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The Role of Language Testing in the Migration Flow to the European Union

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Introduction

Immigration to Europe has a long history but there has been a noticeable increase of the phenomenon over the last decades as a consequence of the never-ending plague of the 'migrant crisis'. This is the reason why the European Union (EU) and its Member States (MSs) have been seeking to cope with a wide range of complex situations due to the massive arrival of third-country nationals. At a time when public budgets are tightening, the integration and immigration policies seem also to be toughening. One of the chief reasons stems from the fact that immigration/integration policies go across the receiving countries' general policy areas that involve fields such as education, employment and social cohesion (Blommaert, 2006a). As demonstrated in numerous studies and scholarly researches, the large regulatory context of the European Union in the immigration flow and, specifically,what regards issuesof family reunification, long–term residence permit and citizenship, allows the MSs to require additional conditions of integration (Strik *et al.*, 2010; Böcker & Strik, 2011; Groenendijk, 2011; Caponio, 2013). Consequently, both the EU institutions and most MSs, have become increasingly active in developing integration strategies and searching for solutions to the pressing challenge of immigrant integration. Under these circumstances, language tests, often accompanied by Knowledge-of-Society tests (KoS-tests), have become an integral part of these policies as a condition for entering an MS, or when seeking to obtain a residence permit (Extra & Spotti, 2009).

It goes without saying that against this framework, the role of *language* as a selection criterion in the migration flow is thus extremely critical. The use of language tests raises a set of problematic questions formulated by experts and scholars such as Böcker & Strik (2011), Groenendijk (2011), Kunnan (2004), McNamara (2005), Shohamy (2001, 2009), Strik *et al.* (2010), and Van Avermaet (2006, 2010, 2011). Relevant and interesting interrogatives concern issues such as language test as the most realistic way to measure an individual's integration into new society, language tests used as gatekeeping mechanisms rather than instruments of social inclusion, if prospective test takers are all provided with the same equipment and conditions when preparing for the test, if the governments of the MSs offer language courses or it is the prospective candidate who has to look for them on the private market. Further questions are: Are the courses and tests free of charge or do the candidates have to pay a fee for them? Can the prospective candidates afford for them? Are the test takers' human and civil rights guaranteed in the testing procedure? Are vulnerable categories such as women and girls safeguarded in the testing procedure?

These are only a few of the dilemmas that will be discussed in the five chapters of this research.

The first chapter focuses on the description of the dynamics of linguistic integration of adult migrants and on current policies expressed through documents such as Directives, Communications, Recommendations, and so forth, which are applied to immigration contexts in the European Union, with an eye to the linguistic requirements of the host country. In this part, particular attention will be paid to the distinction between "hard laws" and "soft laws", the inclusion models adopted in Europe and, finally, to professional and institutional frameworks of training and testing, which are put into practice in Member States such as France, Germany and the Netherlands. A more thorough discussion concerns the Italian context, since Sicily and the urban areas of Agrigento have been surveyed so far as geographical places of experimental investigationin the field of migrant policies. The role of the European Union tools for language education and assessment such as the Common European Framework of Reference for languages (CEFR) and the European Language Portfolio (ELP) will be also discussed in this chapter.

The second chapter sheds light on the definition of language testing, its positive and negative sides, the ethical perspective of the 'language testing phenomenon' as well as the sphere related to human rights. It also takes into account the formulation of new approaches to the assessment of adult migrants' language knowledge in the migration flow to the European Union. The exploration of the theoretical implications and connections with previous studies in this area demonstrates the need for more democratic evaluation methods due to various political, economic, social and cultural questions which will be further highlighted in this paper. Starting from the first theories on language testing (Carroll, 1961; Lado, 1961) to the latest theoretical approaches on this issue (Kunnan, 2004; McNamara, 2008; Shohamy, 2009; Van Avermaet, 2010), it is evident how a language, an extraordinary instrument of human relationships and form of integration, can become a means of social exclusion (McNamara, 2005; Shohamy, 2001, 2009; Blommaert,2006a; Avermaet, 2010). It will be highlighted that there is no real relationship between language knowledge and a mandatory language test that are imposed as a condition for family reunification, long-term residence permit and citizenship (Strik *et al*., 2010; Böcker & Strik, 2011; Groenendijk, 2011).

This form of linguistic reductionism should be somehow overcome, even though tests are widely appreciated in the educational context, the world of work and society as a whole. Tests are perceived as objective allowing every test taker to have the same opportunities and testing conditions. Indeed, tests are seldom criticized as they are viewed as symbols of merit, standards and productivity (Shohamy, 2009). On the other side of the coin, this means that, when and where there

is power, there will develop initiatives and principles, both from an insider and an outsider viewpoint, for the correct and fair use of that power (Hamp-Lyons, 2000). In particular, ethical issues have come to the forefront of language testing because of the powerful impact they have had on individuals' private and professional lives. Tests are often used as tools of power in undemocratic and unethical ways to carry out hidden policy agendas (Shohamy, 2009). Not the less, in recent years, notwithstanding the trust in tests, alternative forms of assessment, which help value migrants' individual language repertoire, their cultural and affective dimension, have been introduced as opposed to testing.

The second chapter also discusses the close link between professionalism and ethics, which can be identified as the standards of a profession. Davies (2007) states that moral professionalism provides a contract for the profession and the individual with the public, thereby safeguarding all three. This type of contract normally takes the form of a Code of Ethics, a Code of Practice, or a Standards document, introduced by a professional association such as the Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE) or the International Language Testing Association (ILTA). The role of being a member of a community of practice will be also examined in this second chapter (Fulcher & Davidson, 2013).

The third chapter analyzes the language requirements of migrant subjects in the European Union and, among numerous access formal requirements, the chapter mentions and investigates the crucial question of family reunification, which has been one of the most significant reasons for immigration shifts into the EU. The notion of citizenship will be taken into account in the light of a broader concept of "*universal* citizenship".

The fourth and fifth chapters are an illustration of the technical and experimental part of this research, which will also give proof of the results obtained. Great attention will be given to the study of specific key-terms in the field of migration and language testing, and of the various levels of analysis and understanding of the practical side of testing procedures. The fourth chapter "Concepts in assessment and validation testing" focuses on the investigation of the meanings of concepts such as *validity*, *reliability*, *authenticity* and *anxiety*, and urges relevant criticality on the methodology and the results obtained from the practice of language testing.

The fifth, and experimental chapter, instead, puts emphasis on the "case study" of this work, and offers a methodological synthesis of alternative forms of investigation relating to language testing addressed to migrant subjects. It contains the analysis of the research carried out in the field, and also the statistical evaluation of the results obtained. The chapter is divided into the following topics: Methodological approach, Participant selection, Survey Questionnaire, General information,

Migrants' educational situation, Migrants' social and familiar situation, Migrants' general linguistic situation, Periodic student assessment at the *Centro provinciale per l'istruzione agli adulti* (CPIA), the Provincial centre for adult education and training

It will be demonstrated that the research was primarily a descriptive study that utilized a two-pronged approach to data collection, namely, survey questionnaire and formal student assessment. The study focused on a target group in order to show to what extent adult literate migrants are aware of their Italian language proficiency. It sought to illuminate particular perceptions rather than to generalize about the global experience of learning and using Italian both in and beyond the classroom. The survey was carried out at the CPIA of Agrigento, a town on the southern coast of Sicily. Firstly, to obtain as complete a picture of the participants as possible, a survey method was utilized to collect the data. The candidate administered a questionnaire to a group of literate adult migrants in order to focus on the migrant's self-image as a speaker of Italian and the perception of his language anxiety as well asthe anxiety-increasing and reducing factors. The purpose was also to bring out individual, emotional and cultural aspects.

The survey examined the existence of cross-cultural barriers in the process of interaction with the inhabitants of the host country. First and foremost, the research aimed to discover what modality the migrants considered the most suitable to assess their knowledge of Italian. The data of the questionnaire were compared with the students' formal evaluation of the first part of the four-month period of the school year 2016/2017. The results confirmed the migrants' trust in standardized tests (Shohamy, 2001). However, some of the respondents opted for forms storytelling, which opens up new perspectives in the field of language assessment. Indeed, the ethno-poetic approach of Hymes (1996; 2003) was the theoretical background for the construction of this type of investigation that led to the reflection according to which a standard test could be partially substituted by storytelling. The method of storytelling, according to established studies (Blommaert, 2006a; 2007), has proved to be useful and effective when applied to the assessment of migrant's linguistic competence. Storytelling has several advantages: it recognizes the centrality of the evaluatee; it values the migrant's individual linguistic repertoire and his/her cultural background; it builds on the migrant's literacy skills in his/her mother tongue; it involves the migrant's affective domain and it reduces test anxiety as the migrants are familiar with both the content (biographical stories) and the format (telling a story can be viewed as a universal human activity).

CHAPTER I

Linguistic integration of adult migrants: observations and reflections on new policy trends in Europe

1.1. Hard law and soft law in the integration policies of the European Union

The framing of the role of language tests in the large EU regulatory context in the immigration flow, and precisely, for family reunification, long–term residence permit and citizenship (Böcker & Strik, 2011; Caponio, 2013; Groenendijk, 2011; Strik *et al.*, 2010), is the starting point for any research in this field. The European regulatory context, which has been gradually outlined in the recent years, includes, on the one hand, *hard law*, whichcontains the directives that have legally binding force, which means the Member States (MSs) have to achieve certain goals by mandatory terms of implementation, while they can independently look for the most suitable way to transfer EU directives to the domestic ground. On the other, the term *soft law* describes various kinds of quasi-legal instruments of the EU, such as codes of conduct, guidelines, communications, etc. In the area of law of the European Union, *soft law* instruments are often used to indicate how the European Commission intends to use its powers and perform its tasks within its area of competence. In other words, *soft law* is composed of Community law acts and instruments *"[…] il cui tratto comune è costituito dal carattere 'non' vincolante delle regole che in essi vengono poste, benché ad essi vengano comunque riconosciuti effetti giuridici"[1]* (Poggi, 2005:3). In order to observe the EU immigration and integration policies from the perspective of the language knowledge, it is fundamental to study both the most relevant EU directives and the codes of conduct.

There are two key Directives which have had a far-reaching impact on the European integration policies, namely Council Directive 2003/109/EC of 25 November 2003 concerning the status of non-EU nationals who are long-term residents and Council Directive 2003/86/EC of 22 September 2003 on the right to family reunification. Apart from the specific purposes of the two Directives, both allowthe EU countries to require additional conditions of integration (Böcker & Strik, 2011; Caponio, 2013; Groenendijk, 2011; Strik *et al.*, 2010).

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[1]"[…] whose common trait is constituted by non-binding rules which are put into them, although they are still recognized some legal effects", my translation.

According to the Paragraph 2 of Article 7 of Council Directive 2003/109/EC, the MSs "[…] may require third-country nationals to comply with integration conditions, in accordance with national law."[2] This means that migrants can be required to show basic knowledge of the host society's language, history, and institutions which is considered indispensable to integration as a necessary condition before they are granted the long-term resident-EC permit. Groenendijk (2011) argues that *integration measures* should be distinguished from *integration conditions* mentioned in the Article 4, Chapter 1.[3] From his viewpoint, integration conditions allow a state to require a specific level of achievement, for example, that a person passes a test, but integration measures may only amount to organizing language courses and requiring adult migrants to take these courses, without requiring them to pass any test (*ibidem*).Conversely, Vermeulen (2010) states that the Article 7(2) of the Directive 2003/109/EC *a fortiori* allows a state to demand a successful test as a condition to entry. This conclusion is reinforced by the reference in the same article to "[…] measures in accordance with national law", thereby giving the MSs discretion in formulating their actions at the national level.[4]

At the level of *soft law*, according to the latest EU guidelines, contained in the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and Council on guidance for application of the Directive 2003/86/EC on the right to family reunification (2014), "MSs may impose a requirement on familymembers to comply with integration measures under Article 7(2), but this may not amount to an absolute condition upon which the right to family reunification is dependent" (Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and Council on guidance for application of the Directive 2003/86/EC:15).

The MSs may also require family members to make a certain effort to demonstrate "[…] their willingness to integrate, for instance, by requiring participation in language or integration courses, prior to or after arrival" (*ibidem*). Since these measures are meant to help facilitate the integration process, this also implies that the way in which the MSs conceive this possibility cannot be unlimited. According to a new trend, the MSs tend to transfer both the test preparation stage and the testing itself to the prospective candidates' home countries. This line of action reveals a strong link between admission and integration in contrast with the early European approachesof the 80s and 90s that considered admission policies and access to civil rights "funzioni di *policy* distinte"

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[2]http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32003L0109&from=en.
[3]*Ibidem.*
[4] *Ibidem.*

(Caponio, 2013: 3).[5] The involvement of countries of origin in the organization of language training and testing is a relatively recent fact (Böcker & Strik, 2011; Groenendijk, 2011; Strik *et al.,* 2010).

Given the prerogative of the individual EU states to independently define their priorities in immigration and integration policies, the MSs are free to schedule the check of the specific integration requirements, either in the pre-entry phase, so anticipating the management of migration inflows by transferring the testing tothe applicants' countries of origin, in the case of family reunification, or, in the post-entry phase, organizing the verification of requirements after the arrival in the host country, in the case of a request for a long-term residence permit or for the access to citizenship (Böcker & Strik, 2011; Caponio, 2013; Groenendijk, 2011; Shohamy, 2009).

Generally speaking, immigration and integration policies should take into account that integration is a two-way process in which cross-influences from both the cultures, ways of life and languages get mixed. In the case of a traditional type of cultural assimilation, that is, interpenetration, and fusion of ethnic minorities into the dominant culture, immigrants and members of minority ethnic groups are expected to gradually resemble the majority groups in terms of norms, values and behavior.

Assimilation, which is different from integration, takes place in those countries, or societies, where the majority group does not accept different ethnic or racial identities. As a result, ethnic characteristics of the minority group may disappear as the minority group gradually adaptsto the customs, language and cultureof the host society. Assimilation may also lead to segregation, or to self-segregation of an ethnic group from the rest of society. This phenomenon is in contrast to the principles of multiculturalism, which, instead, promote diversity as a source of cultural richness in society.

In multicultural integration different cultures that come into contact, inevitably modify, or change, at least in part, to integrate the minority culture into the majority one. Integration is by nature a long, complicated process that requires acceptance of the laws, and ways of the host country by the people of the minority culture without giving up their own background. On the other hand, the receiving society should be prepared to show great tolerance to those who have a different ethnic and linguistic background. To cope with the complex integration process, several European countries have experimented, and implemented different strategies, measures and models to shape efficient policies since the end of the 80s, although the issue reached its peak at the turn of the century.

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[5]"[…] two different policy functions", my translation.

1.2. Models of integration in Europe

In the last past few years, the integration of immigrants has moved to the top of the policy agenda of the European Union and the individual MSs. EU institutions and national stakeholders have realized that this phenomenon plays a crucial role in reaching the maximum benefits in terms ofhuman capital accumulation and economic progress. At the same time, the fear of terrorist attacks, and the growing fear of religious fundamentalism, have highlighted the importance of integration in terms of social cohesion (Wiesbrock, 2011). Consequently, the EU institutions, and most MSs, have become increasingly active in developing integration strategies and searching for solutions to the pressing challenge of immigrant integration.

The public debate on the integration of non-EU immigrants began in many MSs as early as in the 80s and 90s. At that time the discussion focused on the relationship between *immigration policies* and *integration policies* that were considered distinct and separate areas of intervention (Caponio, 2013). In that period, France, Germany and the Netherlands restricted immigration by agreeing on closure policies regarding non-EU workers (Caponio, 2013; Joppke, 2007). At that stage, in terms of integration policy, different strategies, characterized by an increasing number of labor-market related integration measures, were experimented in single MSs (Caponio, 2013; Gronendijk, 2011; Joppke, 2007). Although there is no strict correspondence between models of integration, and national integration strategies put into practice in various MSs, links between the main trends, and different models, as well as between temporary migration regimes, and multicultural outcomes, can still be found.

The INTEC Project (Strik *et al.,* 2010), which was financed by the EU, has shed light on both the integration policies and on the role of language tests for three main purposes, such as family reunification, long-term residence, as well as citizenship in nine different countries across Europe, namely, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Latvia, the Netherlands, United Kingdom and Hungary. The results of the research outline a framework of three main models used in Europe. According to this vision, France seemed to have adopted a policy of assimilationism which aimed to include migrants as individuals who were able to speak the national language and willing to respect the republican values (Caponio, 2013; Joppke, 2007; Quirico, 2013). The prevailing approach in the Netherlands was represented through a multicultural model, which was open to the recognition and respect of migrants' own language and cultural identity (Caponio, 2013; Quirico, 2013). Joppke(2007) claims, instead, that today the use of national models no longer makes sense, as integration policies are converging, and moving towards assimilationism.

Germany has had ongoing need for immigrants to boost the economic development and maintain a dynamic workforce since the 1960s, given the rapid aging of the country's population (Caponio, 2013; Quirico, 2013). For this reason, more than fifty years ago, Germany adopted the functionalist-utilitarian model that considers migrants as "*Gastarbeiter*", guest workers. The model was based on the idea that all guest workers, most of them not qualified, but low-skilled workers from abroad, would return to their countries of origin when they were no longer needed. Thus, in the 60s and 70s, no specific policies were put in practice to assist the migrants to integrate (Caponio, 2013; Gasparini Casari, 2010).

At the national level, several MSs have introduced citizenship trajectories, which involve voluntary or obligatory inclusion programs for recent immigrants. Obligatory integration programs for newcomers often include language and KoS tests, orother integration-related requirements, for the acquisition of state citizenship or permanent residence (Strik*et al.,* 2010).

In recent years nine EU-countries, namely Austria, Denmark, Finland, Flanders (Belgium), France, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden and the United Kingdom have introduced integration courses, citizenship tests and/or citizenship trajectories as instruments in their civic integration policies for immigrants. These countries are implementing integration programs without any particular direction of the EU. As a matter of fact, there is no specific European directive on integration policy that obliges the MSs to share particular guidelines by adopting common policies (Gronendijk, 2011; Jacobs and Rea, 2007; Strik *et al.,* 2010).

Since November 2004, there is, however, a European Council agreement on the Common Basic Principles of immigrant integration, which forms the foundations of any EU initiative in the field of integration.[6] These eleven principles are rather general and do not oblige the MSs to design or adopt particular integration programsin a clear manner. The CBP 4 hints at the possible introduction of integration courses and citizenship trajectories. Indeed, it states that "Basic knowledge of the host society's language, history, and institutions is indispensable to integration; enabling immigrants to acquire this basic knowledge is essential to successful integration."[7]

Among the countries within Europe, the Netherlands is often cited as a forerunner in the field of integration policies, together with countries such as Germany and Denmark following its mandatory model. The Dutch integration program, demanding a considerable amount of acculturation from the prospective migrants,is currently considered the strictest in Europe (Jacobs &

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[6]https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/the-eu-and-integration/eu-actions-to-make-integration-work.
[7]http://www.eesc.europa.eu/resources/docs/common-basic-principles_en.pdf.

Rea, 2007). The Netherlands, known and praised in the 1980s and 1990s for its multicultural model, thus seems to have shifted to a more assimilationist position (*ibidem)*.

Since the Netherlands has toughened its civic integration program, several European countries and regions have followed its example. Belgian neighboring region Flanders copied the original Dutch the *"inburgeringstrajecten"*, citizenship trajectories, at the start of the new millennium (*ibidem*). When Germany introduced its *"Integrationskurse"*, integration courses, the Dutch program was in some measure used as a model(*ibidem*). Since the end of the 1990s, integration courses and citizenship trajectories have gradually emerged across Europe.

France started *"Contrats d'acceuil et de l'intégration"*, Contracts of reception and integration*,* and Austria introduced *"Integrationsvereinbarungen"*, integration agreements, which have become a necessary intermediate step towards a long term residence permit (*ibidem*). The UK introduced a citizenship test which includes a language test, and a test of knowledge about life in the UK in order to qualify for British citizenship, while some Scandinavian countries, such as Denmark, Sweden and Finland, implemented programs which were inspired by the strict Dutch model (*ibidem*).

The convergence of integration policies seems to have made the use of distinctive national models obsolete "[…] instead of diverging in terms of national models, Western European states' policies on immigrant integration are increasingly converging" (Joppke, 2007:1). The neo-assimilationism has left the characteristics of the traditional assimilationism aside, and aims to promote the integration of newcomers, as soon as possible after their arrival, and always more often, even at the pre-departure stage in the prospective migrants' home countries, through mandatory testing of the language and civilization of the host country (Ambrosini, s.d.a).

Scholars, who follow this current, believe that the integration of newcomers, but above all, that of the second generation, that is, those who were born in the host country, goes on by itself, *"inintenzionalmente"*, unintentionally, (Ambrosini,s.d.a.:8). In recent years, assimilationism seems to have been more oriented towards personalized paths of integration that give priority to flexible integration modalities in the host society (Ambrosini, s.d.b.). Hence, migrants with different linguistic, ethnic and social contexts, are put in a favorable condition to contribute to the formation ofa new form of society, which is a result of multicultural and multilingual elements.

Other scholars, such as Jacobs and Rea (2007), have stressed on the continuous distinctiveness of integration policies in Europe, and the value of working with different models.[8] According to them, the traditional classifications of integration policies are likely to be altered in

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[8] http://aei.pitt.edu/7916/1/jacobs-d-11i.pdf.

the future, but since there are still some essential differences between the national immigration policies, maintaining the analytical distinction of integration models continues to make sense (*ibidem*).

A short presentation of the integration programs for the third-country nationals in the most representative MSs, that is, the Netherlands, France and Germany, is given in order to sum up the current trends in those countries that have always been considered the pioneers and pathfinders in the European integration policy making.

The Netherlands

In 1998 the Dutch government voted for a new law, "*Wet Inburgering Nieuwkomers"*(WIN), Newcomers' Integration Law, whose primary aim was to establish an integration policy in order to increase the self-sufficiency of newcomers (Gronendijk, 2011; Jacobs &Rea, 2007; Strik *et al.,* 2010). The WIN was a scheme of so-called citizenship trajectories addressed to newly arrived adult third-country citizens who were obliged to attend both Dutch language courses, and social and vocational orientation training financed by the central government and the municipalities (*ibidem*). It aimed to assure that newcomers would rapidly gain independence in the host society (*ibidem*). At the same time, the WIN stipulated sanctions (mainly economic penalties) for those newcomers who failed to meet the obligations set out by the law.

Since 1st January 2007, the WIN has been replaced by the "*Wet Inburgering"* (WI), Integration Law (Gronendijk, 2011; Strik *et al.,* 2010). Unlike the WIN, this law, which imposes the duty to integrate, aims to involve both the new arrivals and the oldcomers, who have already been living in the Netherlands for some years, but who have not completely integrated, or participated in Dutch society, due to their insufficient knowledge of the language and civilization of the host country (*ibidem*). Migrants, who fall under this new act, are required to pass an integration test, which comprises of a language and a KoS test (*ibidem*).

This modification means that the obligation to participate in the tests was changed into an obligation to pass the tests (Jacobs &Rea, 2007). This can be seen as a clear sign of the toughened line of action in the Dutch immigration policies. The Netherlands is currently the only country in the world to demand the knowledge of language and society from its inhabitants who do not have a non-Western immigrant background before allowing them to stay permanently in the country.[9] In

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[9]http://www.ucl.ac.uk/dutchstudies/an/SP_LINKS_UCL_POPUP/SPs_english/multicultureel_gev_ENG/pages/autochtonen.html.

other words, passing a language test, and a KoS test, has become a prerequisite for the Dutch citizenship (Gronendijk, 2011; Jacobs &Rea, 2007; Shohamy, 2009; Strik *et al.,* 2010).

However, unlike under the 1998 WIN-programme, individuals under the new WI-programmehave to pay for the courses and tests themselves, even if in some cases municipalities can also take care of the feesfor applicants (Gronendijk, 2011; Jacobs &Rea, 2007; Strik *et al.,* 2010). A new citizenship test was also introduced for the third-country citizens planning to come to the Netherlands, for instance, in the framework of family reunification, as well as for those people who needed a long term residence permit (*ibidem*).

This new regulation, introduced by the *Wet Inburgering Buitenland* (WIB),[10] Integration Abroad Act*,* has been in effect since March 2006 (*ibidem*). There are some special groups, such as EU-nationals, holders of the EU Blue Card, andnationals of a number of non-EU countries (the U.S., Canada, Australia, New-Zeeland, Norway, Switzerland, etc.) that are exempt of taking the language and KoS test (*ibidem*).

The procedure under the WIB gets started abroad, at the pre-departure stage, which means that prospective migrants for family reunification first have to successfully pass an automated language and KoS test at the Dutch embassy in the country of origin before being allowed to move to the Netherlands.[11] The test covers both oral and written skills at level of A1 of the *Common European Framework of Reference* (CEFR), which is a visa requirement for the Netherlands (Morano-Foadi & Malena, 2010).

France

In 1998, France started the '*plate-forme d'accueil*', a program aimed to help newcomers learn about the different institutions of the French welfare state (Joppke, 2007). In 2002, an alternative program, '*Contrats d'acceuil et de l'intégration'*, (CAI), Contract of reception and integration, was introduced. This mutual undertaking between the Government on the one hand, and the new migrant on the other, became mandatory in 2007.[12] The CAI is presented to newcomers at the half-day information session which is held in the regional departments of '*Office Français et de l'Immigration et de l'Integration* (OFII). On this occasion, each newcomer has an individual meeting with a social interviewer from the OFII whose task is both to administer a personalized

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[10]https://ind.nl/Documents/WI%202013-9.pdf.
[11]http://en.inburgeren.nl/inburgeren-hoe-moet-dat.jsp.
[12]http://www.ofii.fr/s_integrer_en_france_47/presentation_466.html.

diagnostic of needs, and assess the newcomer's oral and written skills in French using "a test set by legal order if required".[13]

In case the newcomer's knowledge of French is considered sufficient, a certificate of exemption from language learning (AMDFL) is immediately given.[14] This certificate is a proof of the new migrant's sufficient language proficiency. On the contrary, if the newcomer's level is not considered sufficient, a four hundred-hourlanguage course is recommended to the migrant. After attending the course, migrants have to take an exam for the Diploma of introduction to French (DILF) which certifies their sufficient mastery of French.[15]

Under the CAI, the new migrants benefit from training courses on different issues such as the civic training, that is mandatory for all the signatories. This course, that is translated into the main languages of the newcomers, gives the participants information about the French institutions and the republican values and principles, such as gender equality, secularism, (compulsory and free) access to education, as well as and the political and administrative organization in France.[16] Once a migrant has lived in France continuously for five years, he/she can apply for a *'carte de resident',* that is a renewable permanent residence permit allowing the individual to live in France for up to 10 years.[17]

In case a third-country national wants to apply for French citizenship through naturalization or marriage, he/she has first to sign the CAI, which is valid for twelve months.[18] After that period, the applicant will be evaluated to be sure that he/she has met the requirements of the contract, for example, that he/she has sufficient mastery of French, or that he/she has attended the civic training course. Anyhow, there is no specific citizenship test to be taken in order to become a French national (Groenendijk, 2011; Jacobs & Rea, 2007).

Germany

In Germany a new "*Zuwanderungsgesetz*", Immigration Act, has been in effect since 2004 (Michalkowski, 2004; Joppke, 2007). Under this Act, newcomers can take three hundred hours, that can be extended up to six hundred, of German language classes, and thirty hours of lessons on German society, that consists of culture, history, constitution, legal system and political institutions (Jacobs &Rea, 2007). The entitlement to a temporary residence permit depends on participating

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[13]*Ibidem.*
[14]*Ibidem.*
[15]*Ibidem.*
[16]*Ibidem.*
[17]*Ibidem.*
[18]*Ibidem.*

inthe integration program, while permanent residence requires passing an exam. The program is compulsory for all those migrants that cannot show a minimum knowledge of German. It is mandatory also for those third-country nationals who are not able to show that they enjoy social benefits. If the migrants do not follow the program, they can get can a fine, or they may face acut in their social benefits (*ibidem*).

There have been various developments over time regarding the legal basis of the integration courses. The courses organized after the migrants' arrival in Germany were first introduced in accordance with the Immigration Act 2004; whereas the language tests for admission administered abroad were introduced as statutory requirements in 2007 (Böcker & Strik, 2011; Groenendijk, 2011; Sevek & Walter, 2010; Strik *et al.*, 2010). Furthermore, the basic knowledge of the legal and social system, and the way of life in Germany, was imposed as a further condition for naturalization. Since 2008, candidates have also been required to show this knowledge in the nationally standardized naturalization test (Sevek & Walter, 2010).

Since the turn of the century, the issue of labor migration has considerably gained importance in the EU, and since the year 2000, a number of legal and administrative measures aiming to encourage labor migration to the MSs countries, including the three pioneering countries, have been introduced to promote the mobility of workers.

As migration and labor mobility play an important role in the economic development and demographic challenges the EU has to face in the long term, it has been working on a number of interconnected measures in order to produce more flexible admission systems, applicable to some specific groups of non-EU nationals.

This is why, in 2009, the EU introduced a set of particularly favorable conditions for high-skilled non-EUworkers. The "EU Blue Card" established both a fast-track procedure and basic common criteria, such as a work contract, professional qualifications and a minimum salary level for the beneficiaries of this card.[19] The issuance of a special residence and work permit facilitates access to the labor market, and entitles the cardholders to convenient socio-economic rights and flexible conditions for family reunification and movement around the EU.[20]

1.3. European scenario- highly qualified non–EU nationals

As a matter of fact, in the European scenario, immigration to the EU has become a more and more significant matter of economic interest since the Maastricht Treaty was signed in 1993. It gave

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[19]http://www.eu-bluecard.com.
[20]http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/legal-migration/work/index_en.html.

birth to the single market under the 'four freedoms' of movement of goods, services, persons and capital (Treaty on European Union, 1992).[21]

Directive 2009/50/EC of third-country nationals for stays of more than three months, the European Union Blue Card directive, is directly intended to contribute to achieving the goals of the Maastricht Treaty, and addressing labor shortages by fostering workers' admission and mobility. The main goal of this document is to make the EU, and the single MSs, more attractive to highly skilled workers from around the world. Moreover, it aims to sustain the competitiveness of the EU and its economic growth in the framework of world economy.[22]

This directive must be framed in the same primary economic perspective of the EU immigration policy in which legal immigration plays an important role. It enhances the knowledge-based economy in Europe on the one hand, and advances the economic development on the other, thus contributing to the implementation of the Lisbon Strategy (Council Directive 2009/50/EC, (4)).[23] Indeed, the Blue Card gives its holders a series of rights, including favorable family reunification conditions. Moreover, it also encourages geographic mobility between the MSs within the internal frontiers of the EU.

The EU Blue Card is a work permit issued to highly-qualified non-EU citizens by twenty-five out of twenty-eight EU MSs.[24] The name of the card is a combination between the US Green Card and the color of the European Union flag.[25] Introduced in 2007 by the European Commission, the Proposal became officially known as "the EU Blue Card Directive" in 2009. It was implemented with the intention to stimulate economic development in the EU area by offering non-EU citizens, classified as qualified workers, favorable migration conditions and rights such as free movement inside the EU area. The directive aims to face the emerging labor shortages in Europe as well as the demand for additional qualified workers, especially in those fields in which the lack of workforce is evident, such as Mathematics, Informatics, Natural Sciences, Technology and Medicine.[26]

The Blue Card directive applies to the territory of each MS of the EU, excluding Denmark, Ireland and the United Kingdom, for stays that last more than three months for the purposes of employment and residence.[27] The Blue Card is recognized by twenty-fiveMSs with the common basic criteria for all applicants who must prove that they have 'higher professional qualifications',

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[21]http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=URISERV:xy0026.
[22]http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32009L0050&from=RO.
[23]*Ibidem.*
[24]http://www.eu-bluecard.com.
[25]*Ibidem.*
[26]http://www.eu-bluecard.com/who-can-apply/.
[27]https://www.apply.eu/directives/Directive-2009-50-EC.pdf.

either by showing a higher education qualification, such as a university degree, or by having at least five years of relevant professional experience.[28]

The Blue Card applicants must work as paid employees since the EU Directive does not apply to self-employed workers or entrepreneurs.[29] Their annual gross income has to be at least one and a half times the average national salary, which is not an easy requirement to comply with.[30]The applicants must present a work contract or a binding job offer in an MS for at least one year. Moreover, they must provide the necessary travel documents and health insurance for themselves and any relatives who accompany them.[31] They must also prove that they fulfill the legal requirements to practice their profession, in case this profession is regulated.[32]

The EU has facilitated the admission of highly qualified workers and their family members by establishing a fast-track admission system. As a matter of fact, the directive enables foreign workers to get work and residence permits via a single procedure.[33] The Blue Card also allows qualified workers to bring their close family members with them.[34] Consequently, EU immigration policies aim to establish a framework for legal migration, thus focusing on the fast integration into the host societies. As the work permit can be renewed after a two-years period, this channel of entry also opens up a privileged way to the naturalization in the host country.

Some of the measures in support of legal immigration aim to cover and protect the conditions of entry and residence of certain categories of non-EU nationals, such as highly qualified workers, students and researchers.[35] Favorable conditions for family reunification, as well as for access to work for spouses, together with additional rights for long-term residency, are also provided for through the EU Blue Card Directive.[36]

The derogation included in the Article 15(3) of the Directive :"By way of derogation from the last subparagraph of Article 4(1) and Article 7(2) of Directive 2003/86/EC, the integration conditions and measures referred to therein may only be applied after the persons concerned have been granted family reunification"[37] does not preclude the MSs from maintaining, or introducing, new integration conditions and measures, including language learning, but not any kind of language testing, for the family members of a EU Blue Card holder.

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[28] http://www.eu-bluecard.com.
[29] https://www.apply.eu/directives/Directive-2009-50-EC.pdf.
[30] *Ibidem.*
[31] *Ibidem.*
[32] http://ec.europa.eu/immigration/who-does-what/what-does-the-eu-do/coming-to-the-eu_en.
[33] https://www.apply.eu/BlueCard/.
[34] http://www.eu-bluecard.com.
[35] https://www.apply.eu/BlueCard/.
[36] https://www.apply.eu/directives/Directive-2009-50-EC.pdf.
[37] http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2003:251:0012:0018:en:PDF.

As to the Blue Card holders' language mastery, students are required to have sufficient knowledge of the language of their study program, which does not necessarily have to coincide with any of the host country's national languages.[38] Depending on the rules of the EU country, unpaid trainees, exchange pupils and voluntary workers may instead be required to take part in a basic introduction course regarding the host country's language, history and political and social structures.[39] As far as the admission of highly qualified workers and researchers is concerned, the EU Blue Card directive does not define any language requirements as a mandatory condition. However, knowledge of the language(s) of the host country is considered useful for the Blue Card holders' integration, but it is not an obligation.[40] Through these specifications, the EU Blue Card directive defines a particular group of non-EU nationals that does not have to prove the knowledge of the host country's language and civilization either as a pre- or post-departure condition. As a matter of fact, the directive does not anyhow mention the knowledge of the language or society of the host country among the requirements for the application.[41]

However, in Germany, if the applicant is able to demonstrate his/her knowledge of German, at least at level B1 of the CEFR, in addition to payment of contributions to the pension fund and other minor conditions, his/her mastery of the host country's language can help shorten the term of the issuance of a residence permit from thirty-three months to twenty-one months.[42] Even in this case, language knowledge is not a mandatory pre- or post-arrival condition, which means that EU Blue Card holders can enter an MS without any knowledge of the host country's language or culture. The exemption from the language and KoS tests for this particular group is likely to create unequal admission conditions between two categories of third-country citizens, as the majority of migrants have to obey a different set of rules when moving to an MS.

Since the introduction of the EU Directive 2009/50/CE in 2009, the MSs have had two years to adapt their national laws to the new rules. In this case, the MSs have added only some minor criteria and prerequisites, when transposing it at the national level.

Among the MSs, France was the first to transpose this directive, namely, with the *LOI n. 2011-672 du 16 juin 2011 relative à l'immigration, à l'intégration et à la nationalité,* the law of June 16, 2011, concerning immigration, integration and nationality.[43] This law enables a Blue Card holder to bring his/her family to France through a simplified procedure and a temporary residency

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[38] *Ibidem.*
[39] http://ec.europa.eu/immigration/who-does-what/what-does-the-eu-do/coming-to-the-eu_en.
[40] https://www.apply.eu/Questions /.
[41] http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2003:251:0012:0018:en:PDF.
[42] https://www.apply.eu/BlueCard/Germany/.
[43] https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000024191380&dateTexte=&categorieLien=id.

permit with the note "private and family life" which gives the family members authorization to work.[44] This card is delivered for the same duration as the Blue Card of the spouse, and it is renewable for the same period.[45] In Germany, the EU Blue Card has existed since 1 August 2012. To 31 July 2013, 8,879 such cards were issued, and by the end of that year, 10,000 non-EU academics received a Blue Card.[46] As to the language requirements for family members, the spouses of Blue Card holders are not expected to possess any knowledge of German.[47]

As to the general benefits, third-country migrants working legally within the EU enjoy common rights, similar to those of EU nationals. These include working conditions, like rates of pay and terms of dismissal, as well as recognition of diplomas and qualifications, tax benefits, certain branches of social security, and access to, and supply of public goods and services, such as transport, museums and restaurants.[48]

As a matter of fact, like most countries with advanced economies, also the EU and its MSs have elaborated specific policies in order to facilitate the mobility of highly skilled professionals into their respective national economy. These individuals are considered desirable migrants and identified, according to the hierarchical lexicon of human migration, as expatriates. The word *expatriate*, or *expat*, describes "a person who lives outside their native country".[49] It seems to be in contrast to the terms *immigrant* and *migrant*, as the question of the legality of the migration is generally removed from the term's context.[50] The similar treatment between the EU citizens and highly-qualified workers from outside Europe, researchers and students, enables the Blue Card holders to approach a more inclusive status in the host country than that of other third-country citizens.

There is a basic difference between the EU Blue Card directive, that highlights the prominent economic rationale behind the recent EU integration strategies (Caponio, 2013), and the European Agenda for integration of third-country nationals, that, on the contrary, focuses on the integration, based not on prior economic drivers, but on the respect of values, such as respect for diversity, different language and ethnic backgrounds. One of the challenges the EU has to meet, a part from the question regarding asylum seekers and refugees, concerns the admission and integration of so-called 'economic migrants', that are generally unskilled and semi-skilled

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[44] *Ibidem.*
[45] *Ibidem.*
[46] https://www.bundesregierung.de/ContentArchiv/EN/Archiv17/Artikel/2013/07/2013-07-31-blaue-karte.html;jsessionid=098836ADFF938949CACF474C8F51DBA9.s5t1.
[47] https://www.apply.eu/BlueCard/Germany/.
[48] http://ec.europa.eu/immigration/who-does-what/what-does-the-eu-do/coming-to-the-eu_en.
[49] https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/expatriate.
[50] http://blog.oxforddictionaries.com/2016/06/refugee-vs-migrant.

individuals from impoverished countries in the global south. This wide array of people moves from one country to another in order not only to improve their professional advancement, but their general conditions of life, from health care and housing to instruction. Low-skilled workers are a lot more than the highly skilled professionals in the migration flow towards the EU area. Thus, immigration and integration policies as a whole should take into account all types of economic migrants: highly-qualified professionals, semi-skilled workers as well as those with no specific skills. There should be an open-minded vision of integration questions, which means, that the decisions regarding immigration and integration, should not be exclusively based on prevailing economic rationale.

In addition to the migration from countries outside Europe, there is also migration within the territory of the EU. The Directive 2005/36/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications is applied to all citizens of the 28 EU Member States, as well as to nationals of Iceland, Norway and Liechtenstein, who wish to perform a regulated profession in an MS, other than the one in which they obtained their professional qualifications, either as self-employed workers or as employees. As for the language requirements in the context of migration within Europe, in accordance with the Article 53 of the Directive, EU professionals "shall have a knowledge of languages necessary for practising the profession in the host Member State".[51]

The host MS can require EU professionals to master its official language or one of its official languages, in case this can be justified by the nature of the profession the applicant wants to practice in the receiving country. However, the language requirements may not exceed what is strictly necessaryfor the applicant's professional needs, that is, vocabulary, oral and/or written knowledge, active and/or passive usage.[52] In addition, the EU professional's application should be processed in (one of) the official language(s) of the receiving MS, and if he/she is required to take an aptitude test, this has to likewise be in the same language.

According to the Directive 2005/36/EC, the procedure for the recognition of the applicant'sprofessional qualification, and any test of his/her language skills are two distinct procedures. The recognition of professional qualifications cannot be refused, or postponed, on the basis of the fact that the applicant does not have the appropriate language skills.[53] However, there is an exception to this rule in case language skills are part of the applicant's professional qualification,

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[51]http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32005L0036&from=EN.
[52]http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/qualifications/docs/guide/users_guide_en.pdf.
[53]*Ibidem.*

for example, if he/she is a speech therapist, or a teacher giving lessons in one of languages of the host country.[54]

Moreover, the receiving MS cannot systematically make EU professionals sit a language examination. Instead of large-scale tests, applicants have the faculty to produce different kinds of certificates/documents which constitute sufficient proof of language skills such as:

1. qualification acquired in the language of the host MS;
2. qualification attesting knowledge in the language(s) of the host MS, for example, a university degree;
3. a chamber of commerce qualification;
4. certificates awarded by a recognized language institution;
5. evidence of previous professional experience in the host MS territory.[55]

If the applicant cannot provide any of these documents, he/she may be required to take an oral or a written exam.

In any case, the host MS cannot organize systematic, obligatory large-scale language tests for professionals. This kind of evaluation must be excluded because of the principle of proportionality which regulates the exercise of the powers exercised by the EU in accordance with Article 5 of the Treaty on European Union.[56] Under that rule, the institutions must limit their actions to what is strictly necessary in order to achieve the intended objectives.[57]

Once the administration of systematic large scaletesting must be excluded according to the principle of proportionality, the problem of assessing EU professionals' language skills is critical, particularly in case of health professionals, such as doctors, nurses responsible for general care, dental practitioners, midwives and pharmacists.[58] These professionals benefit from the automatic recognition of their qualifications through which they can immediately come into direct contact with patients/clients that are likely to speak different languages other than their mother tongue.[59]

In this field, particular attention should be paid both to the safeguard of patients' rights and caretakers' proficiency of the language(s) of the host country, since communication and language problems are sensitive, and they are getting more and more widespread, due to labor mobility and freedom of movement. Language tests administered to individual professionals at the post-arrival stage, validation of language certificates or alternative language assessing methods, linked to

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[54]*Ibidem.*
[55]*Ibidem.*
[56]http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2011:0367:FIN:en:PDF.
[57]*Ibidem.*
[58]*Ibidem.*
[59]http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2005:255:0022:0142:en:PDF.

training courses could help overcome language barriers, for example, between nurses and patients that cause the vast majority of malpractice suits the healthcare field in which professionals are continuously on the move from one country to another (Simpanen & Uttilla, 2014).

Since the ability to communicate in foreign languages, together with the ability to communicate in one's mother tongue, is one of the eight key skills set out in the 2006 Recommendation 2006/962/EC of the European Parliament, and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning, the Council of Europe has elaborated tools for language learning, teaching and (self-)assessment such as the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and the European Language Portfolio (ELP).[60]

These tools aim to provide learners of different ages with extra help in a variety of language learning and assessment contexts, including language training in the context of the migration flow of third-country (adult) nationals towards the EU area. The ELP for adult migrants supports them in three main ways: it helps them monitor their language learning, reflect on their individual language repertoire and raise their intercultural awareness.[61]

1.4. EU tools for language education and assessment

Even if it is not automatic, knowing the receiving country's language(s) may lead to better job opportunities and independence. Thus it may help prevent segregation in general and, that of vulnerable groups, in particular. For example, mastery of the receiving society's language may prevent, or at least limit, migrantwomen's frequent exclusion from the full participation in society. Therefore, language learning courses, as well as integration programs, must be both financially and geographically accessible for every prospective candidate irrespective of their age, gender or intelligence. In addition, the learning offer should be as rich as possible, providing different levels of language courses based on the participants' prior knowledge, education and conditions for learning.

A trend of policy, that seems to be common to several MSs with regard to the integration of immigrants, has emerged in the last past few years. In this sense, Joppke (2007:1) argues that "[…] instead of diverging in terms of national models, Western European states' policies on immigrant integration are increasingly converging." First of all, many EU countries recognize almost unanimously, both in accordance with the Common Basic Principles of 2004 and the European Pact

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[60]http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=URISERV:c11090&from=HR.
[61]http://www.coe.int/it/web/lang-migrants/european-language-portfolio-elp-.

on Immigration and asylum of 2008, that the knowledge of the language and culture of the host country is a prerequisite for the integration of migrants.[62]

According to this principle, the Council of Europe has elaborated some practical tools that aim to support learners in assessing their own language levels and recording their progress. The best known outcome is the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), which is also one of the most widely used language instruments worldwide. The CEFR is a foreign language proficiency framework which was developed by the Council of Europe for mutual recognition of language qualifications, for learning, teaching as well as (self-)assessment.[63] It is published in English by Cambridge University Press and in French by Editions Didier. It is also available online on a dedicated website.[64]

The CEFR was designed to offer a transparent, coherent and comprehensive basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses and curriculum guidelines, the design of teaching and learning materials, and the assessment of foreign language proficiency at six levels: A1 and A2, B1 and B2, C1 and C2.[65] The main levels are further completed through three 'plus' levels A2+, B1+, B2+. This scheme, that is a result of over twenty years of research, makes it possible to compare tests and examinations across different languages and national boundaries. The CEFR is not used only in Europe, but also in other continents; that is why today it is available in forty languages.[66] One of the main tasks of the CEFR is to provide guidelines for recognition of international language qualifications in order to facilitate educational and occupational mobility of labor worldwide.

The "can do" statements of the CEFR are summarized in a bank of descriptors. The illustrative scales are accompanied by an analysis of communicative contexts, themes, tasks, and purposes, as well as descriptions of the competences on which individuals draw when they use a foreign language.[67] The scaled descriptions and analysis of the communicative contexts explain the reason why the CEFR is more and more frequently used in teacher education, the reform of foreign language curricula, and the development of teaching materials.

It is important to notice that the mission of the CEFR is not to offer ready-to-use solutions to language problems, on the contrary, the framework should always be adapted to the requirements of specific contexts. Using the CEFR sometimes also requires "thinking outside the box", for example, when analyzing the communicative needs of adult migrants, deciding how to assess their

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[62]http://www.eesc.europa.eu/resources/docs/common-basic-principles_en.pdf.
[63]http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/cadre1_en.asp.
[64]http://www.coe.int/lang-cefr.
[65]http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/cadre1_en.asp.
[66]*Ibidem.*
[67]*Ibidem.*

proficiency in the language(s) of their receiving country and establishing the most suitable moment for the evaluation. In these cases, creative thinking may help

- analyze the individuals' or groups' effective needs;
- reflect on the best timing for the assessment procedure;
- set realistic objectives.

The level of proficiency required in the testing procedure in the migration flow to the EU area is usually based on the CEFR, but due to its flexible nature it is possible to notice a considerable difference in the levels of proficiency required across the MSs, ranging from A1 to B1 or even B2 (oral) of the CEFR.[68] The approach also varies a lot as the MSs organize testing at different stages of the migration, even if an increasing number of countries require adult migrants to demonstrate proficiency in the language of the host country before granting entry, residence, work permits or citizenship. However, language and KoS tests are still optional in most MSs, and not compulsory, like in the Netherlands (Gronendijk, 2011; Jacobs & Rea, 2007; Strik *et al*., 2010).

Further policy guidelines and tools for language education, assessment and certification are developed on ad hoc basis by the Language Policy Unit, in partnership with appropriate Council of Europe sectors, and International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) with participatory status.[69] The aim of the Language Policy Unit is to support all directly interested people, institutions, agencies and bodies both in developing a needs-based approach, and in following best professional practice, so as to ensure transparency, quality and fairness, in particular concerning 'high-stake' situations, such as language requirements for citizenship, work or long-term residency purposes.[70]

As the Council of Europe's primary aim is to create a common democratic and legal area throughout the continent, the respect for the fundamental rights requires a coordinated and principled approach. This involves language policy as it cuts across different domains of integration policy sectors that concern social sphere, employment, health, together with an awareness of the mutual rights and responsibilities of migrants and host societies.[71]Accordingly, the question of adult migrants' language learning gets particular attention from the Council of Europe. The Linguistic Integration of Adult Migrants (LIAM)is a project developed by the Council of Europe's Language Policy Unit. This project gives the MSs further support in the development of coherent, effective and inclusive language policies, based on shared values, such as respect for human rights, the

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[68]http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Migrants_Home_EN.asp.
[69]http://www.ecml.at/Thematicareas/EvaluationandAssessment/Resources/tabid/1680/language/en-GB/Default.aspx.
[70]*Ibidem.*
[71]http://www.coe.int/en/web/lang-migrants/guiding-principles.

dignity of the person, democracy and the rule of law.[72]The standard setting instruments, guidelines and recommendations produced by the Council of Europe set out the key principles of language learning, requirements and testing in the migration flow. These are accompanied by language policy guidelines, and tools like the CEFR and the ELP, elaborated to support their effective implementation in an inclusive approach based on shared values and principles.[73] Drawing on these guiding principles, agencies responsible for language policy are invited to consider the degree to which they have to extend their responsibilities for specific actions such as:

- implementing language programs that provide an effective response to migrants' language needs for personal, social and working life;
- ensuring that programs are sufficiently flexible to accommodate the diversity of migrants;
- supporting migrants in developing independent learning skills;
- monitoring language and KoS courses to make sure they meet internationally accepted standards of quality assurance and to define required proficiency levels in a realistic and open manner that reflects the actual needs and capacities of migrants;
- making sure that formal tests, when used, are conformed to accepted quality standards and are not misused to exclude migrants from society through gate keeping functions;
- formulating effective incentives rather than ineffective sanctions, offering tangible rewards for language learning, such as faster access to employment or social benefits, increasing motivation;
- valuing migrants' languages of origin and their unique plurilingual and pluricultural identities.[74]

If the basic principles were translated into effective, concrete actions, they could support migrants in integrating faster and more successfully into the receiving society. If migrants' immediate and medium-term needs were identified at an early stage, it would be easier to define realistic objectives drawing on, and adapting, the scales of the CEFR for fundamental everyday tasks such as addressing one's children's teachers, speaking to neighbors, addressing a bank clerk, etc.

According to the documents published by the Language Policy Unit, migrants should be invited to be as independent and autonomous as possible regarding their language training.[75] They should be able to manage their language learning and acquire independently the competences they need to the level(s) required, both at their workplace, and when building networks in their social space. Learners are thus expected to use the ELP, which allows them to record their language

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[72]http://www.coe.int/en/web/lang-migrants.
[73]http://www.ecml.at/Thematicareas/EvaluationandAssessment/Resources/tabid/1680/language/en-GB/Default.aspx.
[74]http://www.coe.int/en/web/lang-migrants/guiding-principles.
[75]*Ibidem.*

learning achievements and their personal experience of learning and using languages. As this tool is specifically designed to support the development of learning skills, migrants should be taught how to relate their progress to the levels of ability of the CEFR.[76]

The guidelines produced by the Council of Europe, instead, suggest that courses should, when possible, be tailor-made, drawing to the migrants' actual language needs at work or in their social context.[77] The organization, administration and delivery of tailor-made courses is surely more expensive and complex, but seemingly provides value for money boosting migrants' attendance, increasing their motivationand raising their language awareness. The quality standards, design and delivery of the language courses addressed to adult migrants should be monitored over time by agencies responsible for language policy, ensuring these are administered by properly trained professionals with the necessary facilities and equipment.[78]

Anyhow, there is no standard model of language learning at adult age. As a consequence, it is a complex task to design courses and choose methods of assessment, also because there is a great diversity among adult migrants who enter the EU area. They come from several countries of origin and speak different languages. They also differ in terms of their personal situation, needs and capacities, prior educational and language learning history, time needed and/or available for learning a new language. Additionally, they have different reasons for migration such as family reunification, long term residence permit or naturalization.

Furthermore, the stages of migration are likely to have a great impact on the migrants' willingness and approach to learning the host country's language. The migrants' input, for example, at the pre-departure compared to the post-arrival stage, may not be the same. Moreover, organizing language learning and testing abroad presents peculiarities and difficulties that are likely not to exist to the same extent in the host country.

In the migration context, it is important to set realistic language goals in adapting the CEFR scales for official purposes, such as long-term residence permit or naturalization, bearing in mind that in most societies the majority of native speakers do not have to perform all the tasks required at the highest CEFR levels. Moreover, successful integration does not depend on a given level of language proficiency. As the illustrative CEFR scales are flexible, they can be used to define mixed, heterogeneous user 'profiles', which give a more realistic view of the learners' actual competences.

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[76]*Ibidem.*
[77]http://www.coe.int/en/web/lang-migrants/home.
[78]*Ibidem.*

This means that an individual may be assessed, for example, A2 level for spoken interaction, but A1 for reading or written interaction.[79]

Even if all stakeholders strive for transparency in migration policies, language tests may easily hide undeclared and covert purposes, such as gatekeeping functions, imposed bypoliticians and policymakers because "[…] for states, 'citizenship' provides a category that can be used to control and determine the composition of the state - those who would be entitled to rights and benefits versus those who should be denied them" (Shohamy, 2009:45). Indeed, in Shohamy's opinion (2009), a single language or KoS test should never be used for high-stake decisions that define who fits in and who does not.

Additionally, Shohamy (2009: 46) claims that this kind of policy is "[…] anchored in false assumptions and beliefs and leads to discrimination and violation of basic rights of immigrants". In her opinion, the guiding principles of "a 'language tests for citizenship' regime" (*ibidem*), generate second-class citizens, and thus violate basic civic and human rights. Indeed, there is no established relationship between successfully passing a language test and integration in the host society. Interestingly, migrants can be successfully integrated, and yet have limited language skills in the official language(s) of the host country.[80]

As a matter of fact, language proficiency develops through real-life, everyday use over time, and therefore it cannot be considered as a precondition for, but rather a result of active participation in society. Assessment procedures should be thus based on performances in specific contexts that take into account the kind of language an adult migrant actually needs in reference to his/her age, job, literacy level and work tasks.

Moreover, the knowledge of the host society's language should not be considered as an isolated ability, but as a part of migrants' general literacy skills in which traits, such as language negotiations between L1 and L2 learners, are taken into account (*ibidem*). Migrants should be offered opportunities to attend language courses, and they should be given all the possible instruments for self-study, and self-assessment in order to develop self-awareness, such as the ELP**,** which provides evidence of what a learner 'can do' in various languages. Tools like the ELP, which is linked to the CEFR, could integrate or, in some cases, even replace a formalized language test in the migration flow.

The ELP was developed by the Language Policy Unit of the Council of Europe to support the development of learner autonomy, to back up multilingualism, and to promote intercultural

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[79]https://www.coe.int/t/dg4/.../Migrants-Principles-JS_EN.doc.
[80]*Ibidem.*

awareness and competence.[81] It conforms to a common set of Principles and Guidelines approved by the Committee of Ministers, and recommended to Member States (Recommendation CM/Rec (2008)7E).[82] The Council of Europe's objective is to make the ELP even more valuable, particularly as far as multilingual education and intercultural awareness are concerned.

The ELP, which has three main parts: a language passport, a language biography and a dossier, aims to helps learners give shape and coherence to their learning experiences and use of languages other than their first language.[83] It allows users to record their language learning progress, in one or more languages, and to reflect on their language learning style, use of languages, and intercultural experiences.

The purpose of the ELP is to promote learners' motivation by recognizing their efforts. It diversifies their language skills, and provides an updated record of their language repertoire, and cultural knowledge, which can be consulted on various occasions, and for different purposes, for example, when learners are reaching a higher language level, seeking employment, or moving abroad.[84]

In an ELP, which is property of the learners themselves, all language knowledge, and materials produced by the learner, are taken into account.[85] This is highly important as an ELP records everything that is gained both inside and outside formal education. In other words, both informal and formal language experiences are equally valued. As an ELP is linked to the CEFR, it allows learners to assess themselves in relation to its scales and thus monitor their own progress. [86]

These values and principles are also central to the projects of the European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML).[87] ECML's dedicated website offers a suite of templates that can be used, with or without adaptation, to create an individual ELP.[88] The templates can also be used selectively, for example, to promote self-assessment in language learning, develop learners' intercultural awareness, or help them to focus on their multilingual repertoires.[89]

Definitely, also migrants' language(s) of origin and their L1 skills, are crucial in the integration process into the host society. It is important to value migrants' individual linguistic repertoire and to encourage them to transmit their languages of origin to their children, because of

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[81]*Ibidem.*
[82]http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/conventions_en.asp.
[83]*Ibidem.*
[84]http://www.coe.int/en/web/portfolio/introduction.
[85]*Ibidem.*
[86]*Ibidem.*
[87]http://www.ecml.at.
[88]*Ibidem.*
[89]*Ibidem.*

their importance as identity markers and an asset for a multicultural societyas a whole. These aspects should be taken into account also when designing assessment practices of migrants' language skills.

As a matter of fact, multilingual and intercultural approach to the teaching/assessment of the language(s) of the host society ensures that languages become instruments of inclusion and social cohesion that unite rather than segregate people. Hence, it is important to emphasize the relevance of those languages which are already part of migrants' individual linguistic repertoire in order to continue building on that background to shape their identities as active, democratic citizens in the receiving society.

In the following paragraph I will provide the experiences of three pioneering EU countries, France, the Netherlands and Germany, as to their approaches to language training and testing of adult migrants. Each of these MSs has interpreted the EU directives in a different way, and introduced specific language courses, developed learning materials, engaged migrants in formal language learning and built a testing procedure of its own. A common trait in the language policies of these countries can anyhow be immediately found in the anticipation of the testing procedure, that is, migrants are more and more often obliged to attend courses, and pass the language, and sometimes also a KoS test, at the pre-departure stage of migration.

1.5. Language training and testing in France, the Netherlands and Germany

The MSs have found several ways to manage language training and verification requirements, both in the third-country nationals' countries of origin, and in the host country. Recently, the Netherlands and France have introduced policies of civic integration abroad: family migrants have to acquaint themselves with the language and customs of the host society before being admitted to the country (Böcker & Strik, 2011; Groenendijk, 2011; Strik *et al*., 2010). In both countries, this policy reform was a response to a growing concern about the consequences of the impact of past and present immigration flows on the cohesion of their societies.

However, whereas French and Dutch politicians defined the problem of immigration and integration in very similar terms, the modalities of the civic integration abroad policies they designed to solve this problem were crucially different. The French version is much less restrictive than the Dutch that is the strictest in Europe (Böcker & Strik, 2011; Groenendijk, 2011; Strik *et al.,* 2010).

The knowledge of the national language is considered an essential factor of integration in France. The state has set up several mechanisms to promote language learning for migrants. First,

learning general French and second, learning French for Specific Purposes, under the patronage of the*Office Français de l'Immigration et de l'Intégration (OFII)*, the French Office for Immigration and Integration, which is responsible for implementing both types of language training available for foreigner citizens.[90]

Language training, whenever necessary, is provided to those migrants who must sign the Contract of Reception and Integration (*Contrat d'Accueil et d'Intégration* – CAI).[91] Already established on a voluntary basis in 2003, since 2006 all third-country nationals, who intend to settle down in France, have to sign an undertaking with the state in order to obtain legal residency for up to four years before they can be granted permanent residence and become candidates for naturalization.[92]

The contract applies to all foreigners with the exception of nationals of the MSs, the European Economic Area and the Swiss Confederation. It also applies to foreigners who have been educated for at least three years in a French secondary education institution overseas, and to those foreigner citizens between the age of sixteen and eighteen, born in France to foreign parents, who already live in France, or whose stable residence has been in France for at least five years, since the age of eleven (Böcker & Strik, 2011; Groenendijk, 2011; Strik *et al.,* 2010).

Those non-EU citizens, who have not passed successfully the initial French language test, which is a part of the reception and integration contract, and want to settle permanently down in France, are prescribed language training within the CAI. In 2011, 24,358 people were prescribed such training.[93] Moreover, a number of migrants, who had arrived in France before 2006, and had not had the opportunity to attend French courses within the Contract of Reception and Integration, as they are not signatories of the CAI, can also attend these courses.[94]

Since the knowledge of French is considered essential for every migrant's integration into society, one of the OFII's main missions is to organize language courses for foreigners, including those already living in France. The courses are addressed to those third-country nationals who wish to acquire adequate knowledge of French for Empowerment, Employment or French nationality.[95] In 2011, 20,187 people benefited from this scheme.[96]

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[90]http://www.ofii.fr.
[91]http://accueil-etrangers.gouv.fr/modeles/articles-lies/article/definition-du-contrat-d-accueil-et.
[92] *Ibidem.*
[93]http://www.immigration.interieur.gouv.fr/Accueil-et-accompagnement/L-apprentissage-du-francais/Les-dispositifs-d-apprentissage-du-francais-pour-les-etrangers.
[94]*Ibidem.*
[95]*Ibidem.*
[96]*Ibidem.*

Since 2007, the signing of the CAI has been preceded by civic integration evaluation in the country of origin.[97] The civic integration abroad evaluation applies only to family members who intend to join their spouses, partners or parents living in France for at least one year (Caponio, 2013). It consists of an assessment of the applicant's language skills and knowledge of republican values. If the applicant's language skills are deemed insufficient, he/she is obliged to attend language courses, provided by the state free of charge (*ibidem*). Since 2007, if the applicant is a spouse and a parent, besides the CAI, both family members have had to sign a reception and integration contract designed specifically for parents, *Contract d'Accueil et d'Integration pour la Famille* (CAIF) (*ibidem*). By signing this contract, spouses and parents commit to attend a one-day training session concerning the rights and duties of parenthood in France.

The OFII's training offer is provided by special trainers, whose mission is to develop courses in order to meet the needs of migrants, taking into account such factors as duration and attendance, issuance of the end of training certificates from A1.1and B1 (oral skills) of CEFR levels.[98] Since 2013, these language courses have been delivered according to the pedagogical scheme of *"Français Langue d'Intégration"*(FLI), French language of integration.[99]

It is also possible to approach French in an alternative way, that is, in socio-linguistic workshops, *Ateliers Socio-Linguistiques* (ASL), supported, and co-funded by the *Direction de l'Accueil, de l'Accompagnement des Etrangers et de la Nationalité* (DAAEN), Direction of the reception, the support for foreigners and the nationality.[100] The socio-linguistic workshops have a different approach if compared to traditional language courses. They are mostly organized by associations that aim to promote the maintenance or the development of social relationships in the neighborhoods.[101] The workshops' mission is to offer participants individualized, tailor-made pathway into the language learning.

Participants learn by doing in their authentic social space, that is going to the post office, the bank, the station, the market, etc., where they are accompanied to by facilitators, and have to carry out some everyday tasks using their skills in French.[102] Through this method, the participants learn the language they need through life experience, moreover, they also reinforce their social skills and competencies. Participants are assessed on the basis of the interaction, and the concrete result of the

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[97]*Ibidem.*
[98]http://www.ofii.fr.
[99]https://www.fle.fr/fr/pages-pro/article/479/Francais-langue-dintegration-Label-Qualite-F-L-I.
[100]http://www.faftt.fr/site/tt1_39434/fr/partenaires/la-daaen.
[101]http://www.immigration.interieur.gouv.fr/Accueil-et-accompagnement/L-apprentissage-du-francais/Les-dispositifs-d-apprentissage-du-francais-pour-les-etrangers.
[102]http://www.faftt.fr/site/tt1_39434/fr/partenaires/la-daaen.

assigned task, for example, taking the floor in the parent-teacher conference in their children's school.

In 2008, the Ministers responsible for Integration and National Education launched a campaign called "*Ouvrir l'École aux parents pour rèussir l'intègration*", Open the school to the parents for a successful integration.[103] The campaign included language learning opportunities that enabled parents of third-country national foreign students to improve their knowledge of French, and to become familiar both with the school and teaching environment.[104] Through this modality, parents not only received free language training, but had the chance to be part of the institute their children attended. On the one hand, the courses supported the migrants' language learning and gave them the opportunity to familiarize with school as a social institution. On the other, through the dissemination of information on their own and their children's rights, parents were empowered to monitor their children's schooling. In the school year 2011-2012, three hundred and twenty-two schools participated in this initiative that linked the migrants to an important institution of their social space.[105]

In France, the integration process may as well go through a professional qualification, that migrants can obtain as part of their wages, or more generally, through vocational training, when they are unemployed. The integration into the world of work is developed in collaboration with *Organismes Paritaires Collecteurs Agrées* (OPCA), joint bodies of approved collectors, and professional sectors,which allow access to and retention in employment.[106]

LOI n. 2004-391 du 4 mai 2004 relative à la formation professionnelle tout au long de la vie et au dialogue, Law No. 2004-391 of 4 May 2004 on vocational training throughout life and social dialogue, registered learning French in the Labor code (Article L6313-1) and facilitated language learning in the workplace.[107] Since then French language training has been explicitly among the official activities within the framework of continuing vocational training in the lifelong learning process, that is a vital element of the European Commission's policy for employability and competitiveness, active citizenship, social inclusion and personal development.[108]

In 2009, in addition to the contribution of OPCA, *le Fond Paritaire de Sécurisation des Parcours Professionnels* (FPSPP), the joint cross-career security fund, was created to implement

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[103]http://eduscol.education.fr/cid49489/ouvrir-l-ecole-aux-parents-pour-la-reussite-des-enfants.html.
[104]http://www.immigration.interieur.gouv.fr/Accueil-et-accompagnement/L-apprentissage-du-francais/Les-dispositifs-d-apprentissage-du-francais-pour-les-etrangers.
[105] *Ibidem.*
[106]http://travail-emploi.gouv.fr/ministere/acteurs/partenaires/article/opca-organismes-paritaires-collecteurs-agrees.
[107]https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000000613810&categorieLien=id.
[108]http://www.immigration.interieur.gouv.fr/Accueil-et-accompagnement/L-apprentissage-du-francais/Les-dispositifs-d-apprentissage-du-francais-pour-les-etrangers.

the vocational training as part of migrants' learning plans.[109] The Fund also provides extra missions, such as helping financial actions of the qualification (or retraining) of employees, and job seekers with low qualifications, or skills deficiencies, that could undermine their continued employment or vocational rehabilitation.[110]

Furthermore, the Department for Integration supports a training program for both trainers and stakeholders involved in the instructional design of *Français sur Objectif Spécifique* (FOS), French for Specific Purposes, which is composed of an evaluation program, and seven distinct training modules available on a dedicated website.[111]

Unlike in France, in the Netherlands, the integration process obligatorily begins in the migrants' home country, if the prospective migrant is an adult, that is, between eighteen and state pension age.[112] This means that all third-country nationals, also clerics, imams and pastors, have to take the civic integration exam abroad before they arrive in the Netherlands.[113] Foreign nationals from the European Economic Area (EEA), Switzerland or Turkey are not obliged by law to study the language of the receiving country, but it is considered important that they as well learn to communicate in Dutch.[114]

"The Civic Integration Examination Abroad" lays its basis on, and tests, the basic knowledge both of the receiving country's language and society, history, and customs. The mastery of these two components of the exam is assessed by taking a test at the Dutch Embassy or Consulate in the country of origin, or in the country of continuous residence, which is understood as the country where a person is allowed to lawfully stay for more than ninety days.[115]

In order to pass the pre-integration test abroad before the admission to the Netherlands, applicants are invited to buy an official self-study pack, called *Naar Nederland,* which is specially developed for the Dutch Government for that purpose, and is available in thirty-three languages.[116] The applicants have to pay 25 Euros for the kit (the price was set in December 2015), while the digital version is available for free since the same date.[117]

The kit contains self-study materials that aim to enable the applicants to familiarize themselves with the exam requirements. It includes the necessary learning materials that are

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[109]http://www.fpspp.org/portail/easysite/fpspp.
[110]http://www.immigration.interieur.gouv.fr/Accueil-et-accompagnement/L-apprentissage-du-francais/Les-dispositifs-d-apprentissage-du-francais-pour-les-etrangers.
[111]http://fle.insa-lyon.fr/fr/content/francais-sur-objectifs-specifiques-fos.
[112]https://www.government.nl/topics/new-in-the-netherlands/contents/integration-of-newcomers.
[113]*Ibidem.*
[114] *Ibidem.*
[115] *Ibidem.*
[116]http://www.naarnederland.nl/en/the-examination-package.
[117]http://www.naarnederland.nl/en/.

supposed to be helpful for the candidates to be able to speak, understand and read Dutch to pass the exam at the required level. Migrants, who pass the exam abroad, receive *Machtiging tot voorlopig verblijf(MVV),* the Provisional Residence Permit, in their country of origin. Once in the Netherlands, migrants must pass the Civic Integration Exam within three-and-a-half years after their arrival in order to obtain a residence permit.[118]

As to the study materials for the Civic Integration Examination Abroad, one of the most important components of the self-study pack is the film *Naar Nederland.*[119] The film is included in the official kit with the same title, which migrants still residing abroad are expected to buy in order to prepare for the exam. The film deals with different aspects of life in the destination country, that is, history, customs, health, work, children, language and the exam itself, emphasizing the difficulties of integrating quite strongly and, thus, the importance of the migrant's goodwill to accept the values of the host country.[120]

The film has frequent mentions of gender equality as a key value of Dutch society (Böcker & Strik, 2011; Groenendijk, 2011; Jacobs & Rea, 2007; Sevek & Walter, 2010; Strik *et al.,* 2010). Hence, it seems that the migrant family has become one of the central targets in the integration process. This is particularly true with migrant women: the new civic integration programs aim to emancipate Muslim women as to practices such as polygamy and wearing of veils, which are commonly considered symbols of oppression in non-Muslim countries. Consequently, both in France and in the Netherlands, the new integration materials and courses aim to instruct Muslim migrant women in particular on their civil rights and promote gender equality above all in the family.[121]

The right to wear a full veil, that has long provoked debate in the context of women's rights and religious freedoms, is today once again in the spotlight, because of the series of terrorist attacks by Islamic militants. In 2004, France was the first European country to ban the burka (full body covering with mesh over the eyes) in public. In 2011, the French government introduced a total public ban on full-face veils. The Dutch government considers banning clothing, that covers the face in education, the care sector, public transport as well as in public-authority buildings, a measure to promote integration.[122] If a person does not obey this norm, the police is authorized to

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[118]http://www.euraxess.nl/incoming-researchers/immigration-formalities/visa-and-embassies/provisional-residence-permit.
[119]http://www.naarnederland.nl/en/the-examination-package.
[120]*Ibidem.*
[121]http://www.ladocumentationfrancaise.fr/rapports-publics/044000033/index.shtml.
[122]http://www.inclusiveworks.eu/Portals/0/Changes%20to%20civic%20integration%20requirements%20in%20the%20Netherlands%20ENGLISH.pdf.

order him/her to remove such clothing for the purposes of identification. Moreover, those who wear clothing that covers the face cannot be qualified for social assistance benefit.[123]

The Civic Integration Exam abroad is structured in three parts. The exam evaluates the knowledge of Dutch society, *Kennis van de Nederlandse Samenleving* (*KNS)*, language skills in spoken Dutch, *Gesproken Nederlands* (*TGN)*, and the understanding of written Dutch, *Geletterdheid en Begrijpend Lezen* (*GBL)*.[124] The exam is not free of charge, but the candidates have to pay for them as follows: speaking skills € 60, reading skills € 50, Knowledge of Dutch society € 40, for a total amount of € 150.[125]

The form of the Dutch basic civic integration exam changed in 2014. The main change was that the exam is no longer taken by telephone, but by computer.[126] Beforehand, the knowledge of the language and Dutch society, was tested through an oral examination conducted over the telephone from Dutch Consulates and Embassies abroad, using a voice recognition software which was based in the US (Strik *et al.*, 2010). The software was also programmed to decide whether the candidate had passed or failed the test (*ibidem*).

Today, all the modules of the civic integration exam are taken by computer. A new module on fluency, which comprises of two parts, has been added to the original format. In this module, the candidates are first invited to do a Question-Answer partin which they receive questions and have to give their own answers. In the second part, the candidates are asked to complete a set of sentences.[127] The candidates have to show their reading proficiency through a test that comprises of two parts.[128] In the *Kennis van de Nederlandse Samenleving,* the candidates see photographs and have to choose the correct answer out of two different options they are allowed to see and hear.[129]

If a migrant wants to change his/her purpose of stay into continued residence, or permanent residence, and he/she is at least 18, and has not yet reached his/her pension age established by the National Old Age Pensions Act (AOW), he/she first has to pass the civic integration examination in the Netherlands.[130] It is possible to integrate in two different ways: through integration exams that is

[123]*Ibidem.*
[124]https://www.inburgeren.nl/the-basic-civic-integration-exam-abroad.jsp.
[125]*Ibidem.*
[126]https://www.government.nl/latest/news/2014/09/22/more-about-changes-in-the-basic-civic-integration-exam-for-those-abroad.
[127]*Ibidem.*
[128] *Ibidem.*
[129] *Ibidem.*
[130] *Ibidem.*

the most popular option, or through *Staatsexamen* NT2, Dutch as a Second Language State Exam.[131]

If a person must integrate, then he/she receives a letter from *Dienst Uitvoering Onderwijs* (*DUO*), the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.[132] The letter informs the migrant about the date he/she has become obligated to integrate. The integration period lasts three years.[133] Those who were obligated to integrate before 1 January 2015 needed to take five integration exams, and pass all five. After that date, the candidates have been obliged to take six exams, because they also have to sit an additional exam, called the Orientation on the Dutch Labor Market exam.[134]

In Germany, family reunification policy has developed partially in parallel with the European legislative procedure since 2001. As a result, a part of the European regulations set out in the Family Reunification Directive was anticipated in the German law.[135] The family reunification discussion during the legislative procedures for the Directive Implementation Act (2005-2007) was centered on the overall issues of integration. The debate focused on the necessary knowledge of German, and the age limit for spouses (Sevek & Walter, 2010). The principle of introducing a minimum age for spouses was discussed with a focus on preventing forced marriages and protecting girls and young women. In this context, the question of the language knowledge was also brought to the forefront (*ibidem*).

The focus of the debate was not on how a sufficient amount of German might be learned in the host society, like during the legislative procedures for the Immigration Act, but on the question whether spouses should prove that they already knew some German before entering the country (*ibidem*). The aim was to prevent the in-laws from consciously, or indirectly, from not allowing their spouses to participate in social life in the host country. Offering immigrants opportunities to be engaged in the integration courses, after their admission to Germany, was not regarded as a sufficient action to guarantee that the victims offorced marriages, mostly child marriages, might map their own path of life in Germany (*ibidem*). There was also further concern that girls and young women might remain subject to constraints from their in-laws for a long period of time, until the beginning of the courses, and thus, before learning some German.[136]

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[131] http://en.inburgeren.nl/inburgeren-hoe-moet-dat.jsp.
[132] https://duo.nl/particulier.
[133] http://en.inburgeren.nl/inburgeren-hoe-moet-dat.jsp.
[134] *Ibidem*.
[135] http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/european_migration_network/reports/docs/emn-studies/family-reunification/2._de_emn_ncp_small-scale_study_iv_family_reunification_final_en_version_en.pdf.
[136] http://en.inburgeren.nl/inburgeren-hoe-moet-dat.jsp.

In 2007, Germany adopted *Gesetz zur Umsetzung aufenthaltsrechtlicher und asylrechtlicher Richtlinien der Europäischen Union*, Act on Transposition of EU-Directives on Issues of Residence and Asylum.[137] This Act amends the Residence Act, which includes pre-entry integration measures for migrants for family reunification.[138] Under this act, the rules regarding family reunification with nationals are less favorable than those provided for family members of third-country nationals in Directive 2003/86, under which registered partners have the same right to family reunification as married couples.[139] On the one hand, there is no same-sex marriage in Germany; it is only possible to enter a registered partnership, and on the other, Germany does not grant a right to family reunification to unmarried partners, who are not in a registered partnership. The conclusion of a registered partnership is only possible between same-sex partners (Groenedijk *et al.,* 2007).

According to the Directive Implementation Act of 2007, foreign nationals, who want to move to Germany to join their spouse, have to prove, as a general rule, that they have basic German language skills before they enter the country (Strik *et al.,* 2010). Migrants should be able to communicate in German at a certain minimum level, that means, their language ability should correspond to A1 level skills of the CEFR (Böcker & Strik, 2011; Groenendijk, 2011; Strik *et al.,* 2010). The objective of this requirement is to make the family members participate in society from the outset. Proof of language skills is not required, if either of the married couple is a national of a Member State of the EU, or of the EEA states (Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein or Switzerland).[140]

When a migrant applies for a visa at a German Embassy, or at a Consulate General, to enable him/her to join his/her spouse, he/she can demonstrate to master the required German language skills during an interview.[141] Unlike the Netherlands, Germany does not test migrants' language knowledge itself (Strik *et al.,* 2010). This means that migrants can prove their proficiency in German with a certificate of a recognized test such as: "*Start Deutsch 1*" run by the *Goethe Institut* or *telc GmbH*, "*Grundstufe Deutsch 1*" forming part of the Austrian Language Diploma (*Österreichisches Sprachdiplom (ÖSD)*) or "*TestDaF*" run by the *TestDaF Institut* (*ibidem*).

The test abroad (for spouses), developed by the *Goethe Institut*, consists of a written individual exam, and an oral exam in a group (*ibidem*). Candidates are not required to prove

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[137]http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/e-library/documents/policies/legal-migration/pdf/general/odysseus_2003_86_family_reunification_national_reports_en.pdf.
[138]*Ibidem.*
[139] *Ibidem.*
[140]http://www.bamf.de/EN/Migration/EhepartnerFamilie/ehepartnerfamilie-node.html;jsessionid=4B1103B7F431C918D0BEA1D29984A7C4.1_cid359.
[141]*Ibidem.*

Knowledge of German society, even if "[…] they must also possess specific information about the country, culture and everyday life"(*ibid.*: 17). The tasks of the exam are action-oriented, and involve reading, writing, speaking and listening. Another important part of the exam is the use of language in which candidates have to prove they are able to cope with some common everyday situations in Germany (*ibidem*).

If a migrant cannot make himself/herself understood in simple German, he/she is suggested to attend a German course locally. Another channel to study German is *Deutsche Welle* radio that offers various ways of learning the host country's language.[142] Free German courses for beginners and advanced students are available in almost thirty languages on the radio station's website.[143] *Deutsche Welle* has developed "Radio D", an audio language course, in collaboration with the Goethe Institut.[144] Beginners with no previous knowledge of German can download the course or subscribe to it as a podcast.[145] Migrants can find information about further learning programs and language courses in the information leaflet for spouses entitled *Faltblatt zum Ehegattennachzug*.[146] On the one hand, the migrants have different options to learn the language and to show their knowledge. On the other, in the German system, almost the whole responsibility of the integration process, which essentially means all organizational and financial costs, is transferred to the migrants themselves (Caponio, 2013).

Different integration tests were introduced in Germany in the period 2005-2010: a German language test before the admission to the country, tests after entering the Federal territory at the end of an integration course, and an orientation course test and a naturalization test (Böcker & Strik, 2011; Groenendijk, 2011; Strik *et al.*, 2010).

There have been various chronological developments regarding the legal basis: the integration courses after entry into the country were first introduced in accordance with the Immigration Act 2004; the language tests abroad for admission to Germany were introduced as statutory requirements in 2007 (Böcker & Strik, 2011; Groenendijk, 2011; Sevek & Walter, 2010; Strik *et al.*, 2010). Furthermore, a basic familiarity with the legal and social system, and the way of life in the Federal territory was imposed as a further condition for naturalization. Since September 2008, candidates have to demonstrate to master these topics in the nationally standardized naturalization test (Sevek & Walter, 2010). By passing this test, the applicant can prove that he/she

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[142] http://www.dw.com/en/learn-german/s-2469 .
[143] *Ibidem.*
[144] *Ibidem.*
[145] *Ibidem.*
[146] http://www.bamf.de/EN/Migration/EhepartnerFamilie/ehepartnerfamilie-node.html;jsessionid=4B1103B7F431C918D0BEA1D29984A7C4.1_cid359.

possesses a sufficient knowledge to be naturalized in Germany (Böcker & Strik, 2011; Groenendijk, 2011;Sevek & Walter, 2010; Strik *et al.*, 2010).

After payment is applied, candidates can sit the test at the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees' test centers.[147] The exam consists of a test paper with thirty-three questions from different fields; thirty questions investigate how much the candidates know about three specific subject areas, namely "Living in a democracy", "History and responsibility" and "People and society", while the other three questions refer to the Federal Landin which the candidate resides and is registered.[148]

As to the administration of the test, the candidate is given sixty minutes to answer a series of multiple-choice questions by selecting the correct answer to each question from four possible alternatives. To pass the test successfully, the candidate has to score seventeen points out of thirty-three. In case the candidate answers fewer than seventeen questions correctly, he/she must sit the test a second time.[149] The candidate with a pass mark receives a certificate from the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, which provides proof of his/her civic knowledge to the naturalisation authorities.[150]

In order to prepare for the test, candidates can use an interactive list of questions in the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees online test center. A sample test with three hundred and ten questions is also available: three hundred are general questions, and ten questions relate to the Federal *Land*in which the migrant resides.[151] The candidates can also complete a sample test paper that is available in the Online Test Centre. The migrants, who cannot reach the Online Test Centre, can alternatively download the General Catalogue of naturalization test questions and the lists of questions that relate specifically to the individual Federal *Länder,* as pdf documents from the Federal Ministry of the Interior's web pages.[152] Some Federal *Länder* also organize specific courses to support the candidates when preparing for the naturalization test.

When a migrant has to prove that he/she has adequate German language skills for naturalization, he/she can attend an integration course that includes a sixty-lesson orientation course. This course deals with several topics covered by the naturalization test. At the end of the orientation course, migrants can take free of charge, "DTZ - *Deutsch-Test für Zuwanderer"*,

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[147]http://www.bamf.de/EN/Einbuergerung/WasEinbuergerungstest/waseinbuergerungstest-node.html.
[148]*Ibidem.*
[149]*Ibidem.*
[150]*Ibidem.*
[151]*Ibidem.*
[152]*Ibidem.*

German test for immigrants, which is tailored specifically to meet migrants communicative needs.[153] A candidate gets a pass mark if he/she reaches an overall A2 level of the CEFR.[154]

In the following two paragraphs I will analyze the Italian migration laws, and the types of language tests that are administered to those third-country nationals who want to find the path of life in Italy. In the paragraph 1.6., I will oversee the Italian legislative framework as to immigration and integration issues. In the paragraph 1.7., I will go through the language requirements and the different ways through which a migrant can demonstrate to master Italian.

1.6. The Italian context

According to the 1947 Constitution of the Italian Republic, Italy has exclusive legislative powers concerning immigration matters.[155] However, as an MS, Italy has obligations under the European Union law, and has transposed various EU directives on immigration law, such as Council Directive 2009/50/EC of 25 May 2009 on the Conditions of Entry and Residence of Third-country Nationals for the Purposes of Highly Qualified Employment. At the national level, the content of the directives on immigration and integration, was incorporated into the Legislative Decree No. 286 of July 5, 1998, Consolidated Text of the Provisions Concerning the Field of Immigration and Rules on the Conditions of Foreigners. The Legislative Decree No. 286 is thus a compilation of immigration laws on immigration, and it is commonly referred to as *Testo unico*, Single Text.[156]

Italy ratified the 1951 Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of refugees in 1954**,** and the associated New York Protocol in 1972.[157] The right to asylum in Italy, furthermore, was already officially recorded in article 10.4 of the 1948 Constitution, which states that "[…] the foreigner who is denied the effective exercise in his country of the democratic rights guaranteed by the Italian Constitution has the right to exile in the territory of the Republic under conditions established by law".[158]

In spite of the provision guaranteed by the Constitution, the asylum issue has been regulated over time through a series of different laws**,** which has made it impossible to develop an efficient legal system of rights, procedures and appropriate social care for refugees and asylum seekers.[159] The first three laws, each of which is based on a previous one, are named after the politicians that

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[153]*Ibidem.*
[154]http://www.goethe.de/lhr/prj/daz/glo/gld/en5113350.htm.
[155]https://www.senato.it/documenti/repository/istituzione/costituzione_inglese.pdf.
[156]http://www.altalex.com/documents/codici-altalex/2014/04/09/testo-unico-sull-immigrazione.
[157]http://www.resettlement-observatory.eu/ita-legislation.html.
[158]*Ibidem.*
[159]*Ibidem.*

promoted them: *'Legge Martelli'* (Law 39/1990), *'Legge Turco-Napolitano'* (Law 40/1998),*'Legge Bossi-Fini'* Law (189/2002), followed by*'Pacchetto Sicurezza'*, Provisions on Public Security, (Law 94/2009).[160] Since all EU citizens join the freedom of movement within the internal frontiers of the EU area, it limits the bulk of Italian immigration law to third-country nationals.

The first law, introduced in 1990, was the so-called *'Legge Martelli'* (Law 39/1990), which regulated both international protection issues and the management of economic migration flows.[161] This law extended the right to seek asylum to migrants from all over world, thus abolishing the previous geographic restrictions. The Law 39/1990 aimed to regularize the conditions of immigrant workersthat were exploited as irregular workers. Hence, it focused on the question by narrowing the migration flow through a pre-set number of official accesses (quota), and linking them to the specific needs of the job market. Under this act, a renewable two-year permit of stay (visa), was granted for different purposes, such as work, study, medical care or family reunification.[162]

According to this law, those who got the visa with regular documents, but stayed after the expiration date of the permit, or those exceeding the quota, were considered "illegal immigrants".[163] Undocumented or unauthorized immigrants, as well as the ones who did not have the required qualifications, were expelled from Italy. Illegal or irregular immigrants were to leave Italy on their ownin fifteen days' time, otherwise they were sent out of the country by the police.[164] The Law 39/1990 did not develop a systematic program for the future, because it had a narrow, economic point of view on the immigration issue, which since then has been a critical point in the Italian immigration legislation.

The first consolidated migration act, the so-called *'Legge Turco-Napolitano'* (Law 40/1998), was introduced in 1998. Also this law,just like the Law 39/1990, put both the regular migrants and the asylum seekers within the same framework.[165] There were two characteristic features in this new law: first, the introduction of the criteriaboth for the entrance quotas that granted the stay permits, and for the administrative detention of immigrants lacking a staypermit and awaiting expulsion; the second, the creation of detention centrescalled '*Centri di Permanenza Temporanea*' (CPTs), Centres of Temporary Stay, that were established by Article 12, which regulated

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[160]www.progre.eu/wp.../Analisi-e-commento-del-testo-unico-sullimmigrazione.
[161]http://www.naga.it/pdf/legge_martelli.pdf.
[162]*Ibidem.*
[163]*Ibidem.*
[164]*Ibidem.*
[165]http://www.camera.it/parlam/leggi/98040l.html.

deportations.[166] People, who were forcedly deported, as determined by the Law 39/1990, were placed in these structures. Asylum seekers were also temporarily placed in the CPTs.

The Law 40/1998, which introduced the official immigration quotas, also sanctioned the link between the principle of freedom of entry of foreigners to the Italian territory, and the need for dependent and seasonal workers. It means that, once again, the needs for a workforce determined the immigration flows, apart from specific cases of political asylum seekers and refugees. The law was very explicit here, and established, in the Article 21 on seasonal work, that the annual decrees had to take account of the information supplied by the Ministry of Labour on the state of employment, and rates of unemployment at the national and regional levels.[167] It also established that a migrant could get a regular work permit, if he/she possessed documents such as a contract to stay as a dependent employee, a work-contract and a lease agreement.[168]

The Law 189/2002, also known as the '*Legge Bossi–Fini'*,tightened up the norms against illegal immigration.[169] Immigrants, that were found in international waters, formerly outside of the patrolling lines of Italy, could be sent back to their country of origin, or to the neighboring countries. This law also established that boats carrying people without visas did not have the right to dock on Italian coasts. Forced detention became an ordinary rule: all unauthorized and undocumented immigrants found by the police on the Italian ground without the necessary documentation had to be identified, and deported to their countries of origin. In 1998, a stay in a CPT could not exceed thirty days.[170]. Under the Law 189/2002,migrants could be detained for up to sixty days in a CPT, and had the right to come back to Italy only after 10 years.[171] A new system of protection for asylum-seekers and refugees, *'Sistema di Protezione per Richiedenti Asilo e Rifugiati',* the so-called SPRAR, was established under this law by Article 32.[172]

The Law 125/2008, known as the "Security Package", renamed the CPTs with the name they have today: *'Centri di identificazione ed espulsione'* (CIEs), Centres of Identification and Expulsion. Some months after the issuance of the Law 125/2008, it was implemented by the Law 94/2009, which established that the maximum detention term for migrants in such Centres would be one hundred and eighty days.[173] This means that the maximum duration of detention was tripled

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[166]http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/european_migration_network/reports/docs/emn-studies/irregular-migration/it_20120105_practicalmeasurestoirregularmigration_en_version_final_en.pdf.
[167]*Ibidem.*
[168]*Ibidem.*
[169]http://www.camera.it/parlam/leggi/02189l.html.
[170]http://www.camera.it/parlam/leggi/98040l.html.
[171]http://www.camera.it/parlam/leggi/02189l.html.
[172] *Ibidem.*
[173]http://www.parlamento.it/parlam/leggi/08125l.html.

respect to the Law189/2002. Together with potential asylum seekers, who fail to obtain political asylum, also migrants, who have been living in Italy for many years, along with their families, and whose children were born in the country, can be placed in the CIEs after losing their jobs.In case migrants are not able to renew their residence permits, and, if stopped by the police, without the necessary documents,they can be detained awaiting repatriation to their countries of origin.[174] The direct consequence of the repatriation is that the number of families divided through this mechanism has grown in recent years. Criticism towards this system has been moved by organizations involved in the defense of human rights.

According to 'Medici per i Diritti Umani' (MEDU), an independent humanitarian organization,the Italian system based on the CIEs has proved itself a failure by being of negligible impact and almost no effectiveness in the fight against irregular immigration.[175] They also claim that the extension of the maximum period of detention to eighteen months has not led to any significant improvement in the effectiveness of the repatriation system, on the contrary, the atmosphere of tension within the centers has dramatically worsened.[176]

By the decree of the Ministry of Interior of June 4, 2010, Italy became part of the European scene under Article5, paragraph 2 of Directive 2003/109/EC, which provides that the MSs may "[…] require third-country nationals to comply with integration conditions, in accordance with national legislation."[177] This is why the MSs have the opportunity to require migrants, for example, to demonstrate 'sufficient' or 'good'knowledge of the language, and/or culture of the host country, as a necessary condition for the issuance of the long-term residence permit (Groenendijk, 2011).

As to the integration tests, Italy follows the example of most MSs only in part, while elsewhere across Europe they have become a common, sometimes even an obligatory practice. On the one hand, the implementation of the principle of the importance of the knowledge of the language(s) and culture of the host country has most often meant the introduction oflanguage and/or KoS tests, which have been more and more often administered in the migrants' country of origin. On the other, most MSs have been directly involved in the organization of language training and civics, as well as in the design of specific teaching (and testing) materials for adult migrants (Böcker et al., 2011).

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[174]https://www.law.ox.ac.uk.
[175]http://www.mediciperidirittiumani.org.
[176]http://www.mediciperidirittiumani.org/en/the-cie-archipelago-inquiry-into-the-italian-centres-for-identification-and-expulsion-2.
[177]http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32003L0109&from=en.

In Italy, compared to the European mainstream, three peculiar aspects as to testing may be highlighted. First, tests are always administered in Italy, no pre-arrival language or KoS tests are provided by law. Second, the test is based only on language competence and communicative skills and does not includea KoS test. Third, the purpose of the decree relates only to the issuance of a long-termresidence permit which is subject to the successful passing of the Italian language test. The decree does not regard family reunification, although under Article 7, paragraph 2 of Directive 2003/86/EC, the MSs are given the opportunity to ask those who wish to join their relatives living in an MS, to pass a language and/ora KoS test.[178]

Italian citizenship can be acquired in different ways, for example, through automatic acquisition as a result of Italian parents/ancestors, '*iure sanguinis*', citizenship granted to persons born on Italian soil, 'iure soli', citizenship through judiciary ruling on natural paternity/maternity or through acquisition by claim, for example, foreign descents of Italian up to the second degree, or born on the Italian ground.[179] Moreover, citizenship can be granted by marriage to an Italian citizen, or through naturalization.[180] Language proficiency or KoS tests are not required by law for citizenship.

Non-EU nationals, who have legally lived in Italy for at least five years, and intend to apply for a residence card, must sit an Italian language test according to such laws as Legislative Decree No 286 of 25 July 1998, Presidential Decree No 394 of 31 August 1999, and Interior Ministry Decree No 476 of 2010.[181] In order to sit the test, candidates have to apply online through trade unions, charitable institutions and other agencies authorised by the Interior Ministry.[182]

Applications are entered into a computerized system, which sorts them out, according to the date of arrival, and on the basis of their postal code, to the various educational institutions authorised to provide the test.[183] On accessing this system, the staff of the Help Desk at the Prefecture can view the applications received, check them, correct any eventual errors, validate them, and send the letters of invitation to sit the test.[184]

The Italian government implemented an integration agreement in March 2012, introducing a merit/demerit system to newcomers who want to obtain a long-term residence permit. All new migrants, aged sixteen or above, have to sign the integration agreement at the Prefecture or at the

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[178]*Ibidem.*
[179]http://www.esteri.it/mae/en/italiani_nel_mondo/serviziconsolari/cittadinanza.html.
[180]*Ibidem.*
[181]www.prefettura.it/files/docs/.../vademecum-inglese.doc.
[182]*Ibidem.*
[183]*Ibidem.*
[184]*Ibidem.*

Provincial Police Headquarters. Upon signing, the migrant complies with civic obligations and duties in order to get a residence permit of no less than a year.[185]

The integration agreement, which is provided for by section 4-bis of the Italian Consolidated Act on Immigration and the Legal Status of Third-Country Nationals, (Legislative Decree No. 286/1998), and governed by Presidential Decree No. 179 of 14th Sept. 2011, is essentially an agreement between the Italian State and a foreign national, who enters Italy for the first time.[186]

By signing the agreement, sixteen initial credits are given. The confirmation of the initial credits takes place following the attendance of one free training session on civic activities and life in Italy, held at the One-Stop-Shops for Immigration of Prefectures.[187] On such occasion, information is also received on the initiatives supporting the integration process, such as free courses of Italian, active in the Region where the migrant wants to settle down. The non-participation in the training sessions will lead to the loss of fifteen out of the sixteen credits awarded.

According to the Agreement, foreigners shall obtain thirty credits within two years. Credits can be obtained through the acquisition of specific knowledge (Italian language, civic culture and civil life in Italy) and the performance of some activities that are likely to promote the migrant's integration, such as Italian language courses, vocational training, formal qualifications and training programs abroad.

One month before the expiration of the two-year term, the One-Stop-Shop for Immigration at the Prefecture begins the evaluation procedure through the documents filed by the applicant or acquired by the Office. The minimum threshold to avoid that a residence permit being revoked, or its extension being refused, is thirty credits.[188]

The applicant has to produce the necessary documents to obtain the recognition of credits, including the certification relating to the obligation of providing education to minor children, and the obligation of the knowledge of the Italian language at a level of at least A2 of the CEFR.[189] Failing such documentation, the applicant may ask to be tested on his/her level of knowledge of the Italian language, civic culture and civil life in Italy through a free-of-charge test administered by one of the One-Stop-Shops.[190]

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[185]http://www.integrazionemigranti.gov.it/en/latest-news/highlights/pages/integration-agreement.aspx.
[186]*Ibidem.*
[187]*Ibidem.*
[188]*Ibidem.*
[189]*Ibidem.*
[190]*Ibidem.*

In the following paragraph I will investigate how the Italian system is structured in order to teach adult migrants the Italian language. Moreover, I will go through the assessment practices of the required language knowledge in order to obtain the EC long-term residence permit.

1.7. The knowledge of Italian

According to Law 94/2009 (Provisions on Public Security), in order to get the EC long-term residence permit, migrants must also demonstrate they know Italian.[191] The minimum level of knowledge of the Italian language required for obtaining the EC long-term residence permit corresponds to A2 level of the CEFR.[192] The required knowledge of Italian may be shown in various ways, for example, through a certificate issued by one of the four Certifying Authorities recognized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and by the Ministry of Education, Universities and Research. These are:

1) University for Foreigners of Perugia

2) University for Foreigners of Siena

3) University of *Roma Tre*

4) *Società Dante Alighieri*.[193]

Migrants can attend free Italian language courses for foreigners organized by associations that have signed an agreement with one of the four Certifying Authorities recognized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and by the Ministry of Education, Universities and Research andreceive an Italian language certificate. [194]

In this framework, University for Foreigners of Perugia is responsible for the creation, distribution, evaluation and awarding of '*Certificato di Conoscenza della Lingua Italiana',* CELI Certification; the University for Foreigners of Siena administers the Certification of Italian as a Foreign Language, '*Certificazione di Italiano come Lingua Straniera'* or CILS, which is a qualification that includes various levels of language knowledge. University *Roma Tre* administers IT Certification and *Società Dante Alighieri* issues PLIDA certificates that are Italian language diplomas that certify the holder's mastery of Italian as a foreign language.[195]

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[191]https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/country/italy.
[192]http://www.esteri.it/mae/en/politica_estera/cultura/promozionelinguaitaliana/societadantealighieri.html.
[193]*Ibidem.*
[194]*Ibidem.*
[195]*Ibidem.*

PLIDA Certification is also recognized by the Ministry of Labor and Social Policies and by the Ministry of Education, Universities and Research.[196] These diplomas provide a recognition of competence in Italian as a foreign language, using a six-level language-learning pathway corresponding to the CEFR. The Rome Branch of the Dante Alighieri Society is the official center of examination for the issuing of PLIDA.[197] However, the *Dante Alighieri Society* has authorized 172 Certification Centers, and in 2007, 6,108 PLIDA diplomas were issued.[198]

A new element in the landscape of certification of knowledge of Italian language as a foreign language is the creation of '*Certificazione Lingua Italiana di Qualità*' (CLIQ)*,* a single system of the Italian Language Quality Certification, which brings the four certification bodies under one quality mark, that is the University for Foreigners of Perugia, the University for Foreigners of Siena, the University of *Roma Tre,* and the Dante Alighieri Society.[199] These official certification bodies have set up the CLIQ Association, with which the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has signed an agreement for the use of the mark and its promotion abroad.[200]

According to the new regulations, and precisely through the Decree DPR n. 263/2012, the former *Centri Territoriali Permanenti* (CTPs), Permanent Territorial Centres for Education and Training in Adult Age and 'evening courses' merged into the *Centri provinciali per l'istruzione degli adulti* (CPIAs), Provincial Adult Education Centres. The CPIAs are public institutions, in which state teachers operate, also in collaboration, according to specific needs, with experts and external collaborators, to provide cultural, educational and language courses to adult migrants.[201]

All foreign nationals, aged at least sixteen (in some particular cases also fifteen), can attend courses such as first-level courses for first-cycle qualifications and certifications of the basic competencies to be acquired by the end of compulsory education; second-level courses for technical, vocational and artistic qualifications; literacy courses and Italian language courses that also include civic education or information on the rights and duties of citizens.[202] The language courses are aimed at adult migrants for language certification giving evidence of the acquisition of the mastery of Italian at a level of at least A2 of the CEFR.[203] The language level is recognized in

[196]*Ibidem.*
[197] *Ibidem.*
[198]*Ibidem.*
[199]*Ibidem.*
[200]*Ibidem.*
[201]http://www.infonet-ae.eu/country-overviews/italy.
[202]http://www.integrazionemigranti.gov.it/en/services/language/pages/default.aspx.
[203]http://www.indire.it/lucabas/lkmw_img/eurydice/quaderno_eurydice_30_per_web.pdf.

the framework of the credits assigned under the Integration Agreement that was enforced in March 2012.[204]

As from such date, third-country nationals applying for a residence permit with a duration exceeding one year must sign an agreement with the Italian State.[205] By signing the Integration Agreement, foreign citizens undertake to achieve specific integration objectives during the period of validity of their residence permit, and the State undertakes to support foreigner nationals' integration process through the adoption of suitable initiatives in agreement with Regional Governments and Local Authorities.[206]I n particular, as stated in the text of the agreement, foreign nationals undertake to acquire a knowledge of spoken Italian equal at a level of at least A2 of the CEFR.[207]

To be able to communicate in Italian is without doubt an exceptional instrument for migrants to become part of the receiving country. However, the perspective changes when the knowledge of the language becomes instead a formal requirement without which it is not be possible to obtain, for example, the issuance of the long-term permit of stay. Migrants' applications for long-term residence, just to name a procedure, and the mandatory language tests, do not have an automatic connection. The certification as a recognition of a voluntary path of learning differs from the introduction of a mandatory, standardized language test, which is discriminating for the right of stay and settele down in a new country.

Consequently, in the following chapter, after presenting various definitions of the term *testing*, I will focus on the impact of fairness and ethics on the development of language testing. In this respect, it is crucial to analyze language tests "as tools of power" (Shohamy, 2001:374), and consider the stakeholders' role in language testing events, together with their involvement in the defense of basic human rights, at each stage of the testing procedure. This automatically leads both to the analysis of the development of an ethical perspective in the community of practitioners, and to the need for alternative language assessment methods, particularly in highly critical contexts, such as the migration flow towards the EU area.

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[204]http://www.integrazionemigranti.gov.it/en/latest-news/highlights/pages/integration-agreement.aspx.
[205]*Ibidem.*
[206]*Ibidem.*
[207]*Ibidem.*

CHAPTER II

On fairness and ethics

2.1.Language testing- towards a definition

The history of language testing began not longer than a half a century ago. It is often said that modern language testing dates to 1961, since this was the date of the publication of the first book on language testing by Lado. The same year, a paper by Carroll (1961), set out the scope of language testing which "[…] is always to render information to aid in making intelligent decisions about possible courses of action" (*ibid*.:364). Curiously enough, Carroll seems to have identified one of the most crucial problems of language testing, which still persists today, that is, the relationship between decisions and their consequences. Today's debate also focuses on the role of different stakeholders, and the relationship between all those involved in the various testing events, as well as on ethical issues, fairness, and the power of tests.

Tests can sometimes affect and modify the structure of a language course or test design, but most often, tests have to do with the lives and careers of individuals. It means that language testing has an ethical dimension insofar as it affects people's lives (Davies, 2007). Clearly, tests and the use of test results, also have an impact on different institutions and society as a whole (Shohamy, 2000, 2009). In this regard, the preliminary phase, when tests are designed, and the post-delivery phase, when the results are to be applied to the declared purpose, are likely to affect the future design, and/or the use of the tests themselves.

There are several ways to define language testing, some of the most efficientstatements of meaningcan be foundon the language testing website designed by Glenn Fulcher.[1] The winning entry from the 2009/10 definition competition, run on this website, defines language testing as "[…] the practice and study of evaluating the proficiency of an individual in using a particular language effectively."[2]

An ever increasing number of people is interested in language testing, thereforeit alsohasan entry on Wikipedia, which is a widely consulted user-generated platform. The current definition, which is attributed to the *Encyclopedia of Language and Education, Vol 7., Language Testing and Assessment* (Shohamy and Hornberger, 2008), defines the purpose of language testing as the assessment of first, second or other language in the school, college, or university context, as the use

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[1]http://languagetesting.info.
[2]*Ibidem.*

of languages in the workplace, and as the assessment of language in the migration, citizenship, and asylum contexts.[3]

In the last past few years, testing in general and language testing in particular have become an important part of educational and institutional programs at national and international levels, involving an increasing number of test takers for a variety of purposes, such as study, migration and work. On the practical side, the growing use of highly specialized technology, both in the test design and the delivery of tests, has made it possible to open the way to large-scale tests. It has also led to the development of made-to-measure tests, which aim to respond to the infinitely diverse language needs of individuals all over the world.

According to Davies (1999), the focus of language testing has changed a lot over time. It was traditionally almost totally concerned with the production, development and analysis of tests, while the recent critical and ethical approaches to language testing have placed more and more emphasis on the different uses and misuses of language tests. As Bachmann (2000) argues, imperfection, subjectivity and incompleteness are always associated with the nature of testing and measurement in general. As language tests measure candidates proficiency through the medium of language, what is being measured is easily confounded with the medium itself (Farhady, 1998).

Language tests are intended to determine a person's knowledge and/or ability in the language, and to discriminate that person's ability from that of other people's language competences, that cannot be simply defined in purely linguistic terms (*ibidem*). Consequently, ethical questions have been raised, particularly as to the requirements of migrants' knowledge of language constructs (Farhady, 1998; Shohamy, 2009; Van Avermaet, 2010). The issue also relates to what extent the knowledge of the hegemonic language(s) of the host country can be considered essential to all migrants in order to function properly in the destination society they want to move to (Shohamy, 2009).

Moreover, the time adult migrants need to learn a new language is considerably long. Some of them may even be illiterate in their own language and most of them lack both opportunities for and access to learning. Any adult of reasonable abilities, if given enough time and opportunity and having enough desire, can learn to communicate in a new language. However, second language acquisition still remains a gradual lifelong process. Study results show that in case of adult students, the process of learning a language may last between seven to eleven years (Levin & Shohamy, 2008)

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[3] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Language_assessment.

Furthermore, the language levels for citizenship, long-term permit and family reunification in most European countries are often higher than the realistic level an adult migrant can reach in a relatively short time to pass a formalized language test (Blommaert, 2006; Shohamy, 2009). On this point, Van Avermaet (2010) calls for determining the appropriate language levels needed for proper functioning in the new society, or at the workplace as precisely as possible, deciding what language areas (accent, grammar, and communication), it is reasonable to focus on the tests in the migration flow. Besides, native speakers are not likely to have the same level in the four language skills even in their mother tongue, thus the adult migrants' learner profile is likely to result heterogeneous (*ibidem*).

Moreover, the use of language tests for other social or political, that is, unintended or undeclared purposes, for example, as gatekeeping mechanisms, is not acceptable, as it views those who do not master the language of the host countryas an 'outgroup' (McNamara & Roever, 2006). In fact, knowledge of the dominant national language(s) is seen as a 'glue for cohesion' of the national state. Hence, the participation in the host country's social life and proficiency in the national language are considered positive signs of the group belonging. These aspects specifically hint at belonging to the 'in-group' (Van Avermaet, 2010).

Thus, when a migrant is willing to learn the host country's language(s), he/she is 'in', if not, he/she is 'out' (*ibidem*). Consequently, outsiders are not considered as equal members of the state having equal rights respect to the majority (McNamara &Shohamy, 2008; Shohamy, 2009). Not knowing the majority language(s) of the host country thus places a newcomer outside the destination country or receiving society (Van Avermaet, 2010).

Language proficiency and the knowledge of civics are often directly associated with the national membership (Shohamy, 2009). Therefore not learning the *national* language(s) of the host country is commonly interpreted as a lack of willingness to assimilate and integrate (Shohamy, 1993, 2001, 2009). In most nation-states language is considered the core element for the creation of national unity and social cohesion (Blommaert, 2006a; Shohamy, 2009). As a consequence, the willingness to learn the language(s) of the host country is considered an important form of assimilation. In some cases, migrants do not only have to show they know the official language(s) of the receiving country, but language tests are accompanied by the KoS tests on the history, culture and social norms of the host country (Extra & Spotti, 2009).

In 2006, the Netherlands and a year after, Germany and France, through a kind of policy emulation, were the first EU countries to use integration policies as an instrument to select immigrants for family reunification before allowing them to enter their territory (Böcker & Strik,

2011; Groenendijk, 2011; Strik *et al.*, 2010). By requiring the prospective candidates to pass a pre-departure language test integrated with a KoS test, the Netherlands, France and Germany claimed to test the willingness and ability to master the language competence of those family migrants who wanted to reach their spouses or minor children in Europe (Groenendijk, 2011).

To master the official language(s) of the host country was, and still is, considered a demonstration of goodwill to assimilate and integrate successfully into the destination country(Böcker & Strik, 2011;Groenendijk, 2011;Strik *et al.*, 2010). It should be anyhow remembered that language programs and success in language testing can support the integration process, but they cannot alone guarantee full integration of migrants into the host society under any conditions.

Conversely, Epstein (2012) argues that assimilation of migrants into a new reality is a result of two key elements, in other words, it is a two-way process. Firstly, it involves the extent to which the migrants themselves wish to assimilate, the effort they invest to stay different from the local population, holding on to their heritage and the consumption of ethnic goods. Secondly, the process is about the degree to which the local population welcomes the migrants. As a consequence, integration into the host country is a question of reciprocity and mutual respect of diversity (*ibidem*).

Yet, language knowledge is definitely considered as one of the central aspects of the many issues raised by migration. It is considered a fundamental element of integrationand maintenance of social cohesion in the newcomers' host countries. If the majority of native speakers do not perform language tasks at the highest level of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), most migrants have difficulties to reach even the lowest levels, since they often are functionally illiterate or have low literacy skills. The requirement to show a 'sufficient' or a 'good level' in the host country's official language(s) is vague; as such it is not useful for a correct language evaluation. The CEFR levels required by most European countries are based "[…] on the unproven assumption that successful integration depends on a given level of language proficiency" (*Council of Europe*, 2014:13).

It is fundamental to remember that the CEFR was not developed for a second language acquisition context; on the contrary, it is a reference tool for learning, teaching and assessing of foreign languages skills and abilities (Van Avermaet, 2010). However, most migrants learn the language of their destination country as a second language. This issue inevitably raises concerns and problems as to the correct use of the CEFR in the migration flow. The CEFR descriptors clearly imply an existing basic knowledge of literacy, immediately starting from the lowest levels, such as

A1 and A2. This is problematic, as tests for family reunification, long-term residence permit and citizenship refer to the CERF six-level system and most migrant test takers are illiterate or have low literacy skills in their own language (*ibidem*).

It goes without saying that higher CEFR levels require also higher levels of schooling and education; a condition that cannot be expected from lower or semi-skilled workers who often have no educational background. The misuse, or misinterpretation of the language levels described in the CEFR can be complicated in testing for integration and citizenship: "On the basis of being unsuccessful on a language test that was never intended for these purposes, people are refused citizenship, residence or even admission" (*ibid.*:21). The core problem is that policy makers choose a particular level of the CEFR without any precise validation or rationale from language professionals. This is clearly visible, when observing the great variety of language levels required across Europe for admission, residence or citizenship (*ibidem*).

Another issue of concern is the use of the CEFR as an instrument in favor of monolingualism even if it was originally developed as a tool to promote plurilingual competence. Plurilingualism is the manifestation of the capacity for speech typical of all human beings that can be used in different languages throughout an individual's lifetime. According to Van Avermaet (*ibidem*), the initial step in the use of language tests in the migration flow calls for an accurate reflection. Migrants' own languages are not considered positively, on the contrary, the third-country nationals speaking their heritage languages are seen "[…] as having a language deficiency" (*ibid.*:21). Migrants' own language repertoire is not taken into serious consideration, on the contrary, their own linguistic capital is often perceived as something negative, as an obstacle for integration. Moreover, speaking a minority language may also be felt as something dangerous for the host society, because it is easily associated to fundamentalist groups and radical ideologies.

However, the knowledge of the language(s) of the destination country can play an important role in the integration process if certain learning conditions are guaranteed. If adult migrants are provided with both formal and informal educational opportunities to learn the official language(s), and their proficiency is not assessed through a single test, but over time, integration may take place more smoothly. Besides, the use of alternative testing methods, such as story(re)telling, negotiation etc., instead of standardized test formats, may boost migrants' engagement in language learning, and promote integration (Shohamy, 2001).

Additionally, migrants should be given opportunities to be active in intra- and interlinguistic markets, such as school, or the world of work, where they can come into contact with the local people (Van Avermaet, 2010). In the social space language acquisition tends to be a natural process

through interpersonal contact, and because migrants have to carry out specific, everyday tasks, for example, making a hospital appointment, asking for prices at the market, etc. In contrast, when tests are to be taken abroad, for example as a pre-departure strategy, prospective candidates are *a priori* excluded the opportunity to learn and practice the language in free societal domains (*ibidem*).

Conversely, Blommaert (2006:238) argues that "[…] official administrative belonging– being a citizen of a state– is a poor indicator of sociolinguistic belonging, let alone of language behavior in general". This clearly means that the concept of an inseparable association of language and state should be challenged (Shohamy, 2009), also because "[…] the world is not neatly divided into monolingual states" (Blommaert, 2006:238), but concentrated in a globalized, multicultural and plurilingual societies. As a consequence, in the multilingual diversity (an area with the presence of several languages) of many EU countries, the choice of one hegemonic language is not automatic (Shohamy, 2009). In some areas of Spain, for instance, in the Basque provinces, the Basque languagehas been the official language together with Castilian since 1982, while Castilian and Catalan have been the official languages of Catalonia since 1979, and those of the Balearic Islands since 1983.[4] In this scenario it is not obviously possible to determine the official language of a region, both because of a great variety languages used in different areas and because of the existing linguistic controversies. This means that it is not only getting more and more difficult to decide what language should be considered the official language or the functional language. It is also complicated to establish if the official language is only one, and thus, what language(s) a migrant should master, and how much of that language he/she needs to know to be a good citizen in the destination country (Van Avermaet, 2010). It seems, that what really counts is, how much of the host country's language migrants truly need to function in certain domains of society(*ibidem*). Hence, migrants' previous language knowledge should be valued in order to build on that repertoire.

In today's multicultural, and multilingual world, "[…] an immigrant is no longer an immigrant, he is a member of a complex metropolis" (*ibid.*:16). Indeed,Groenendijk (2011:28) states that in the Netherlands "[…] a migrant may have more success integrating if he has good English skills rather than very poor Dutch skills". This is to say that in almost every corner of the world, it is easier to learn such widespread and commonly spoken languages such as English, French or German rather than Dutch (*ibidem*). This is a crucial element, both for the way language courses can be organized in the candidates' country of origin, and for the legality of the language requirements (*ibidem*).

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[4] http://usefoundation.org/view/565.

It goes without saying that language learning is far more efficient when migrants have opportunities to regularly apply and practice in the outside world what they have learned in the classroom. This is not always easy in the migrants' home countries, because of various obstacles, such as financial, geographical, personal problems, together with difficult access tolearning and lack of prior access to test-taking equipment (Kunnan, 2000).

As a matter of fact, tests and test materials may be unaffordable abroad; moreover, test takers with handicapping conditions may not be able to take a test, because appropriately modified tests are not available (*ibidem*). Another critical focus is on whether the test takers can be organized a prior access to the test-taking equipment in order to familiarize with them. This may occur when geographical access to test and course sites is complicated, for example, in post war zones in many politically unstable areas of the world. Under certain circumstances, prospective test takers can rarely be offered such opportunities, because reaching the sites can be extremely risky and dangerous (Böcker & Strik, 2011; Groenendijk, 2011; Strik *et al*., 2010).

Nevertheless, each migrant has specific, individual language needs, which should be taken into account, regardless of where he/she resides at the moment of taking the test. But as the knowledge of the host country's language is often the *sine qua non* condition for admission, long-term residence permit, or citizenship, tests are organized on a large scale in order to be the same for every test taker, and thus, to guarantee equity and fairness (Van Avermaet, 2010). Curiously enough, administering the same test to every candidate does not safeguard the rights of all test takers, because the needs of vulnerable groups such as women, girls and disabled people cannot be taken into account in such a procedure. More collaborative assessment tools, such as language portfolios or smaller scale testing methods, should be adopted to highlight migrants' 'can do' statements, instead of the negative viewpoint focusing on what they 'cannot do' with their language skills. More flexible assessment tools could still be (broadly) related to the CEFR levels in order to profile the migrants' linguistic repertoire from a positive, motivating viewpoint (*ibidem*).

An approach called the 'progress route', which was in use in the UK until 2013, recognized that different people have different skills and abilities (Beacco *et al*., 2014). This approach fostered migrants to make progress from one CEFR level to another (*ibidem*). On the one hand, it acknowledged that individuals might reach a level beyond which they would not arrive. On the other, it recognized the prior educational efforts individuals might have made through formal, or informal learning. Moreover,the 'progress route' can be considered as a non-discriminatory approach, as it does not exclude anyone from the access to rights and benefits they would not otherwise be able to get (*ibidem*). This approach demonstrates, that it is absolutely possible that a

learner has a "fuzzy profile" (*ibid.*:40), which means, he/she demonstrates differentiated progress, and thus reaches different CEFR levels in the four skills - speaking, listening, writing and reading. As a matter of fact, broader assessment tools do not provide an indication of just one CEFR level, on the contrary, they aim to depict the individual's multilingual profile by diversifying his/her single competences (Van Avermaet, 2010).

According to Shohamy "[…] it is very unlikely that these policies of language tests for citizenship will cease to exist" (*ibid.*:56). Notwithstanding this prediction, the development of assessment methods, such as storytelling and the progress route project, should be encouraged. They are motivating and participatory by nature and aim to acknowledge both the existence of an individual linguistic capital and the co-existence of bi- and plurilingualism, incorporating migrants' L1 skills and ability to negotiate. This implies the fact that it is possible to assess migrants' language ability from a fairer, more democratic perspective, implementing a learner centered method through which the focus automatically moves towards realistic language use and content. When the migrant is at the centre of the evaluation procedure, it is easier both to employ strategies that are familiar to test takers and apply more flexible assessment criteria.

2.2. Language tests - tools of power

McNamara and Shohamy (2008: 1) state that "Tests have been constructed as a symbol of success, achievement and mobility". In line with this, Shohamy (2001) affirms that tests are reinforced by dominant educational, and social institutions as major criteria of worth, value and quality. Moreover, testing in general tends to be associated with the idea of equality and the respect of national and international canons which measure the individual's proficiency on his/her own merits. In society as a whole, tests are positively connected with "[…] standards, objectivity and merit"(*ibid.*:1). Consequently, success in passing tests well, is associated with productivity at the workplace, whereas in the educational context it is believed, on the one hand, that tests motivate students to study harder because of their fear of failure while, on the other, that success boosts teachers to teach more effectively (Shohamy, 2009).

The wide public acceptance and trust in tests, which symbolize social order, enable governments to use them as a condition for deciding who can enter a new country (Shohamy, 2001). This means that language proficiency tests, and always more often, also the KoS tests, are directly used as a criterion for citizenship, long-term residence permit, and family reunification (McNamara & Shohamy, 2008; Shohamy, 2009; Van Avermaet, 2010).

In this regard, the world of work, the educational arena, and the migration flow are all three scenarios that reveal the power of language tests. On top of that, according to Shohamy (1993), language tests are powerful, inasmuch as they are scientific and represent one of the few areas that most approximates empiricalsciences within the field of human sciences. Additionally, within the field of applied linguistics, language testing allows experimental procedure through whichit is possible to make empirical, clearly defined and answerable questions in order to collect data, and apply statistical techniques (*ibidem*).

Shohamy (*ibid.*:23) claims that "It is this information that tests are capable of providing that makes them valuable". This means that language tests are powerful, because they can provide decision-makers with valuable guidance and insights: teachers can learn a lot as to the teaching and learning process; test designers can verify if their tests respect the main principles of language testing such as practicality, reliability, validity, authenticity and washback (Brown, 2004); policy makers and education administrators can use language tests and their results to control and drive education to a desired direction, both in centralized and decentralized educational systems, as well as in foreign language evaluation all over the world (Shohamy, 1993).

In a number of countries in different parts of the world, for example in Australia, a points system is used in the selection of immigrants, usually prior to the admission to the receiving country (McNamara & Shohamy, 2008). In particular, in most EU countries, both the language and the KoS tests, and the information contained in them, are used to manage the impact of continuing cross-border migration flows through efficient integration/immigration policies (Böcker & Strik, 2011; Strik *et al.*, 2010; Van Avermaet, 2010).

Language and KoS tests are, indeed, widely used to control and determine the composition of a state in an increasing number of countries worldwide. Many EU countries started to introduce formal language and KoS tests for newcomers for naturalization alreadyin the early 2000s (Böcker & Strik, 2011; Shohamy, 2009; Van Avermaet, 2010). More recently, the EU countries are introducing language tests at an earlier stage of the immigration process, and precisely in the candidates home countries as a pre-departure procedure (*ibidem*). This means that language and societal knowledge are regarded as central elements in the immigration/integration policies when national governments are concerned about social cohesion, national identity, cultural and linguistic heritage (Hogan-Brun, 2009; Van Avermaet, 2010; Kostakopoulo, 2010; Strik *et al.*, 2010).

The pre-departure integration measuresabroad, which were first introduced in Europe in the Netherlands in 2006 (Böcker & Strik, 2011; Groenendijk, 2011; Strik *et al.*, 2010), gave way to Germany and France, which the following year, introduced similar measures for family

reunification in their national law (Groenendijk, 2011). The integration policy of the other EU countries also includes the use of language tests in at least one of the critical areas in the migration flow.

As a matter of fact, almost half of the EU member countries made changes in their integration policy between 2008 and 2010 (Van Avermaet, 2010). However, it is important to notice that the strategies adopted, instead of promoting integration, seem to have turned more and more often into means for exclusion (Extra e Spotti, 2009; Groenendijk, 2011; Van Avermaet, 2010). Yet, all integration policy measures, for example, language tests, should promote inclusion. Their use for undeclared purposes, gatekeeping rather than integration, obviously raises questions of ethicality (Shohamy, 2009; Van Avermaet, 2010). The tightened pre-departure strategies adopted in the Netherlands, Germany and France were motivated by the high number of third-country nationals admitted for family reunification in comparison with the lower numbers of migrants admitted for employment or studyreasons (Strik *et al.*, 2010). The underlying political motivation seems to be, instead, the direct causal relationship between selective immigration and successful integration (Michalowski, 2010).

Thus, language tests abroad, prior to entry, do not aim to enhance the integration of third-country nationals, but seem to be dedicated "[…] to better manage migration flows" (Strik *et al.*, 2010:27). According to Shohamy (2009:53), "[…] a larger number of immigrants, growing ethnic tensions, xenophobia and fear, created by political and violent clashes" are some of the most important factors that lead the states to perceive that they are in danger, and consequently losing control of social cohesion. That is why they tend to exercise more control through "[…] managed policies, language tests included" (*ibid.*:53).

On the whole, the language requirements for third-country nationals who want to enter the EU member countries present a considerable variation for family reunification, citizenship and long-term residence permit, if compared with the six proficiency levels of the CEFR (*Council of Europe*, 2001), even if there has been a general tightening up of the evaluation criteria across Europe (Groenendijk, 2011; McNamara & Shohamy, 2008; Van Avermaet, 2010). The intense debate in the Netherlands on the legality of mandatory language tests when prospective candidates abroad lack sufficient provision of facilities, such as courses, materials, schools, etc. for language learning and test preparation, can be seen from two perspectives. First, it can be viewed as an example of the violation of human rights. Second, it depicts the controversial relationship between test makers and linguists on the one side, and policymakers and governments on the other (Böcker & Strik, 2011; McNamara & Shohamy, 2008; Strik *et al.*, 2010).

In 2004, a group of linguists was asked to report to the Dutch government on the validity of test administered to family migrants in their home countries (Böcker & Strik, 2011;Groenendijk, 2011; Strik *et al*., 2010). The linguists motivated their negative evaluation with several reasons. First of all, the test was to be taken at a Dutch embassy in a telephone conversation with a computer equipped with a voice recognition software that was not developed for that end (*ibidem*). Secondly, the educational material for the test, which consists of a hundred questions about life in the Netherlands, was on the free market, and thus resulted unaffordable for most prospective candidates (*ibidem*). Thirdly, the applicants also had to pay a fee for the test (*ibidem*).

The linguists thus concluded that the test taken abroad could not promote civic integration. On the one hand, their points of view clearly involved questions of ethicality of language tests and concerns of the violation of human rights, on the other. Nevertheless, the Dutch Minister for Migration and Integration did not pay attention to the linguists' opinion, because the government's idea was to make potential applicants themselves also economically responsible for their preparation (Böcker & Strik, 2011). From the Dutch government's viewpoint, (economically) supporting the migrants in their preparation for the test abroad would have sent them a wrong signal. Moreover, the government stated that not offering any support would have allowed the migrants larger freedom of choice in how to prepare for the test (Strik *et al*., 2010). Eventually, the pre-departure tests with civic integration examination abroad entered in force in 2006 (Böcker & Strik, 2011; Groenendijk, 2011; Strik *et al*., 2010). Later on, two official advisory bodies concluded that the test would violate Article 8 of the European Convention of Human rights,[5] if a large group of family migrants would *de facto* be prevented from living with their spouse or partner in the Netherlands (*ibidem*).

Education and skill acquisition play an important role at many stages of an individual's migration. Indeed, language proficiency is an importantpart of integration, but it cannot in any case be a precondition for integration, since learning a language is potentially a gradual, lifelong process (*Council of Europe*, 2016; Shohamy, 1993; 2001; Van Avermaet, 2010). Doubtlessly, language acquisition is far more efficient when migrants have opportunities to regularly practice on the ground what they learn during the classes (Groenendijk, 2011). But as more and more MSs administer language and KoS tests in the migrants' home countries, organizing educational infrastructures or networks abroad could diminish the risk of exclusion of certain (vulnerable) groups after their arrival in the host country (Strik *et al.,* 2010).

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[5]http://www.echr.coe.int/Documents/Convention_ENG.pdf.

Migrants should be provided with all the necessary information on the receiving society as a whole at the earliest possible stage to help them deal with an unfamiliar reality.[6] As migration and education are decisions that are closely intertwined, being informed on the educational opportunities is particularly important in order to allow migrants to engage in both formal learning/assessment and informal learning/assessment after their arrival. The provision of cultural and pre-departure orientation may result in more realistic picture of what awaits them as many migrants have unrealistic and often inaccurate expectations of life in the host country.[7]

In the following paragraph, I will look at the different groups of persons involved or invested in language testing/assessment processes. I will focus on the stakeholders that can be roughly divided into two groups: on the one hand, those who make decisions and those who are affected by the decisions, on the other (Rea-Dickins, 1997). This definition inevitably involves a wide range of individuals, groups, bodies, institutions etc. having a stake in the testing procedure. As a matter of fact, over time, several maps or models have been presented to list the stakeholders involved in language testing and to define the interrelationships.

2.3. Stakeholders in language testing events

Language tests are powerful because they can be used to distinguish the in- and outgroup in a given country or society (McNamara, 2000; McNamara & Shohamy, 2008). They are powerful also because many different kind of people such as test takers, test makers, politicians, spouses and parents are involved in them and have an interest in them to some extent (McNamara & Shohamy, 2008; Strik *et al.*, 2010). Each group of stakeholders brings in their own experience and training, their personal interests and priorities connected with the test. Moreover, in each stakeholder group there are representatives of different age and ethnic groups, professions, origins, motivations and background.

It is noticeable that it may not be possible to meet the needs of all stakeholders. However, it is important to plan with all the groups in mind and to identify the test that fits best. Likewise, stakeholders are not influenced in the same way by the test results. This means that the grade of acceptance/refusal of the scores and results in general, is likely to be different according to the group the individuals belong to (Farhady, 1998). The interest may of course concern a group as a whole.

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[6]http://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/pre-departure_orientation.pdf.
[7]http://www.iom.int.

Since there is a great variety of types of individuals and groups of people involved in the testing procedure, over years several models have been presented to list the stakeholders involved in language testing and to describe the relationships between them. In the business of language testing, the most traditional model usually separates stakeholders into the producer and the consumer, while in the public and institutional testing, stakeholders are traditionally identified with the test-maker and the test-taker (Taylor, 2000). In language testing in the migration flow, the main distinction seems to be between the host country, in the framework of its integration/immigration policy, and the migrant (Böcker & Strik, 2011; Strik *et al.*, 2010).

Another important relationship in all scenarios, but particularly in the migration flow, is the one between test designers and linguists on the one side, and decision-makers such as administrators, bureaucrats, and politicians on the other (Farhady, 1998). The group of professional test makers, who know that no test score is an absolute indication of any ability, is rarely involved in the final decision-making process that is likely to directly affect many persons' lives and careers. Conversely, political decision makers easily assume that test results are realistic indications of an individual's language skills (Farhady, 1998; Shohamy, 2001, 2009).

Therefore those in authority may use tests and test resultsfor purposes that are not in line with those originally stated or declared (Shohamy, 2009). If so, tests and their results can be misused and authorities may use them as disciplinary tools to manipulate educational or social systems, thus violating individuals' or groups' fundamental human rights(Shohamy, 2001). As a matter of fact, language tests for integration are not neutral or objective, on the contrary, they reflect the beliefs, norms and values of the dominant majority group of a given country or society (Shohamy, 2009; Van Avermaet, 2010).

The long list of stakeholders can also be divided into three main groups, that is, the political, the educational and the social group (Farhady, 1998). All the three groups are involved at different stages of language testing, as well as influenced to various degrees by test scores. The political group includes, among others, politicians, administrators,governments, immigration officials, bureaucrats, international and national political bodies. Test designers, teacher trainers, teachers, students, local, national and international education institutes belong to the educational group (*ibidem*). The social group is composed of individuals, families, communities, as well as professional associations and Non-Governmental Organizations (*ibidem*).

Rea-Dickins (1997) first divides stakeholders in those who make decisions and those who are affected by those decisions. Second, she identifies further groups and puts them into five subcategories, that is, learners, teachers, parents, governments and official bodies, and the

marketplace. The stronger stakeholders, policy and test makers, who have access to the information should equip the weaker ones such as test takers, learners and parents with the necessary guidance and information so that they may take appropriate action (Lynch, 1997). Sharing information between the different stakeholder groups could be a way to democratize assessment procedures as well as to improve relationships between those involved, thereby promoting greater fairness in the testing procedure (Lynch, 1997; McNamara & Shohamy, 2008).

According to Bourdieu (1991), language has a strong symbolic power which has gradually generated an unwritten contract between those in power and those who are subject to tests. This means that there is a strong relationship between those who want to dominate, and those who, instead, are willing to be dominated in order to be able to maintain their place and status in the (host) society (Shohamy, 2001; 2009). This relationship explains the power of tests as instruments for maintaining social order and for gatekeeping purposes (*ibidem*).

Each stakeholder group has different interests and stakes in the various stages of testing. Some of the stakeholders, such as examiners and test designers in the educational context, have more interest in the test assessment criteria or test format. Others, in the political scenario, such as international and national boards, and governments, may see their stake as being primarily concerned with the outcome of the tests in their migration policies, sometimes from the viewpoint of excluding unwanted groups (Shohamy, 2001; Van Avermaet, 2010).

Learners, parents, guardians,test takers in general, and teachers of course, will naturally have an interest in all aspects of the test, but particularly, in the test results and in their impact on their personal and occupational lives (Taylor, 2000). Inevitably each group, or an individual inside the group, has a higher or a lower stake in the single parts of language testing, and thus exercises power and pressure according to the type of interest (Shohamy, 1993; 2001). Tests can be high-stakes or low-stakes. This depends on how the test is likely to affect the test taker or other stakeholders. It is important to carefully consider the validity and reliability of a high-stakes test as it may have important consequences for the test taker. In the migration flow, language tests that affect individuals' legal status, such as citizenship, profoundly influence test takers' lives and thus are extremely high-stakes.

McNamara and Shohamy (2008: 93) sustain that "Not granting citizenship on the grounds of language is a violation of basic human/personal rights to welfare, education and other social benefits". In line with this reasoning, the following paragraph introduces the basic questions of the respect of migrants' civil and human rights in high-stakes language testing events.

2.4. Language testing and human rights

According to Shohamy (2009:55), on the one hand, "[…] policies such as language tests for citizenship are not only random and arbitrary but, given the difficulties of meeting them, serve as unrealistic mechanisms for control, categorization, gatekeeping and classification of human beings and for the denial of basic human and personal rights". On the other, test takers are not generally aware of their rights, and thus rarely defend themselves as individuals in various language testing contexts, for instance, when applying for a job, citizenship or family reunification (Shohamy, 2001). Without a doubt, "[…] test takers surely have the highest stake of all" (Hamp-Lyons, 2000:581) in the testing procedure, but their voice is the least heard (Hamp-Lyons & Lynch, 1998). Farhady (1998:8) goes further claiming that "[…] students, teachers and teacher trainers" are "[…] the later victims of the test being administered."Shohamy (2001:375), instead, considers tests "[…] instrumental in reaffirming societal power and maintaining social order."

The weaker stakeholders, such as parents, guardians, students and test takers have no say about the test makers' decisions or the content of a test. Moreover, they are not always aware of their rights and tend not to defend them. Anyhow, it does not matter what the stakeholders' interest in language testing is, their approach has changed a lot in recent years, both in theory and in practice. Indeed, they are gradually assuming a more active role in testing by monitoring the testing procedure and the impact of the test results. (Shohamy, 2001; Van Avermaet, 2010). However, it is still rare for an individual test taker to protest, since fairness and objectivity of tests are almost always accepted without question (Shohamy, 2001; 2009).

As a matter of fact, tests enjoy trust and support on the part of public and of institutions, but they can be transformed into "instruments of power that violate fundamental values and principles of democratic practices" (Shohamy, 2001:375). Similarly, as to the role of language tests in immigration and integration policies, Van Avermaet (2010:22) points out that they "[…] should be based on encouraging all people to participate as a citizen in society. He further argues that "[…] political authorities have the democratic and moral obligation […] to provide equal opportunities for the development (i.e. cultural expression, language use) for all social and cultural groups"(*ibid*.:22). This means that the principles of human rights should be respected at each step of the decision-making process through shared responsibility and co-operation.

In Shohamy's opinion (1993, 2001) everybody involved in testing should assume their responsibility for monitoring tests, their fairness, effects and consequences (intended or not). Responsibility should be shared, not only by those in authority, or by testers, but by test takers and

their families, as well as by those in charge of civil rights, and fair behavior in society, such as courts and human rights groups (Shohamy, 2009). In the USA, for instance, lobbies of parents and students, together with teachers and testing professionals, drive a powerful movement that critiques tests and testing practices. The National Center for Fair & Open Testing[8] works to end the misuses and flaws of standardized testing and to ensure that the evaluation of students, teachers and schools is fair, open, valid and educationally beneficial.

In the migration flow, interviews with several migrant representatives in the course of a research carried out by Human Rights Watch in the Netherlands in 2008,[9] regarding the use of the pre-departure language tests in the family reunification process, are a good example of the high level of attention human rights organizations have started to pay to linguistic integration of adult migrants (Böcker & Strik, 2011;Groenendijk, 2011; Strik *et al*., 2010). The test was judged discriminatory, both as it seemed that the host country wanted deliberately to keep certain groups out, and because of the high costs of the preparation materials and the test itself most applicants could not afford (Extra *et al*., 2009; Fulcher & Davidson, 2013; Strik *et al*., 2010).

At the institutional level, the Council of Europe's project on the Linguistic Integration of Adult Migrants (LIAM) aims to support the forty-seven member states in the development of policies and practices based on recognition of adult migrants' human rights (*Council of Europe*, 2016). This is especially important at a time when the MSs attach stricter and stricter language requirements to the granting of citizenship, the right to residence, and sometimes even to the right to enter the country. At the European political level, the Council of Europe's primary aim is to create a common democratic and legal area throughout the continent, ensuring respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law. All the Council of Europe's actions are guided by this vision and the concern with social inclusion and cohesion as well as respect for diversity (*Council of Europe*, 2016; Strik *et al*., 2010).

As a matter of fact, the rights of all test takers, but above all, the rights of those with special needs, should be safeguarded. In recent years, there have been a number of court cases seeking legal court redress both for real or perceived violations of rights in the language testing procedure for race or gender discrimination, and for unfairness (Böcker & Strik, 2011; Groenendijk, 2011; Shohamy, 2001; Strik *et al*., 2010). Potential applicants for language tests, who still reside in their home country, may meet various problems that could violate their rights when studying for and taking the test. The factors,which can put the potential applicants' civil or human rights at risk, can

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[8]http://www.fairtest.org.
[9]http://www.hrw.org.

be financial, geographical, personal and educational (Kunnan, 2000). They may as well regard unfamiliarity with the testing conditions and equipment.

For instance, the absence of an embassy or an education institute, may force potential applicants to travel across dangerous areas such as (post) warzones to attend language courses or to do their test (Strik *et al*., 2010). Also the absence of electricity, or other elementary infrastructures, may create problems to the preparation for the test. Hence, if some migrant groups have differential opportunities to prepare for the test, their performance on the test might differ significantly because of unequal preparation conditions. This clearly raisesethical dilemmas and questions of unfair treatment among potential candidates (Böcker & Strik, 2011;Groenendijk, 2011; Strik *et al*., 2010).

A lot of attention has been dedicated to language testing events in recent years. In particular, ethical issues have come to the forefront of language testing because of the powerful impact they have on individuals and society. This essentially means that, when and where there is power, there will develop initiatives and principles, both from an insider and an outsider viewpoint, for the (correct) use of that power (Hamp-Lyons, 2000). This is the central reason why I will discuss ethical issues in the following paragraph.

2.5. Ethics and language testing

The concern for ethical issues and the far-reaching consequences of the use of language tests for individuals and society, form a relatively new concept which has expanded widely only in recent times, that means from the 1990s (Shohamy, 2001). In fact, Spolsky (1995) does not give much evidence about language test developers' or language testers' concern for ethical questions in his study of the history of modern objective language testing, which covers the period from 1913 to 1965 in detail.

In Messick's (1991) opinion, the central notion in language testing is whether the proposed testing should serve as the means to the intended end or whether it could also have unintended, unexpected purposes. Messick was the first to introduce the notion of consequential validity to educational testing and assessment in 1989. In other words, it seems, that what really counts, are not the policy or test makers' intentions, but the real-life effects of tests, both on people's lives and society as a whole. Consequently, more and more attention has been directed towards an approach of shared responsibility, as well as towards a fairer implementation of test results under the umbrella terms of 'ethics' (Farhady, 1998; Fulcher & Davidson, 2013; Shohamy, 1997), or'ethicality' (Lynch, 1997). Hamp-Lyons (2000) talks about social, professional and individual 'responsibility' as this term carries "an implication of reciprocity" (*ibid*.:582), which is not shared

byeither the terms 'ethics' or 'moral'. In accordance, also Bachmann (2000) links the increased awareness of ethical issues to professionalism. In the same line of thought, Stansfield (1993) associates ethics to language testers' moral conduct in their daily professional practice. Accordingly, language teachers and test designers have become more involved in, and concerned about, tests and their role in their personal, professional and public lives.

Ethicality can be defined in terms of issues, such as harm, consent, confidentiality of data and fairness (Lynch, 1997). Many researchers into ethical, social and political issues, within the methodology of critical social theory, such as Extra, Spotti & Van Avermaet (2009), Lynch (1997), McNamara (2000), Shohamy (1993, 1997, 2000, 2001, 2009),and Spolsky (1995), have contributed to the increased awareness of the importance of shared decision-making and information exchange in all stages of language testing. These researchers have discussed various aspects of testing procedure, as well as of tests themselves, from their "[…] unchallenged, unmonitored and uncontrolled" (Shohamy 2001:375) character, to their gatekeeping function (Bachman, 2000;Van Avermaet, 2010). Elaborating fifteen principles that underlie Critical Language Testing (CLT), Shohamy (2001) seems to have provided "[…] the most definitive response to date for a critical approach to language assessment" (Lynch, 2001:362).

CLT examines, among the different domains, the influence and the involvement of the range of stakeholders in a testing context (Shohamy, 2001). She underlines "[…] the need to conduct and administer testing in collaboration and cooperation with those tested" (*ibid*.:376), focusing on the need to overcome the deep communication gap between the stakeholders and to promote ethical and democratic principles in language testing.

As a matter of fact, one of the central problems of testing is that the information is not equally distributed among the stakeholders. This condition raises several ethical issues. In most cases only policymakers, politicians and administrators are bestowed with the complete or key information, while learners, their parents or guardians are not fully informed (Farhady, 1998). The stronger stakeholders, who have access to the most crucial information on testing, have the power of making decisions on the educational, social, and occupational, and sometimes, on the personal lives of the less informed. In contrast, the weaker stakeholders, such as the test takers, are not able to play a sufficiently active and participatory role in the testing procedure, even if their stakes are the highest (Farhady, 1998; Shohamy, 1993).

Yet, it would be hard to imagine somebody disagreeing on the necessity of an ethical perspective, not only in language testing, but in testing in general. Likewise we tend to believe that all stakeholders naturally assume their professional responsibility towards the social and individual

consequences of their role in language testing (Hamp-Lyons, 2000). But as with many other key concepts in the field of language testing, there are disagreements and contrasting opinions, among the scholars and the community of professionals on the treatment of the term 'ethics' (Farhady, 1998).

According to a recent ethics guide, published by the BBC, "[…] ethics is a system of moral principles and a branch of philosophy which defines what is good for individuals and society."[10] Ethics seems to cover at least the following dilemmas: how to live a good life, individuals' and groups' rights and responsibilities, principles of moral decisions on what is good, and what is bad, as well as what is right, and what is wrong.[11] It also includes the civil code of behavior that is considered correct, especially that of a particular group, profession or individual.[12]

Indeed, it is complicated to determine the limits and the extent of ethics, as well as to find its exact definition. According to the Dictionary of Sociology (Marshall, 1998), research ethics can be defined as follows: "The application of moral rules and professional codes of conduct to the collection, analysis, reporting, and publication of information about research subjects, in particular active acceptance of subjects' right to privacy, confidentiality and informed consent."[13]

Similarly, Punch (1994) states that ethical topics include consent, deception, privacy, confidentiality and equal opportunity to learn. Hamp-Lyons (2000), instead, points out the importance of language testers' awareness of their social and professional responsibility. She considers this insider viewpoint as the basis of ethical language testing together with "[…] the combination of expanded views of all stakeholders" (*ibid.*:581).

According to Davies (1997) being a language professional incorporates codes, contracts, training and standards of practice that may change over time.Indeed, language testers have long accepted the APA Standards for Educational and Psychological testing (1999) that form the basic rules for their profession. This means that a professional, who is aware of the changing nature of his/her profession, agrees to behave according to a shared norm irrespective of where he/she operates or the type of institution he/she works in.

In short, professionalism is linked to ethics which can be identified as standards of a profession. Admission and adherence to the community of practice (see the following paragraph) essentially depends on acceptance of the ethical code which, if violated, leads to sanctions for the members of the community (McNamara & Roever, 2006).

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[10]http://www.bbc.co.uk/ethics.
[11]*Ibidem.*
[12]*Ibidem.*
[13]http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1O88-researchethics.html.

2.6. Development of an ethical perspective in the community of practitioners

The role of all professionals such as linguists, researchers, test makers and teachers, is fundamental to avoid abuses or misuses of language tests and their results. Stansfield (1993) closely links professionalism to ethics, which he considers the moral conduct of language testers as people practicing their profession.Conversely, Davies (2007) states that moral professionalism provides a contract for the profession and the individual with the public, thereby safeguarding all three.

The contract normally takes the form of a Code of Ethics, a Code of Practice, or a Standards document, introduced by a professional association, and to which individual members subscribe as an act of becoming a member of that profession. Codes of practice, which have been first of all written to give practical guidance on how testers should act in a responsible way, cover such areas as "the professional's role in society, integrity, conflict of interests, diligence and due care, confidentiality, and communication with the public and clients" (Shohamy, 2001:383).

The Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE) adopted the Code of Practice in 1994.[14] The Code identifies the responsibilities of the main users of examinations, and aims to safeguard the test takers' rights in four areas, namely examination development, interpretation of exam results, fairness and information.[15] ALTE also has a particular "Language Assessment for Migration and Integration group"(LAMI) that cooperates with external bodies such as the Council of Europe. It also promotes relationships between testing and civil as well as human rights. Moreover, it monitors that ethical principles are properly understood and considered by policy makers.

The International Language Testing Association (ILTA) prepared and adopted a Code of Ethics in 2000.[16] It contains nine principles that describe what ILTA members ought to do, or not to do, or more generally, how they ought to face the testing procedure as a whole. In this respect the principle number 9 of the ILTA Code of Ethics seems to be particularly important: "Language testers shall regularly consider the potential effects, both short and long-term, on all stakeholders of their projects, reserving the right to withhold their professional services on the grounds of conscience."[17] First, this principleis based on an individual tester's consciousness and awareness. Second, it states the individual tester's responsibility to refuse to administer a test, if

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[14]http://www.alte.org/attachments/files/code_practice_eng.pdf.
[15]*Ibidem.*
[16]http://www.iltaonline.com/index.php/enUS/component/content/article?id=57.
[17]*Ibidem.*

he/sheconsiders it unfair, or unethical, under particular circumstances, or if the test could put the candidates' human rights at risk.

From the individual language tester's viewpoint, a code of ethics, or a code of practice, holds a great importance as it is "[…] a professionally sanctioned document universally accepted by the community of professionals to which every tester can turn when needing guidance on whether any particular practice would be regarded by professional peers as ethical or not" (Hamp-Lyons, 2000:588). Being a part of a community of practice is important, as it involves participating, listening to and considering contrary opinions and new evidence (Fulcher & Davidson, 2013).

In other words, free and open discussion among scholars seems to be one of the most important instruments to further develop an ethical perspective in language testing. It means monitoring and evaluating the whole process, from the test design to the consequences of the tests, debating on ethics, and posing new demands of professionalism and appropriateness of specific practices within the social, cultural and political contexts (Fulcher & Davidson, 2013; Shohamy 2001).Shohamy (2001) calls for a continuous examination of testing to protect and safeguard test takers' rights from the authority, and misuses of tests. She also poses questions on the role of testers once they notice misuses since they may have different viewpoints of responsibility, namely ethical responsibility, responsibility for making others aware, responsibility for all test consequences, responsibility of imposing sanctions and shared responsibility (*ibidem*).

The view of shared responsibility implies the need to be critical about tests and their uses, to collect data on the effects and consequences of tests, to warn about misuses and abuses, and to try to protect all those involved in the testing procedure, mainly the most vulnerable categories such as test takers and their families (Shohamy, 1993, 2001). This kind of viewpoint requires each member of the community of practitioners to share news, facts and experiences with both peers and other stakeholder groups in order to facilitate exchange ofinformation.

As to the language professionals' contribution, Fulcher and Davidson (2013) state that language testers' activity as professionals can be judged only through real-world opportunities language tests are capable to offer the citizens. Considered from this viewpoint, there is an important link between professionalism and democracy. Shohamy (2009) claims that a new balance between testers and test-takers can be reached only by adopting democratic approach to assessment which excludes the assumption that test developers and testers are the only ones who 'know it all'.

In the same line of thought, Bachman (2000) sees the solution to the misuses of language tests in the professionalization and respect of codes of ethics, which articulate language testers' responsibilities by informing the test takers about the characteristics and correct use of tests. At the

same time, also the codes of ethics attempt to promote the test takers' awareness of their rights, following the principles of shared power and responsibility, collaboration and democratic representation.

Since the power of is not equally shared between the stakeholders, each individual should count himself/herself as a part of community of professionals, because it is without doubt a hard task for an individual language tester try to influence policy- and decision-makers all by himself/herself (Davies, 2007). Furthermore, it is not easy to refuse to obey orders and exercise language testers' right to withhold their services under circumstances they consider unfair or unethical. Being a member of a larger community of professionals, makes it easier to share responsibility and ask for support. As a community of practice, language professionals are likely to be more powerful, and their joint actions can thus be more efficient. On the other side of the coin, language professionals have both moral and professional obligations. Consequently, as the community agrees to follow the principles of shared power, collaboration and democratic representation, it needs to promote both issues of ethical questions and fairness as an integrated part of the language testing process.

Kunnan (2004:34) argues that "The notion of test fairness has developed in so many ways that the various positions may appear contradictory". Starting from this statement, I will look at some of the most relevant definitions of fairness in language testing in the following paragraph.

2.7. Fairness – towards a definition

Fairness in the testing procedure is a broad concept that involves, not only the test itself, but also its use and the intended as well as unintended consequences (Kunnan, 2000; Shohamy 2000, 2001). Fairness should be thus viewed in terms of the whole system of the testing process from the design to the far-reaching consequences on individuals and society as a whole. The issue of fairness concerns all the various stages of the test development procedure and, precisely, thinking, writing, piloting, analyzing, maintenance, and research stage (Kunnan, 2000).

The first stage of test development procedure involves thinking about the content, constructs, tasks and methods, as well as scoring, and reporting the results (*ibidem*). The issues of accessing to the test, and its consequences should be discussed at this early stage in order to reflect on how the test is likely to affect individuals, groups or society as a whole (Kunnan, 2000; Shohamy, 2001). The writing stage involves the defining of constructs into actual written tasks. This stage consists of item selection, and reflection, whether the canon is something all the prospective test takers should share and learn (Kunnan, 2000). After the tasks are written, tests

should be reviewed to check any use of insensitive language or stereotyping of any societal groups (*ibidem*).

The third step is to pre-test the format with a sample group of potential test takers. What is important at this stage is to guarantee a truly representative sample group of test takers, not a sample that is put together only for convenience's sake (*ibidem*). The choice of the group is particularly critical because it is to affect future choices regarding the test tasks and test format.

At the fourth stage, the data collected from the test takers have to be analyzed in several ways, for example, through structure analysis and rating reliability (*ibidem*). Moreover, analysis of differential item/task, or testlet functioning, should be carried out in order to make sure that score differences in performance on the test from different test taker groups are due to highly relevant construct variance (*ibidem*). Finally, this stage includes analysis of the potential effects on society as a whole. In other words, it should be discussed whether the test contributes to social equity or whether, on the contrary, it might violate test takers' basic human and civil rights (Kunnan, 2000; Shohamy, 2009).

At the last stage, validity, access and justice should be routinely investigated. The relevant data should be collected, not only by testers, but by test takers, as well as by all those who have interest in the test taking procedure in a continuous examination of testing process in order to protect and safeguardthe test takers' rights from the authority and misuses of tests (Shohamy, 2001). Such a collective approach is likely to promote a democratic perspective on language testing(*ibidem*).

To approach the concept of fairness, Kunnan (2004) presented a set of principles and sub-principles that form his test fairness framework. The two general principles of this framework, justice (plus sub-principles) and beneficence, are articulated as follows:

- The Principle of Justice: A test ought to be fair to all test takers; that is, there is a presumption of treating every person with equal respect.
1. Sub-principle 1: A test ought to have comparable construct validity in terms of its test-score interpretation for all test takers.
2. Sub-principle 2: A test ought not to be biased against any test-taker groups, in particular by assessing construct-irrelevant matters.
- Principle 2: The Principle of Beneficence: A test ought to bring about good in society; that is, it should not be harmful or detrimental to society. (Ibid.:33).

In short, given that it is complicated to decide what constitutes fairness, language tests should be developed in a way that enables test takers to receive the same scores on tests administered on two separate occasions, in two different places and from two parallel forms of the same test (Kunnan,

2000; Shohamy,2000, 2001). It should be guaranteed that all the questions are testing the same construct, what means, that if a construct is substituted with another, the test taker will still get the same score (Shohamy, 2000). Moreover, test takers should be ensured that the test is based on a widely accepted theory of what means to know a language (Shohamy, 2000, 2009).

Shohamy (2009) raises questions about the violation of the rights of those test takers that come from different (educational, ethnical, cultural, etc.) backgrounds. This is the situation of most migrants who want to enter an MS. Additionally, more and more often, migrants come from (post) warzones, or otherwise complicated societal circumstances, what makes the respect of human rights an extremely delicate issue. In fact, while decisions around the tests themselves can be based on equal conditions, and opportunities of the testing procedure, it is not possible to guarantee that all test takers have equal educational opportunities while preparing for the test in their home countries (Böcker & Strik, 2011;Groenendijk, 2011; Strik *et al*., 2010).

Prospective test takers should be given the same opportunities to regularly apply and practice what they have previously learned in the classroom, in case they have had the chance to attend a course. This can be rather complicated in the migration flow, particularly in the migrants' home countries, because of various aspects such as financial, geographical and personal problems together with difficult access to learning, and lack of prior access to test-taking equipment and conditions(Kunnan, 2000). These obstacles are likely to make learners feel frustrated. As a consequence of the de-motivation, procpective test takers may abandon their language studies.

In the light of these reflections, it seems clear that the use of language tests raises essential questions about fairness, as decision makers, such as politicians and policy makersseem to be aware of their power to determine the structure of a society, deciding who is 'in' and who is 'out' (McNamara & Roever, 2006; Shohamy, 2001; Van Avermaet, 2010). As a matter of fact, it is the power of tests that may lead those in authority to misuse of tests, and thus, to test takers' unequal and unfair treatment (Shohamy, 2001).

Other critical issues about fairness in language testing include such aspects as the impact of tests on teaching and learning process; unintended or undeclared purposes; consequences on individuals, groups of people, and society as a whole; attitudes that can make decision-makers treat individual testers, or tester groups, in a way that is unfair or different from the way they treat others (Shohamy, 2000).

Tests are quite often used in an undeclared way, not only in the educational, but also in the political scenarios to impose a new policy or practice (Böcker & Strik, 2011; Extra *et al*., 2009; Groenendijk, 2011; Shohamy, 2001; Strik *et al*., 2010; Van Avermaet, 2010). In the migration flow

language tests are more and more frequently and widely used as means of exclusion of migrants, especially of family migrants who want to reach their spouses, partners or minor children in Europe. According to Shohamy (2000) politicians tend to use language tests to resolve problems that are too difficult to handle through regular immigration/integration policy making.

The Code of Fair Testing Practices in Education (Code), prepared by the American Psychological Association aims to guarantee fairness in language testing[18]. This guide for professionals, developed by the Joint Committee on Testing Practices, helps professionals fulfil their obligation to provide and use tests that are fair to all test takers regardless of their age, gender, disability, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, linguistic background, or other personal characteristics.[19] According to the Code, fairness is a fundamental issue in all aspects of testing. Careful standardization of tests and accurate administration conditionsshould aim to ensure that all test takers are given a comparable opportunity to demonstrate what they know and how they can perform in the domain being tested.

Fairness thus implies that every test taker has the same opportunities to prepare for the test, and is informed about the general nature and content of the test as appropriate to the intended purpose. Fairness also extends to the accurate reporting of individual and group test results. As a matter of fact, fairness is not an isolated concept, but must be considered in all aspects and at all stages of the testing procedure, from the initial test design to the final impact on individuals and society as a whole.

In order to move from (high-stakes) testing to (authentic) assessment and introduce more democratic alternatives to formalized testing, Shohamy (2001) proposes some basic principles of alternative testing practices that exclude and discriminate against groups and individuals. In this regard, she suggests the application of critical language testing (CLT) to monitor the use of tests as instruments of power; follow-up of the consequences of tests;collaboration and cooperation between all those involved in the testing procedure; shared responsibility for the tests and their uses; collaboration of all stakeholder groups in designing tests; increasing awareness on the part of test takers to protect their rights; use-oriented testing (*ibidem*).

In the following paragraph I will present some possible alternative methods to assess migrants' language competences thatput them at the centre of the assessment process and are based on their individual language repertoire and L1 skills.

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[18]http://www.apa.org/science/programs/testing/fair-code.aspx.
[19]*Ibidem.*

2.8. New approaches

In recent years, more democratic approaches to language evaluation than formalized, standardized tests have been introduced and experimentedin order to make the testing process fairer (Beacco et al., 2014;*Council of Europe*, 2014; Shohamy, 2001). These approaches follow principles of shared power, collaboration between all stakeholders, democratic representation and participation (Shohamy, 2001).

Collaborative evaluation methods are used to foster improvement both in the course design and organization. Moreover, from this viewpoint, the evaluation stage is considered as an essential part of the teaching-learning process. Forms of self-assessment and reflection are encouraged through the adoption of methods in which evaluators do not act as experts and counselors 'who know it all', but as facilitators, who assist learners to reach their objectives, and as collaborators, who promote mutual understanding and cultivate shared responsibility (*ibidem*).

Collaborative approaches to evaluation are more democratic and fairer because they transfer the assessment process from central bodies to local ones, and thus share power. Besides, they involve the entire local community in an open forum that examines all the relevant matters of concern regarding the acts of teaching, learning and testing (*ibidem*). The local community is intended here as a group that includes test designers, teachers, schools/educational institutions, students, students' family members and external observers. All components of the community are to share power through an internal, multiple assessment procedure. In this approach each participant collects data and represents them in an interpretative and contextualized way to the other members of the community (*ibidem*).

The data collected obviously assume different forms which depend on the role of the participant. Students/candidates collect material for their language portfolios including self-assessment data and project participation; teachers collect material through classroom observation charts and other activities; schools and educational institutions collect material for administrative use and statistics. External observers and NGOs are involved in the process as to the respect for human rights and equal assessment conditions for those who have to be evaluated. Their role is also to safeguard the professional standards of observers/evaluatorsand of those responsible for defining the approach to evaluation and ensuring its successful implementation (*ibidem*). The data collected from different sources over time should be processed through "constructive, interpretative and dialogical sessions" (*ibid.*:379) in order to evaluate candidates with all the possible information on their educational progress. This kind of approach, which strengthens the triangulation of different

data and points of views, can be seen as "an art, rather than a science, in that it is interpretative, idiosyncratic, interpersonal and relative"(*ibid*.:380).

Moss (1996) reports on a language certification experimentation carried out in a local community through contextualization and shared power. This experimentation is based on a dialogue on the language portfolios, documented classroom observations and interactionsover time of a group of students. The dialogue takes place between a language professional, who knows the candidates' personal history, background and their educational context, and the candidates themselves. If an external observer/evaluator is present during the dialogue, his/her role is mainly auditory, but at the same time, he/she should ensure the equity and fairness of the assessment event and the tester's professional competence(Shohamy, 1996, 2001). This approach acknowledges the importance of the assessment context and starts to formulate the notion of validity as a consensus that can be reached through dialogue that takes place between different stakeholders such as teachers, students, parents, and not between disinterested external experts that have the important, but at the same time, limited role of observing the evaluation event (*ibidem*).

Shohamy (2001) gives an example of language testing of a group of immigrant students who were assessed through a mixed evaluation model, based on the principle of triangulation of different data. The final evaluation is the result of a number of agents from different sources and namely the teachers' tests and observations, the test takers' self-assessment and portfolios plus a standardized, formal diagnostic test administered by a central body (*ibidem*). This model also takes into account the principle of power sharing. As a matter of fact, to get the testing process transparent, effective and fair, power should not be transferred, but shared, which means that local and central bodies should actively collaborate throughout the process (*ibidem*).

The complexity and diversity of the migrants' background requires a global vision of the phenomenon. Large-scale, formalized language tests are used to manage the migration flow and resolve some of the main problems that regular integration policy is not capable to face. The discriminating role attributed to language poses questions on ethics and fairness as individuals' basic civil, personal and human rights may not be respected in high-stakes testing events that are likely to have long-reaching consequences on the their personal lives. For example, they may not be granted admission to a country because they do not possess a 'sufficient' knowledge of the destination country's dominant language. Likewise, third-country nationals' application for citizenship or for long-term residence permit may be refused only on the basis of a 'poor' language knowledge.

In conclusion, looking for quality both in language teaching and testing for third-country migrants who plan to move to another country, for example, an EU member state, means the same as seeking fairness, non-discrimination, transparency and ethicality. In this regard, all stakeholders should collaborate on the design of tailor-made language courses and methods of performance assessment, suited for the needs of various migrant groups, respecting both the diversity of their language repertoire and the command of their social communication in the host society, as well as their previous experiences in formal and informal learning.

CHAPTER III

Formal entry requirements

3.1. Family reunification

The Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and Council on guidance for application of Directive 2003/86/EC on the right to family reunification (European Commission, 2014) suggests that specific individual circumstances, such as cognitive abilities, vulnerable position of the person in question, special cases of inaccessibility of teaching/trainingand/or testing facilities, or other situations of exceptional hardship,should be taken into account throughout the testing procedure.

Likewise, the Communication (*ibidem*) highlights the importance of special attention that should be paid to women and girls whomight not have access to education in several parts of the world, and consequently might possess a lower literacy level than men. The Commission suggests that the MSs should provide the necessary integration measures for family members to learn about their new country of residence, and acquire language skills that can facilitate the integration process(*ibidem*) Therefore, the Commission states that language and KoS courses should be offered in an accessible way, this means, they should be free, or at least affordable, and tailored to potential test takers' individual needs, including gender specific needs, for example, childcare facilities.[1] This means that, as far as the practical side is concerned, all possible efforts should be made to allow women and girls to attend language courses. As to the gender specific needs in language acquisition and learning, as well as to the relationship between language and gender, it can be said that they have long been of interest within sociolinguistics, and related disciplines, but they are not specific issues in this research.

The INTEC research (Strik *et al*., 2010) focuses, first of all, on the reasons for introducing obligatory integration requirements, as well as on the way they were developed, and put into practice, and on the actual effects of the requirements for immigrants. Second, the results of this research demonstrate the high motivation of women regarding the fulfillment of pre-departure requirements (*ibidem*). As a matter of fact, according to these results, women seemed generally to be more motivated to learn and were more positive about the requirements than men (*ibidem*). The Report shows that those women who were able to attend a course of good quality in their country of

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[1] http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2014_2019/documents/com/com_com%282014%290210_/com_com%282014%290210_en.pdf.

origin, were more prepared to establish social contacts in the receiving country, gained more self-confidence and had more realistic expectations about their future life in the host country (*ibidem*).

However, according to a large number of both female and male respondents of the INTEC interviews, integration measures should not be imposed before the departure (*ibidem*). As a matter of fact, while pre-departure integration measures may help anticipate everyday problems, and prepare migrants for their new life in the host country by providing information and training before migration takes place, integration measures may often be far more effective in the host country (*ibidem*). For instance, language skills are likely to become more efficient when migrants have the opportunity to practice the language(s) of the host country in their social space in the destination country.

In the last past twenty years, family reunification has been one of the most significant reasons for immigration into the EU.[2]Family reunification is an entry channel that enables those third-country nationals, who already reside legally in an MS and are commonly referred to as sponsors, to be joined by the rest of their family. Family reunification is considered a crucial strategy in the promotion ofsocio-cultural stability, but notwithstanding the clear social advantages of the family reunification, this right is not unlimited. Moreover, the beneficiaries of this action are obliged to obey the laws of their host country, as set out in the CouncilDirective 2003/86/EC of 22 September 2003 on the right to family reunification.

This Directiveestablishes the common rules for exercising the right to family reunion in thetwenty-fiveEU Member States (excluding the United Kingdom, Ireland and Denmark).[3]It applies only to third-country national sponsors, which means, any person who is not a citizen of the Union. It also officially establishes the conditions under which family reunification can be granted and determines procedural guarantees, and provides rights for the family members.

The Communication from the Commission to the European parliament and the Council on guidance for application of Directive 2003/86/EC on the right to family reunification (European Council, 2014) clarifies,that the Directive must be interpreted and applied in accordance with fundamental human rights, and in particular, with the right to respect private and family life, the principle of non-discrimination, the rights of the child and the right to an effective remedy, as enshrined in the European Convention of Human Rights ('ECHR') and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights ('the Charter').[4]

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[2]http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/legal-migration/family-reunification/index_en.htm.
[3]http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32003L0086&from=EN.
[4]http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2014_2019/documents/com/com_com%282014%290210_/com_com%282014%290210_en.pdf.

Hence, sponsors have the right to preserve the family unit, whether the family relationship arose before, or after the resident's entryto an MS. Moreover, sponsors can bring their spouse, minor children and the children of their spouse to the country in which they are residing.[5] The MSs have also the faculty to authorize the reunification with an unmarried partner, an adult dependent children, or dependent parents and grandparents. [6]

Once allowed to enter the target MS, family members receive a residence permit and obtain access to education, employment and vocational training on the same basis as their sponsor.[7] After a maximum of five years of residence, family members may apply for an autonomous permit.[8] Even if the MSs are recognized as having a certain margin of appreciation, the right to family reunification has to be considered as a general rule, which means, that derogations are to be interpreted as strictly as possible.[9] In short, the margin of appreciation should never be used in a way that would undermine the main objective of the Directive, which is to promote family reunification as widely as possible.

For instance, the MSs may extend the right to family reunification to family members, other than the spouse and minor children. The MSs may impose a requirement on familymembers to comply with integration measures under Article 7(2)that claims as follows: "Member States may require third country nationals to comply with integration measures, in accordance with national law".[10] However, these measures may not amount to an absolute condition upon which the right to family reunification is dependent.[11]

The Directive 2003/86/EC on the right to family reunification (European Council, 2014) includes some requirements that may be considered as pre-conditions the MSs may require the sponsor to achieve before authorizing the entry and residence of his/her family members. The Article 7(1)1 states as follows:

When the application for family reunification is submitted, the Member State concerned may require the person who has submitted the application to provide evidence that the sponsor has:
(a) accommodation regarded as normal for a comparable family in the same region and which meets the general health and safety standards in force in the Member State concerned;

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[5] http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/legal-migration/family-reunification/index_en.htm.
[6] *Ibidem.*
[7] *Ibidem.*
[8] *Ibidem.*
[9] http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2014_2019/documents/com/com_com%282014%290210_/com_com%282014%290210_en.pdf
[10] http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32003L0086&from=EN
[11] *Ibidem.*

(b) sickness insurance in respect of all risks normally covered for its own nationals in the Member State concerned for himself/herself and the members of his/her family;

(c) stable and regular resources which are sufficient to maintain himself/herself and the members of his/her family, without recourse to the social assistance system of the Member State concerned. Member States shall evaluate these resources by reference to their nature and regularity and may take into account the level of minimum national wages and pensions as well as the number of family members.[12]

In contrast to Article 7(1)1, Article 7(2) gives the MSs the opportunity to require third-country nationals to comply with integration measures.[13] They may require family members to make a certain effort to demonstrate theirwillingness to integrate, for instance, through participation in language or integration courses, before or after their arrival. Since these measures should help facilitate, and not hinder the integration process, an MS should closely follow the guidelines in the transposition of EU directives into a national law.[14]

3.2. A long journey to citizenship

The EUDO Glossary on Citizenship and Nationality defines the notion of citizenship as "A legal status and relation between an individual and a state that entails specific legal rights and duties."[15] This means that legal citizenship gives the same rights and duties to migrants as to other citizens of a given country. Hence migrants should be provided with all the necessary information on the available pathways and specific requirements regarding naturalization as early as possible after their arrival, or even at the pre-departure stage. The conditions to apply for the long-term residency permit and citizenship vary from one country to another in the EU area. The MSs may have different requirements, for example, concerning the length of legal residence, extent of participation in host society, the level of language mastery, and the knowledge of the receiving country's societal aspects.

It is important to monitor, analyze, evaluate and compare what the national governments are doing to promote the integration of migrants.The Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX) is a tool that measures policies to integrate migrants not only in all EU Member States, but also in a number of countries across the world: Australia, Canada, Iceland, Japan, South Korea, New Zealand, Norway, Switzerland, Turkey and the USA.[16]

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[12]*Ibidem.*
[13]*Ibidem.*
[14]*Ibidem.*
[15]http://eudo-citizenship.eu/databases/citizenship-glossary/glossary#Cithip.
[16]http://mipex.eu/what-is-mipex.

According to 2015 Index, the citizenship policies remain one of the major areas of weakness in most European countries: "The highly discretionary and costly path to citizenship often discourages rather than encourages immigrants to apply and succeed as new citizens."[17] Consequently, citizenship acquisition rates in Europe remain relatively low, with significant variation between the MSs, and between different migrant groups. Moreover, comprehensive pathways towards citizenship seem to be the exception, rather than the rule across Europe.

For instance, the Netherlands dropped eight places compared to the previous 2004 Migrant Integration Policy Index, because of the introduction of strengthened anti-immigrant policies.[18] Migrants in the Netherlands are required to learn Dutch, however they are not given any support in doing so, as a matter of fact: "National funding was cut for targeted language, employment programs and coaches/mentors for immigrants, including for vulnerable groups such as immigrant women and youth."[19]

The results of the 2015 Index reveal that "[...] immigrants' opportunities to become citizens have improved in 11 countries from all corners of Europe."[20]However, according to Shohamy (2009:53) there are "[…] currently strong arguments against the use of 'citizenship' as a category and membership granted by states". This means that the concept of citizenship has to be thought over from a new transnational, even from a more individualized perspective.

Accordingly, some human rights activists have proposed alternative concepts that focus on the notion of "'personhood' rather than 'nationhood'", that could defend migrants' rights from discriminating policies (*ibid*.:53). For instance, migrants are required to pass a language, and is some cases also a KoS test, in order to obtain citizenship regardless of the length of their permanency, status, wages, educational background, just to name a few requirementscurrently in use in most MSs. As a matter of fact, these aspects together with delays, and demanding measures, may discourage the potential applicants from making a formal request (Council of Europe, 2014).The journey to citizenship is also very long: in thirteen MIPEX countries the residence requirement is five years, which is the most common requirement, while the average is seven years.[21]

There is thus a need to go beyond the legal aspects of citizenship, towards a broader concept of "*universal* citizenship" (Shohamy, 2009:53) that could allow migrants to maintain their cultures

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[17]http://mipex.eu/access-nationality.
[18]*Ibidem.*
[19]*Ibidem.*
[20]*Ibidem.*
[21]*Ibidem.*

and basic identities on the one hand, and promote migrants' active democratic participation in society on the other. As a matter of fact, integration is a two-way process in which, both the receiving society and the migrants, have to play an active role (Blommaert, 2006a).

In this regard, the Council of Europe has elaborated two non-binding documents: Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education, and a Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers (CM/Rec(2010)7 (Council of Europe, 2014). These documents have an inclusive approach to integration and thus, to democratic citizenship that "[…] promotes social cohesion, intercultural understanding and respect for human dignity and values diversity" (*ibid.*:55). The basic idea is to back up an approach to education for democratic citizenship for all members of society, both citizens and non-citizens, and to empower them to exercise and defend their basic civil rights.

This means that the necessary knowledge, attitudes and competences required for long-term residence and citizenship purposes are an essential part of lifelong learning process not only for migrants, but for all members of society, both citizens and non-citizens. In the case of migrants, specific integration courses may provide them with the essential info on society through awareness raising activities, but above all, this kind of occupation can prepare them on how to go on with their own skills beyond the classroom. Consequently, "This concept of (education for) citizenship does not lend itself to standard forms of evaluation"(*ibid.*:55).

From this new viewpoint, citizenship is seen as an active, continual process of participation, in which citizenship cannot be considered the ultimate purpose. A broader perspective of citizenship should be viewed in the context of lifelong learning in order to increase the sense of belonging to the receiving society irrespective of whether migrants are aiming at citizenship (*ibid.*). In other words, active, ongoing participation in social, economic, cultural and political life can be viewed as a form of citizenship, that is, a process which may include, but not necessarily, the objective of legal citizenship.

The ongoing process of social participation as a form of citizenship can proceed even with limited language proficiency. The knowledge of the host country's official language(s) is likely to facilitate integration at least partially, but there is no evidence that good language skills guarantee automatic success in integration. This aspect is critical when language testing is connected with granting of citizenship.

Hence, it is not possible to evaluate migrants' integration through a single language test, often accompanied by a KoS test, administered at a specific point in time. Language learning is a lifelong process, hence, language requirements should not be used as preconditions in order to

decide who is 'in' and who is 'out', or who can be a good citizen. Shohamy (2009:49) wonders whether "[…] the acquisition of 'national' languages should not be a choice for people who can make their own best rational decisions as to the language they need to know and use in a multilingual, transnational world". On the basis of the broader notion of citizenship, which focuses on active democratic participation, language mastery develops gradually over time through real-life activities migrants carry out in their social space in the host country.

However, migrants' language ability is evaluated for various purposes, so assessment may take different forms, and be administered at different points in time. Tests, oral interviews, etc. may be administered, for example, in relation to migrants' language level and needs analysis in language course setting, or they may be used at the end of a course to monitor if the educational objectives have been reached. Migrants may be encouraged to use self-assessment tools, such as the ELP specially designed for adult migrants,that allow them to collect all possible (formal and informal) materials that demonstrate on any occasion what they 'can do' in a given language.

The most critical aspect in the context of migrants' language assessment is when this knowledge is required as a precondition, for example, for long-term residence or citizenship. Tests are also more and more often administered in the migrants' home countries, for instance, for family reunification as a pre-departure measure. Test and course administration abroad is complicated for several reasons. Test takers may have to travel across long distances to reach the course or testing sites. Some areas of the world, such as (post) warzones, are dangerous. Some potential test takers, such as girls and women, are more vulnerable than others. Moreover, it may not be possible to arrange special equipment or conditions, for instance, for visually or hearing impaired.

However, the access to entitlement to citizenship in the EU countries is largely conditioned by language, economic and integration requirements. Moreover, the applicants must pay fees to start the application procedure they often cannot afford. Official language requirements vary consistently across Europe from A1 to B1 level depicting a fairly heterogeneous picture. Knowing the host country's language(s) may help migrants in their integration process, as it facilitates active participation in society, but it cannot by any means be considered an end-state or a reward. Additionally, from a long–term perspective, active citizenship should not only focus on the public sphere but take into consideration the private sphere as well, in terms of nurturing and encouraging the next generation (Breen & Rees, 2009).

In conclusion, migrants who meet the eligibility requirements, are granted citizenship through ordinary naturalization that "is a modality of acquisition of citizenship after birth of a citizenship not previously held by the target person that requires an application by this person or his

or her legal agent" (Vink, 2016:9).Whereas some decades ago naturalization required a discretionary act of granting citizenship by a public authority, more and more countries in Europe have promulgated laws that provide for a nearly automatic acquisition of citizenship by a person who fulfills the eligibility criteria, and is entitled to naturalization upon application (*ibidem*). Yet, in the EU, only seven countries, namely Croatia, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, and Spain out of twenty-eight MSs currently have such an entitlement to citizenship in their ordinary naturalization procedure.[22]

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[22]http://eudo-citizenship.eu/databases/.

CHAPTER IV

Concepts in assessment and test validation

4.1. Needs analysis

A needs analysis includes all the activities used to collect information about students' learning needs, preferences, wishes, and interests. This process can also involve taking into account expectations and requirements of other stakeholders such as test designers, educational authorities, teachers, the host community and the public administrators, and other people, who may be impacted by the consequences of the test/assessment, such as students' family members or employers (*Council of Europe*, 2016a).

There are different kinds of needs analysis: it can be formal, extensive and time consuming, as in the case of needs analysis in the migration flow, or it can be informal, narrowly focused and quick, as in most classroom situations in which teachers conduct needs analyses in order to assess what language points their students need to master. A needs analysis can be conducted through various resources such as surveys, questionnaires, test scores, interviews, attitude scales, language tests, job analyses, content analyses, statistical analyses, observation, data collection, or informal consultation (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987; Palacios Martínez, 1994). The information gathered from a needs analysis can be used, on the one hand, to help design syllabuses, and to define language testing/assessment methods, on the other.

During the history of needs analysis in language teaching, several approaches have been developed and, in turn, replaced by other approaches, since the term was first introduced by Michael West in the 1920s (West, 1994). The term 'needs analysis' was introduced to cover two separate concepts: that of 'need', and that of the aspect that contributes to the 'value of learning', that is, what learners are asked to do with the language in a given situation, and how they might best cope with the language during the training period (*ibid*.:1).

It goes without saying that learners' individual needs pose a great challenge to those professionals who have to design tests and language courses, prepare educational material, administer testing and assessment, and develop language policies for different contexts. Empirical research in needs analysis in language learning of specific groups of learners reveals that needs are learner- or group-specific, and that they are closely linked to local contexts, and can change over time (Van Avermaet *et al*., 2004). This means that from an organisational point of view, policy makers should take efforts to give an input to the professionals in charge of developing courses and tests to meet different needs profiles. Moreover, it should be guaranteed that language courses and

tests are organised in such a way that they remain affordable and practicable (Van Avermaet & Gysen, 2006).

This implies, first of all, that a great variety of individual learning needs must be assembled into a practical, effective number of needs profiles. Until the 1970s, language learning needs were determined by language teachers and educationalists (*ibidem*). In the 1970s a new focus on learners' needs arouse from the interest in the design of language courses that could also satisfy individual and social needs (Palacios Martínez, 1992). The development of needs analysis first evolved in association with the teaching of languages for specific purposes.

With the publication of Munby's Communicative Syllabus Design (1978), needs analysis moved towards placing the learner's purposes into the central position within the framework of needs analysis.The heart of Munby's mode is called "Communication Needs Processor" (CNP) into which the information on learners is fed. CNP consists of a number of categories, such as purposive domain, setting, interaction, instrumentality, dialect, target level, communicative event and key, participant's profile (*ibidem*). After processing all these categories, the result will be the profile of the individual learner's needs. In other words, Munby's model is to give a description of what the student will be expected to do with the language at the end of a language course. Consequently, from this viewpoint, the design of syllabuses for language courses can only take place after a preliminary work on the learners' needs.

Since needs analysis is a complex process, other scholars after Munby have added further aspects to the mere list of the linguistic features of the target situation. For example, Hutchinson and Waters (1987) state that a particular factor, which they define as 'target needs', should be taken into account. 'Target needs' are what learners should be able to do in the target situation, how they should be able to use the language, and what learners should do in order to learn a foreign language (*ibidem*). After Munby's Communicative Syllabus Design and Hutchinson and Waters'target needs analysis, a great number of other approaches to needs analysis have been introduced, just to name a few of them: Present Situation Analysis, Pedagogic Needs Analysis, Deficiency Analysis, Strategy Analysis or Learning Needs Analysis, Means Analysis, Register analysis, Discourse analysis, and Genre Analysis (Songhori, 2008).

In a more recent view, the analysis of the target needs, that is, what the learners need to do in the target situation (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987), is not considered descriptive enough to have a global vision of the learners' real-world needs. In other words, an analysis of the mere objective needs, which can be deduced from such factors as the learners' personal traits and their language proficiency, is not sufficient to depict a full picture of the learners' needs. To complete the picture,

learners' subjective needs, which involve their affective needs, such as their interests, wishes, expectations and preferences, are equally important as the target needs. Hence, on the basis of a comprehensive learner profile, both target needs and affective needs, should be taken into consideration to the same degree to shape courses and tests/assessment processes (Nunan, 1988).

While objective needs refer to other parties than the learners themselves, subjective needs are based on learners' own opinions and experiences. Curiously enough, learners and teachers seem to have different perceptions as to the students' pedagogical needs. In this regard, Van Avermaet and Gysen (2006) summarize the results of their research onthe importance given by teachers and learners to some basic classrooms. The results show that students do not seem to appreciate activities such as working with cassettes, discovering their mistakes, using photos or movies or pair work but seem to judge more traditional, teacher-guided activities more positively (*ibidem*). Interestingly, teachers and learners seem only to agree on the importance of conversation practice, while in all other cases their opinions are divergent (*ibidem*). This research leads to the conclusion that both learners' and the teachers' viewpoints are equally important and thus, they have to be taken into consideration when designing courses, tests and choosing the evaluation format.

However, learners themselves are not always aware of the specific language requests and required language level in certain domains, such as the world of work or social domain. Teachers should make learners reflect on their objective and subjective needs, and take them into account in an equal manner when designing a language syllabus and choosing the evaluation format. As a matter of fact, it would be fruitless to follow only objective needs in curriculum design. If students do not perceive there is a clear link between what they are studying and their expectations of the target language in the outside world, they are likely to lose their interest and enthusiasm.

People want to learn languages for a number of different reasons. This means that each learner has his/her specific needs and objectives when learning a new language, from reading a book in the original language, getting a (better) job or travelling to foreign countries (*ibidem*). With regard to the variety of needs, desires and goals in the migration flow, Van Avermaet and Gysen (2006) propose a task-based approach that takes learners' language learning needs into account by interpreting them as an answer to the fundamental question "why do immigrants want to learn the language of the majority group of the host country?" (*ibid*.:2). This question makes us reflect on the societal domains in which immigrants are likely find themselves while using the majority language. However, there is no answer to this crucial question; on the contrary, it has to be completed with another question, that is, "what language the learner needs to acquire?" (*ibid*.:2). These two

complementary questions give insight into the societal domain in which an individual is determined by what he/she needs to be able to do with the language.

Task-based learning seems to offer a pedagogical solution to these questions. In the task-based learning the lesson is built around the completion of a central task, and the language is determined by what happens as the students complete it through various activities. The advantage of this approach is that tasks can be shaped according to different kinds of activities the learners are likely to do in the target language in the outside world. In the task-based approach learners' needs are the starting point to the course design in order to avoid de-motivating students or making them drop out (*ibidem*).

In the educational contexts, objectives can be stated as specific teaching goals, which in turn will function as the foundation on which it is possible to develop lesson plans, materials, tests, assignments and activities. An important point in needs analysis is that it does not only represent a pre-stage procedure to design suitable syllabuses, and adopt effective teaching and evaluation methods. It is definitely an on-going process that can be used to adapt and modify the course design. Indeed, it is necessary to define the learners' (present and future) needs in progress as accurately as possible. This is because the ultimate goal of the language training is to prepare learners for the real language use beyond the confines of the classroom.

In the migration context those in charge for immigration policy play a crucial role in conducting needs analyses, since the questions ofintegration are at the heart of the issue. Hence, it is important to reflect on whether passing the test might lead only to improved language proficiency, or whether mastering the language better could also back up the migrant's integration, and what the likely impact would be on the course provision and content (*ibidem*). Moreover, if language courses and testing/assessment processes are seriously intended to support integration, these should be planned bearing in mind both migrants' and host community's needs (*ibidem*). The two complementary viewpoints show clearly that integration is a two-way process, and has to be handled with care.

In the migration context, it is important to distinguish between the needs identified by analysts and stakeholders such as policy makers, administrators, politicians and those expressed or perceived by migrants. A comprehensive needs analysis helps the stakeholders to clarify the purposes, and the impact of language and KoS tests both on migrants and on the receiving society as a whole. An accurate needs analysis should thus take into account issues, such as the moment in which evidence of language proficiency has to be provided. In other words, it is particularly

important to point out whether the procedure has to take place before or after the arrival in the host country.

In recent years, the MSs have started to anticipate the testing procedure by administering language tests abroad before the admission to the host country. On the other side of the coin, migrants do not agree on this tendency, and criticize the timing and localization of the tests in their home countries (Strik*et al.*, 2010). Moreover, each MS has to decide what type of evidence, for example, language certificates, can be accepted to show the language knowledge instead of taking a test. Accordingly, each MS is free to establish the required language level for the three most important events when language testing is normally provided in the EU area, that is to say, for family reunification, long-term residency permit and citizenship.

A comprehensive needs analysis is important for immigration and integration policy makers, as well as for other stakeholder groups, such as educational authorities, test designers, teachers, the host community, and the public. A needs analysis can indeed collect a variety of information, such as the range of countries the migrants are likely to come from to the host country, the purpose of migration (work, residency, family reunification), their language repertoire, their literacy level and overall skills background. A needs analysis should also collect information as to gender and age, as well as to the linguistic domains, in which migrants are likely to find themselves in the host country, that is, personal, public, occupational and educational contexts. This means, first of all, that a needs analysis should gather data as to the real-world situations the migrants are likely to face, for example, in their prospective workplace. Results of the needs analysis may lead to consider alternative non-formal and informal forms of assessment, different from the formalized large-scale testing, such as language portfolios, observation charts, storytelling, etc. The most important question here is about potential challenges and (dis)advantages of these options, if compared to current standardized tests in place (*Council of Europe*, 2016a).

Anyhow, scores of language tests, both formal and informal, are used to make various kinds of decisions, which are likely to impact individuals and society as a whole. This is why test design is closely aligned with the decisions that have to be made. When defining the purpose of a language test in the migration context, among various factors, such as reliability, practicality and authenticity (*ibidem*), it is equally important to take into account the impact factor of the test. This means that the reflection should go beyond the traditional categories of test types, such as placement, achievement, progress, proficiency and diagnostic test and focus on the vision of future scenarios (Fulcher & Davidson, 2009). These scholars state that "Tests that do not state purpose are as useless in decision making as are buildings that are designed without users in mind" (*ibid.*:125). In other

words, "No test is valid for all purposes or in all situations or for all groups of individuals" (AERA, 1999:17). Therefore it is extremely important to explicitly define the purpose of each single test in order to avoid "validity chaos" (Chalhoub-Deville & Fulcher, 2003:502).

4.2. Validity

Test validity, or the validation of a test, means validating the use of a test in a specific context, such as university admission, or placement into a course. Regardless of the form a test takes, its most relevant element is how the test results are used, and the way those results impact individuals, and society as a whole. A test that is suitable and appropriate in one situation, may be totally inappropriate, or insufficient in another. For instance, a test that results adequate in the general educational diagnosis, may be either completely inadequate in determining graduation from upper secondary school, or inappropriate in evaluating a migrant's language knowledge when moving to another country. When determining the validity of a test, it is indeed important to study the test results in the setting in which they are used. Messick (1993) defines validity as "[…] an integrated evaluative judgment of the degree to which empirical evidence and theoretical rationales support the adequacy and appropriateness of interpretations and actions based on test scores or other modes of assessment" (*ibid*.:2). According to Messick (1993), validity is a matter of degree since tests cannot be defined absolutely valid, or absolutely invalid. This means, validity evidence will continue to gatherover time, either enhancing, or contradicting, previous findings.

Crocker and Algina (1986) identify three key types of validity studies: content validity, which addresses the match between test questions and the content or subject area they are intended to assess; criterion-related validity, which describes the relationship between a test score and an outcome, and construct validity, which refers to the extent to which a test, or other evaluation method, assesses the underlying theoretical construct it is supposed to measure, i.e., the test is measuring what it is expected to measure. These three types of validity definitions include additional concepts of validity (*ibidem*). The content validity of a test is completed through face validity and curricular validity. Face validity refers to the degree to which a test, or the questions on a test, appear to measure a particular construct as viewed by examinees/ test takers, the public, or other stakeholders, while curricular validity looks at the extent to which the content of the test matches with the goals of a specific curriculum as it is formally described.[1]

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[1] https://research.collegeboard.org/services/aces/validity/handbook/evidence#contentvalid.

Predictive and concurrent validity can be used to establish criterion-related validity. Predictive validity refers to the power, or usefulness of the test scores, when predicting future performances, while concurrent validity is involved, whenever one measure is substituted for another, for instance, when allowing students to pass a test instead of taking a course.[2] To establish construct validity, convergent validity and/or discriminant validity studies can be used. Evidence from content and criterion-related validity studies can also be used to establish construct validity.[3]

In the last past few years, consequential validity, which requires an inquiry into the social consequences of the test use, that are not connected to the construct being tested, but which have an influence on one or more groups, has been increasingly proposed as the fourth major type of validity (Messick, 1989). The notion of consequential validity, which links the considerations on the validity of interpretations to the consequences of the test use, has indeed become a central concept in language testing (Bachman, 2000). Accordingly, Bachman (*ibid.*:85) states that "The central question is whether the proposed testing should serve as the means to the intended end, in the light of other ends it might inadvertently serve and in consideration of the place of the intended end in the pluralistic framework of social choices". In other words, a test is supposed to have consequential validity to the extent that society benefits from the use of that specific test.

The key notion here is the impact on citizens, or a specific group of citizens of a given society. Fulcher & Davidson (2007:143) affirm that any test can be defined "[…] as its consequences". That is why any test should be designed, and implemented, with its impact in mind, since this seems the only way to expect the intended results to come true. Test designers should try to imagine the impact the test is going to have in the future, and manage the test development process in order to achieve that precise effect. This kind of procedure is referred to as "effect-driven testing" (*ibid.*:144).

Effect-driven testing is concerned with the probability that a score interpretation coincides with its corresponding meaning in the intended object of measurement, and that decisions made on the basis of the interpretations are not applied beyond the contexts, or domains of reasonable extrapolation (Fulcher, 2010). In effect-driven testing a model is expected to act as a source of ideas for the selection of constructs that are useful and relevant to the design of tests for specific objectives.

In this sense, the CEFR is not considered to have the same purpose (Fulcher, 2010; Fulcher & Davidson, 2007). On the contrary, it is viewed as a general document, a high-level generic model

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[2] *Ibidem.*
[3] *Ibidem.*

for "[…] it is intended to be an encyclopedic taxonomy of what we know about language that is not tied to any context of use […]" (Fulcher, 2010:18). Indeed, models do not deal with the purposes of tests, but they can be turned to, as a way of solving problems by finding solutionsonce the intended purpose is determined. McNamara (2010) criticized the words in which the outcomes of language education are specified in the CEFR, since he considers them as expressions of policy. In his opinion, the CEFR lends itself to a reduction to simple numbers (A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, C2), which are designed to meet the needs of those responsible for the accountability of educational systems (*ibidem*). He believes that "[…] the test construct, and its wording, are determined by complex policy procedures" (*ibid.*:7).

The character of the test construct, and the contexts in which the tests are used, for example, in testing language knowledge for immigration and citizenship, cannot be determined by the test designers, but are, at least in part, if not completely, externally determined as a function of policy and political processes (*ibidem*). This means thatlanguage testing has to face dilemmas of responsibility that regard all the stakeholders in the testing procedure as it is more and more related to policy making.

Finally, test validity is closely connectedto reliability. Validity refers to 'what' the raters are measuring, while reliability has to do with 'how'evaluators/raters are measuring. Validity thus deals with the knowledge and the skills that are tested/measured. Reliability, instead, refers to three main factors: forms and conditions, test takers, and the way in which the test is scored.

Firstly, reliability refers both to the facets that include the form(s) of test and the conditions under which it is taken. Secondly, reliability involves all the aspects that concern the test takers. Thirdly, reliability has to do with the manner in which the test is scored. A central factor in this respect is rater consistency (i.e., the agreement between the raters as to the scores and the judgments related to a particular test). Rater consistency is a particularly critical issue in those tests that involve subjective judgments, such as essays and compositions.

4.3. Reliability

Reliability is one of the central concepts of testing in general, and of language testing in particular, together with validity, practicality and fairness. Whereas validity is concerned with 'what' a test is expected to measure (i.e., with the purposes of a test), reliability is concerned with 'how' the results are measured. The most relevant aspects of reliability of a test involve both the accuracy of scoring and that of the administration procedures of the test. Reliability looks at

different aspects of language testing as it essentially focuses on how repeatable test results can be(*ibidem*).

A test cannot be considered reliable if it does not produce consistent scores, since it is unrealistic to make effective future decisions on the basis of inconsistent scores. In other words, a language test can be considered reliable only to the extent that it measures invariably what it is supposed to measure. On the contrary, if a test does not measure consistently, then it is not possible to count on the test results, which means that the results cannot be considered an accurate index of the learners' achievement, progress or language level (Chiedu & Omenogor, 2014).

According to Maduekwe (2007), reliability of a test is referred to the connection between a well prepared language test and consistent results. In other words, an efficient language test should always measure whatever it is expected to measure under any and all conditions (*ibidem*). In the same vein, Bachman and Palmer (1996) define reliability as the consistency of measurement. Reliability essentially provides a measure of the extent to which a test taker's results reflect random measurement errors, which may depend on test-specific, examinee-specific and scoring-specific factors (Chiedu & Omenogor, 2014).

Transparent conditions under which tests are taken, such as clear instructions, unequivocal questions and unambiguous items that do not permit any form of guessing, have a positive impact on reliability. Other test-specific factors, such as the testing environment, the time of testing, as well as the test setting and the test organization may affect the reliability of a test negatively or positively. For example, if two different forms of a test are given to two different individuals, or groups, both versions should be testing the same items and constructs, and offer the same degree of difficulty (*ibidem*). Moreover, if test takers in one test group are allowed to communicate with each other during the test, and another group is not given the same opportunity, this will negativelyaffect the reliability of the test. Measurement errors can be caused by examinee-specific factors that include memory slips, good or bad luck in guessing, carelessness in giving answers. Also students' lack of motivation and concentration, their sense of fatigue, or boredom, may lead to measurement errors (*ibidem*). In this regard teachers/examiners play an important role, as they can point out the importance of the performance for the test takers' future (a new job, residence permit, citizenship, etc.) encouraging them to do their best.

Rater/examiner reliability is a key aspect in this regard, as scores can only be consistent, if those who evaluate know what they are measuring, scoring or marking. Yet, even if the professionals know what they are measuring, that is, they are aware of the intended purpose of a specific test, this circumstance does not automatically produce consistent, accurate and reliable

results (*ibidem*). This means that those responsible for evaluation in all possible contexts not only have to know their subject well, but they also have to be aware of the far-reaching consequences of the individuals' performance. Rater reliability is external to the test itself, as it does not have to do with intrinsic elements of the test such as its form, or the conditions under which it is taken (Wells & Wollack, 2003). Rater reliability involves the manner in which the tests are marked focusing on scoring-specific factors, such as unclear marking guidelines, carelessness and counting as well as computational errors, which may have a negative impact on reliability (*ibidem*).

Additionally, inter-rater reliability, which mainly involves individual, personal judgments on essays, portfolios and compositions should include an agreement between the raters/judges/evaluators on scores and judgments related to a particular test, because each evaluator can interpret students' work or performance from a different, subjective point of view (Chiedu & Omenogor, 2014). Thus, different situations may occur in a commission of raters, or where raters work in pair: raters may agree on the result after a shared reflection, or they can, *viceversa*, find a compromise. Finally, each rater may back up his/her own evaluation without any concession.

Test-retest, parallel forms, rater reliability (inter-rater and intra-rater reliability), and item reliability are the four main methods of determining reliability in language testing (*ibidem*). The test-retest reliability method (same test takers, different times) is one of the less complicated ways of testing the stability and reliability of a measurement instrument over time. For example, if a group of learners takes a test, they are expected to show very similar results if they take the same test some time later. Parallel forms reliability (different test takers, same time, different test) is a measure of reliability obtained by administering different forms of an assessment tool, for example when a teacher prepares two versions of the same test just varying the items slightly (*ibidem*). Both versions should contain items that probe the same construct, skill, knowledge base, etc. to the two test taker groups. Finally, it should be possible to correlate the results from the Test 1 and Test 2, in order to define the consistency of the scores between the two versions of the test (*ibidem*).

There are two kinds of rater reliability: intra-rater and inter-rater reliability. Intra-rater reliability stands for consistency within the raters themselves. For example, raters/evaluators may have a large number of exam papers to mark, but not enough time to mark them: at the beginning, they are likely to pay more attention to the papers than to the last of them. In this case, inconsistency affects the students' marks since the first might get higher marks than their colleagues whose papers are scored when the evaluators are already tired. Inter-rater reliabilityis a measure of reliability used to assess the extent to which different evaluators/raters agree in their assessment decisions (*ibidem*). Inter-rater reliability may prove useful because evaluators do not necessarily

interpret test takers' open answers or compositions in the same way. They may disagree as to what extent certain responses, or materials, effectively show the knowledge of the skill being assessed. Inter-rater reliability is useful when different raters have to evaluate collections of materials of work doneover time by learners such as language portfolios.

As a matter of fact, inter-rater reliability is especially meaningful when assessment is considered relatively individual and personal, that is, subjective. Subjective assessment includes by its very nature more than one correct answer/option or more than one way of expressing the correct answer like in open-ended questions and essays. Thus two evaluators may assess the responses or compositions in a different way; even the same teacher may give a different mark, if he/she were to assess the essay after a period of time (*ibidem*).

Test takers who fail may protest about various aspects of the testing procedure, for example, test-specific factors such as unclear exam questions and instructions, uncomfortable test taking environment, scarce testing time, unfair test organization, and scoring-specific factors such as counting plus computational errors (Wells & Wollack, 2003). However, the role of rater reliability in assessment, both intra- and inter-rater reliability (i.e., how to be as fair as possible in scoring a test and giving judgments/marks), is the most critical, and thus, takes precedence over all other issues in testing. It has been argued that the distinction between objective evaluation, which includes a single correct answer such as true/false options, multiple choice and matching questions, and subjective evaluation, is neither useful nor accurate, because objective assessment is only a commonly accepted convention in the educational environment that does not exist outside the classroom (*ibidem*). As a matter of fact, all forms of assessment are created with inherent biases built into decisions about relevant subject matter and content, as well as with biases concerning traditional cultural categories such as social class, ethnic group and gender.

However, it is a lot easier to agree on the correctness of a grammar item (commonly considered the objective part) than on the quality of an essay (commonly considered the subjective whole). This means that language use is much more difficult to assess than grammar. Anyhow, it can be argued that even if grammar itself is not communication,language for real-life needs makes use of the basic building blocks of grammar. On the other side of the coin, it is also true that most grammar items are either right or wrong, whereas upon evaluating an essay, it is much more complicated to assess large chunks of language. This is why there is often a wide range of scores between different raters/evaluators. This means that grammar scores are often accurate (reliable), but less valid, while composition scores are often inaccurate (unreliable), but more valid. From the practical side, essays or compositions are much more complex to mark than grammar items because

students' free production is much more authentic than grammar. Upon assessing essays or compositions, raters/evaluators need to look at aspects of language such as cohesion and coherencewhich deal with how sentences and phrases form longer chunks of discourse than single grammar items (*ibidem*). For this reason, composition writing can be considered a real-life language taskas it includes all the three important components of language use, namely content, organization and language. As such it gives the examiner a better understanding of the examinee's global language competence.

Sawyer (2004) states that if testing cannot be considered an objective enterprise, then special attention should be paid to the methods which can reduce negative, undesired consequences of individual rater subjectivity. Bachman (1990) points out the importance of a well-planned test design to exclude, or at least, to minimize the impact of distracting (side) effects in order to focus only on the skill that is to be measured. If a test is not adequately designed, its reliability will be automatically low. In case a test is so easy that every student gets most, or all, items right, or so complicated that every student gets most, or all, items wrong, the test has to be classified as unreliable with results that cannot be used to make future educational decisions (*ibidem*). On the other side of the coin, a carefully prepared test/exam is also easier to be scored. Chiedu and Omenogor (2014) focus on both the importance of a careful construction of test items and the relevance of clear instructions that allow test takers to know exactly what they are expected to do. Additionally, a test with clear objectives can help overcome one of the greatest obstacles in the test development, that is, the lack of agreement among professionals on what it means to know a language, what aspects of language knowledge should be tested, and how these aspects should be tested.

Internal consistency reliability (different questions, same construct) is a method through which language professionals assess how well the items on a test that are introduced to measure the same construct and produce similar results (Wells & Wollack, 2003). In other words, it defines the consistency of the results delivered on a test, ensuring that various items that measure different constructs, deliver reliable scores. For example, if a language test is divided into vocabulary, spelling, punctuation and grammar sections, the internal consistency reliability provides a measure that guarantees that each of these particular fields is measured correctly and reliably. It is expected that test takers who know the domain, will perform well, and that those who do not master the domain, will do worse, notwithstanding the particular sample of items used on the test. Moreover, since all items on a given test concern a common area of interest, test takers should perform in a similar way throughout the test (*ibidem*).

In view of all this, writing test items is a matter of precision. Any item answered correctly, or incorrectly, because of extraneous, or distracting factors in the item, results in misleading feedback, to both the examinee/test taker and the test designer/examiner. A test item should be written to focus the examinees'/test takers' attention on the principle or main construct upon which the item is based. In order to assure the maximum reliability, item writers/test designers should have some essential characteristics, such as knowledge and understanding of the material being tested, focus on goals, continuous awareness of the instructional model,understanding of the target group for whom the items are addressed to, as well asskills in written communication andspecific skills in techniques of item writing (*ibidem*).

Item writers/test designers have two main ways to improve test reliability: increasing the length of a test and improving item quality (Chiedu & Omenogor, 2014; Wells & Wollack, 2003). Generally, longer tests tend to produce higher reliability and reduce the influence of chance factors. The percentage of measurement error decreases as test length increases. It is possible that even low achieving test takers can answer a single item correctly, for instance, by guessing, but they are not likely to answer all items on a test correctly (Wells & Wollack, 2003).

There are various statistical methods to measure the internal consistency reliability, such as Cronbach's alpha and the Spearman-Brown prophecy formula (Phakiti, 2014; Wells & Wollack, 2003). The Spearman-Brown prophecy formula can be used to predict the anticipated reliability of longer or shortertests given a value of Cronbach's alpha for an existing test (Wells & Wollack, 2003). The positive impact of making a test longer is more evident with a short test, that is, if the original test has five items and is lengthened with other five items, the improvement of reliability is likely to be substantial; on the contrary, if the original test consists of a great number of questions, the improvement will remain minimal (*ibidem*).

Finally, reliability and validity are two complimentary aspects of testing. Anyhow, besides these two fundamental requirements, a good test must also be practical (*ibidem*). In order to administer a test, it is sometimes necessary to save time or money, or both, and such savings easily lead to a deterioration in reliability (Bachman & Palmer, 1996). It is important, under any circumstances, to make the best use possible of all available resources in order to make the whole testing procedure run smoothly. In other words, it is necessary to carefully think about how practical matters affect testing and find appropriate solutions to overcome test management problems.

4.4. Practicality

Practicality is considered "[…] a critical quality of language tests" (*ibid*.:23), one that "[…] most language test developers implicitly consider in designing language tests" (*ibid*.: 24). It refers to aspects such as costs, usefulness, and time required. This means, that a practical test should be affordable, stay within appropriate time constraints, have a scoring/evaluation procedure that is specific and time-efficient. Moreover, it should be relatively easy to administer.

On the one hand, practicality can be defined as "[…] the relationship between the resources that will be required in the design, development, and use of the resources that will be available for these activities"(*ibid.:*36), on the other, it can be stated that practicality is a different quality from the others, since it focuses on how a test is administered. In fact, test practicality involves man-power, materials and time. These basic resources can be classified in three main types: human resources, material resources, and time (*ibidem*).

The first category, human resources, includes test writers, scorers/raters, test administrators, administrative, clerical and technical staff that operate at the various stages of the testing procedure. It means that, if a test is practical, it has clear directions for administration, and appropriately utilizes qualified human resources in design, development, use and follow-up of the test. Material resources, instead, include space, that is, rooms for the test development and administration, and technical equipment, such as word processors, computers, digital cameras, etc. Time can be divided into development time, that starts "[…] from the beginning of the test development process to the reporting of scores from the first operational administration"(*ibid.*:37), and time for specific tasks, such as designing, writing and scoring. Financial costs, associated with each aspect of practicality, that is, staff, staff time, preparation and testing materials,are also critical. It is fundamental to stay within the established budgetary limits, even if they are not always easy to estimate.

If a test requires more resources than what are available, it is impractical. For example, if a test takes students several hours to complete, it does not meet the requirements of practicality, as it consumes more time and money than necessary to reach its objective. The other way around, if a test takes a few minutes for a student to take and several hours for an examiner to evaluate, it cannot be defined practical because it requires more effort than agreed from the viewpoint of human resources. A test is also impractical if only a few examiners are available to oversee the examination procedure of a group of several hundred test takers. These examples show that there are several aspects to be considered from the organizational viewpoint in order to compose the puzzle with all the different pieces.

This means that all the resources should be examined carefully to avoid errors at every stage of the testing procedure. As a matter of fact, practicality can be measured by the availability of all resources needed to develop and administer a test (*ibidem*). If a test is judged impractical, then the stakeholders, each for their area of competence, should reduce, increase or reallocate the resources. This is important both to make the procedure more functional and to make sensible choices in the perspective of future decisions (*ibidem*). Practicality is one of the key principles of language assessment together with reliability, validity, washback and authenticity. The latter has been commonly considered only as to materials used in the classroom or in the test setting, but the notion has gradually become more comprehensive. From a broader viewpoint, authenticity closely connects the input of the tasks to the expected response, the test format and the test setting. However, the most relevant aspect in authenticity is the link between tests and the real-world language use. According to Alderson (2000:138), for example, the goal of reading skills assessment "[…] is typically to know how well readers read in the real world". The following paragraph will take a look at the concept of authenticity, which is considered one of the most crucial aspects in language testing.

4.5. Authenticity

To understand the role of authenticity in language testing, it is important to define what is meant by the term "authenticity". This notion has been largely discussed in the field of applied linguistics since it was first introduced into the language testing literature in the 1970s, when the communicative approach was gaining ground together with the interest in teaching and testing 'real-life' language. In general education, instead, the notion of authenticity started to be debated roughly a decade later (Lewkowicz, 2000). In the last past decades, the notion of authenticity has considerably developed, even if independently, in the two fields.

Broadly speaking, authenticity deals with the real world. Since 1990s, some scholars such as Bachman (1991) have agreed that language testing itself is a discipline which derives from applied linguistics. In those years a group of researchers, namely Davis, Brown, Elder, Hill, Lumley, and McNamara, from the Language Testing Research Centre of the University of Melbourne, wrote a handbook, called the "Dictionary of Language Testing", which contains about six hundred entries. According to these authors, authenticity in testing is reached when both "[…] the content and skills" mirror each other (Davis *et al.,* 1999:13).

Bachman (1991) suggested, instead, that there is a need to distinguish between two types of authenticity: situational authenticityand interactional authenticity. He claims that situational

authenticity is the perceived match between the characteristics of the test tasks and Target Language Use (TLU) tasks, while interactional authenticity is the interaction between the test taker and the test task. Consequently, he proposed an interfactional model of language test performance, which has two main components: language ability and test method *(ibidem)*. The former is made up of language knowledge and metacognitive strategies, whereas the latter consists of characteristics of the environment, rubric, input, expected response as well as the relationship between input and the expected response *(ibidem)*. The interfactional model produces two different aspects of authenticity, that is, the situational authenticity and the interfactional authenticity.

The situational authenticity of a given test task depends on the relationship between its test method features, and the characteristics of a specific language use situation, while its interfactional authenticity is directly related to the degree to which it invokes the test taker's language ability. In a similar vein, Bachman and Palmer (1996:23) state that test tasks should correspond to the language that is being tested through the use of specific tasks that in their opinion can be defined as "[…] relatively authentic", which means that even partial authenticity of a test cannot be reached for certain. However, authenticity is a fundamental aspect in language testing, since, on the one hand, it provides a link between the test takers' performance, the Target Language Use (TLU) tasks and the domain to which test makers/examiners want to generalize (*ibidem*). On the other hand, the way test takers/examinees perceive the relative authenticity of each task can facilitate their test performance (*ibidem*). Brown (2004: 28) defines authenticity as "[…] the degree of correspondence of the characteristics of a given language test task to the features of a language task". Test makers/teachers should design tests with items that are likely to be used in the real-world contexts. The following five considerations can prove useful to give authenticity to a test:

1. The language in the test is as natural as possible;
2. Items are contextualized rather than isolated;
3. Topics are meaningful (relevant, interesting) to the learners;
4. Some thematic organization to items are provided, such as through a story or episode;
5. Tasks represent, or closely approximate, real–world tasks. (Ibid.:28)

New approaches to *authentic assessment* have produced research in *performance assessment*. McNamara (1996:6) states that the main feature of performance assessment is that "[…] actual performances of relevant tasks are required of candidates". Performance assessment is mostly described in terms that involve cognitive processes required by test takers including contextualized tasks and judgmental marking in the assessment (*ibidem*). In this regard, performance assessment is defined through characteristics such as higher levels of cognitive

complexity, communication, real-world applications, instructionally meaningful tasks, significant commitments of student time and effort, and qualitative judgments in the marking process (Palm, 2001).

The concept of "authentic assessment" is more recent than the term "performance assessment", even if some scholars consider it the same in meaning as performance assessment (*ibid.*). In the Oxford on line Dictionary[4] the term "authentic" is explained as "[…] of undisputed origin and not a copy; genuine", and in the Cambridge Dictionary on line Dictionary[5] it is defined as follows: "[…] if something is authentic, it is real, true, or what people say it is". In relation to assessment, the dictionary explanations can be interpreted "[…] as what is claimed in or by the task or assessment is really true" (*ibid.*:13). This concept can be applied both to classroom activities and testing situations. The fact that something is supposed to be true, however, gives the concept different meanings depending on the chosen frame of reference. Palm (*ibid.*:13) argues that "Two main questions are of interest here: *what* it is that is supposed to be real or true, and what it is that it is supposed to be *true to?*".

In relation to the second question, three main views can be taken into account in order to analyze authenticity in classroom activities: life beyond the learning environment, curriculum and classroom practice, and learning and instruction (*ibidem*). First of all, this perspective focuses on the similarity with life outside the classroom: it is based on the requirement that young students should be involved in cognitive processes that are important for further successful accomplishments in their adulthood. Secondly, it includes the requirement that learners of all ages should work with tasks that they are likely to carry out in life beyond school, and under the same conditionsas they would have under the real-life circumstances, for example, with time constraints and access to relevant tools. Migrants are likely to develop awareness that mastering the language(s) of a host country is useful in life outside the learning environment for motivational reasons, through facing and solving tasks that replicate significant situations of learners' everyday life outside the classroom.Therefore, it is vital to include, as many instances of meaningful situations as possible into the learning environment, so that close simulations of significant real-life situations, in which language use plays a central role, can work as facilitating elements to obtain the proposed learning objectives (*ibidem*). This means, on the one hand, that the instances should be authentic, and on the other, that real-world task solving activities should be simulated with some reasonable fidelity in the learning situation.

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[4]http://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/authentic.
[5]http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/authentic.

The aspects of authenticity embedded in the simulations should include "[…] Event, Question, Purpose, Information/data, Presentation, Solution strategies, Circumstances and Solution requirements" (*ibid*.:204). The basic idea behind the framework of authenticity is the construct of simulation of real-life situations that can be repeated with more or less fidelity in different learning environments. Moreover, the 'replicas' should also focus on learners' affective dimension. The role of the affective domain is enhanced when the learners experience simulated situations as familiar and meaningful. An efficient learning or testing task, which is intended to imitate a real-life situation, should describe an event that might take place outside the classroom, and include both a question that could be asked on that occasion, and the information that should be the same as in comparable everyday situations (*ibidem*). Moreover, the external tools and instruments in the assessment context and the real-world task situations, should be alike. Authentic assessment for evaluating learners thus refers to the procedure that mirrors good classroom practices. Authenticity is considered an important objective for assessment also because it can involve self-assessment, or tasks designed to provide information that can effectively guide self-study, learning or formal instruction.

The emphasis on the educational aspect of assessment is the main difference between the perspective on learning and instruction, and the focus on life beyond the learning environment. Examples of important assessment features in this perspective are curriculum alignment and concordance in students' working conditions during assessment and classroom practice. However, it could be argued, that even if assessment or classroom practice replicates real-life situations and simulates real-life responses, it is only imitation, and thus, only partially close to authenticity.

The question of authenticity of materials (print, audio and video) used in both classroom activities and assessments is of primary importance here. Spolsky (1985) states that an authentic test must include materials extracted from primary resources or task functions. The instrument/device/tool that is used to deliver tasks plays an important role on this point as well. For example, if a teacher/tester decides to use an article for a listening comprehension, he/she should reflect on its authenticity in relation to the means through which it will be delivered to the students. The question which should be posed here is, whether it is still authentic, when the teacher reads it aloud or, alternatively, whether it maintains its authenticity when it is delivered through technological devices. In other words, the question of authenticity does not only refer to the language content, but also to the means that is used to deliver it. Thus, the question of authenticity, in terms of both means and content, should be posed each time a classroom activity or an

assessment task, that emulates a real life situation, is introduced into the learning environment or testing procedure.

Authentic materials, which are sometimes called "authentic" or "contextualized" real-life materials, are those that a student encounters in everyday life. Authentic materials are not specifically designed for educational objectives, that is, for language students, but are normally used by speakers in the real world. Widdowson (1990) makes a differentiation between *authentic* and *genuine* materials. According to him, authentic materials are those created for native speakers of the language, and utilized for classroom activities in their original form and design (*ibidem*). This means that they are not modified in any way. On the contrary, authentic materials are considered genuine, when they are specifically adapted for class use, for example, jumbled paragraphs, cut out headlines, etc. (Martinez, 2002). There are three principal sources of authentic materials: academic, literary and journalistic texts (Chavez, 1998). The scholar states that authentic materials seem to enhance language acquisition and cultural awareness more than modified or adapted, 'genuine' materials (*ibidem*). Authentic materials seem to involve language naturally both in native-speaker interaction contexts, and in those contexts, such as real newspaper reports, magazine articles, advertisements, recipes, instructions etc., in which standard language is the norm (*ibidem*).

Authentic materials are significant since they are likely to increase learners' motivation, since they expose them to the real-life, contextualized language (Guariento & Morley, 2001). Martinez (2002) makes a list of advantages of authentic materials that include such elements as exposition to real language; a wide choice of styles, genres and formality in authentic texts; motivation to read for pleasure and factual acquisition. Some scholars (Philips & Shettlesworth, (1978), Peacock, 1997, cited in Richards, 2001) have listed the advantages of using authentic materials in classroom or for assessment: they introduce authentic cultural information, expose stdents to real language, are closely related to learners' needs and offer a creative approach to teaching.

Alongside several positive sides in favor of authentic materials, there are also minuses that should be taken into account when introducing materials into the class or an assessment context. Martinez (2002) considers the disadvantages such as misunderstanding due to cultural gaps, unnecessary vocabulary and use of various accents and dialects in listening comprehension materials. Moreover, materials such as news become quicklyoutdatedand are rather difficult for beginners.

To sum up, authentic materials, addressed to the native speakers of the language, and not to the students of the language, can present disadvantages as they may contain difficult language,

unnecessary vocabulary items and complex language structures. These can be extremely difficult to deliver in lower-level classes and be frustrating both for teachers and students. Martinez (2002) argues that authentic materials may as well be too culturally biased and cause lower level studentswaste too much time and energy upon decoding texts. Getting frustrated with too complicated texts may lead to de-motivation.

There are different opinions about the most suitable moment in which authentic materials should be introduced into a classroom/test setting. The key question is whether authentic materials canbe proposed regardless of students'/test takers' level (Chavez, 1998). Guariento and Morley (2001) recommend the use of authentic material for classroom activities starting from the post-intermediate level, at which most students possess a wider range of vocabulary in the target language and know most structures. They notice that at lower levels, the use of authentic materials is likely to make students feel de-motivated and frustrated, since they do not know a sufficient range of lexical items and grammar structures of the target language (*ibidem*).

Conversely, Chavez (1998) showed that lower-level learners like using and getting in touch with authentic materials since these give them a chance to interact with language in the form it is used in the real life world. Interestingly, students do not perceive authentic materials innately complicated. However, students reported that they needed study tips and support, such as the provision of a full range of auditory, visual and written cues from their teachers, both in listening situations, and when reading literary texts. In other words, students expect pedagogical help from their teachers to overcome the difficulties they may face.

The issues of authenticity and genuine materials, which are present in the experimental part of this work, will be applied to the testing of adult migrant students (see Chapter V) and, in particular, they will be addressed to the migrants who study at the *Centro provinciale per l'istruzione agli adulti* (CPIA), the Provincial centre for adult education and training, located in Agrigento, a city on the southern coast of Sicily. This reconducts to the cultural value of testing migrants through narrative strategies of authentic and genuine written interviews or oral/digital storytelling.

In language testing, authenticity as a criterion poses significant pragmatic and ethical questions, because language tests are by their very nature inauthentic, abnormal language behavior (Spolsky, 1985). In this regard, test validity is fundamental in order to reach authenticity in test design (Messick, 1996). In other words, authenticity means direct testing with specific validity standards, expressed through the proficiency of communicative skills, such as listening, interaction, reading and writing. On the contrary, non-authentic materials, or methods, used in a test seem to weaken the generalizability of its results. Authentic-seeming tasks may help overcome, even if only

partially, the difficulties experienced by those examinees/test takers, who do not know or who are not willing to follow, the instructions of formal tests (Lewkowicz, 2002). Authentic-seeming (test) tasks mirror real-life tasks, but as they are replicas, or reproductions, they cannot give rise to 100% genuine interaction in the classroom or in the test setting. As a matter of fact not all real-life holistic tasks necessarily lend themselves to test situations. This means that only some main characteristics ofthe original real-life tasks may be maintained (Spolsky, 1985). Furthermore, test takers should be willing to cooperate, and play by the 'rules of the game' in order to make the virtual imitations function successfully in authentic-seeming testing situations. Otherwise, both the validity and the fairness of the assessment procedures risk remaining questionable and uncertain.

Continuous observation of learners' behavior during the classroom activities might be a partial solution to the question of authenticity in testing. Long, emphatic observation by examiners, who care to help, not only by giving pedagogical support, seems to offer a satisfying solution, and increase the perception of authenticity. Bachman and Palmer (1996) claim that authenticity has a potential effect on test takers' performance. Anyhow, it does not seem clear, whether the presence or absence of authenticity, affect test takers' performance, as it is not known, how test takers perceive authenticity (Lewkowicz, 2000). Additionally, Spolsky (1985) suggests that test takers' performance may be affected by test anxiety, which comes from their fear of failure, essentially in the form of apprehension over academic evaluation. Generally speaking, the fear of failing in test situations is considered, consciously, or unconsciously, extremely harmful by the test takers. Also the fear of negative evaluation is likely to have an impact on test takers' performance. This is particularly the case when the test takers feel that they are not able to make an appropriate social impression. In other words, they feel anxious about other people's judgment, which may lead to avoidance of evaluative situations.

According to Brown (2000), language anxiety is a kind of state anxiety. In the same vein Phillips (1992) classifies test anxiety as a type of state anxiety. Foreign language test anxiety is considered as "[…] a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning, arising from the uniqueness of the language learning processes" (Horwitz *et al.,* 1986:128). These scholars developed a Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), based on three components that, in their opinion, have a negative impact on second languages:

- communication apprehension, arising from learners' inability to adequately express mature thoughts and ideas;

- fear of negative social evaluation, arising from a learner's need to make a positive social impression on others;
- test anxiety, or apprehension over academic evaluation. (Ibid.:128)

If test anxiety is not seen the same as general foreign language anxiety, then the effects on foreign language test performance can be investigated independently. In the EFL (English as a Foreign Language) literature, for example, there are several studies which investigate the relationship between foreign language anxiety and foreign language proficiency or performance (Matsuda & Gobel, 2004; Phillips, 1992) or the relationship between foreign language anxiety and one or more language skills (Matsuda & Gobel, 2001).

On the contrary, there are only a few studies investigating the relationship between test anxiety and foreign language test performance. Some researchers have focused on the relationship between test anxiety and foreign language test performance in general (Horwitz, 1986), while other scholars have investigated the relationship between test anxiety and tests of a single language skill or language component (In'nami, 2006).

Salehi and Marefat (2014:937) state in their study that both language and test anxiety play a negative role in the language learning process. Moreover, they show that language anxiety and test anxiety are closely related to each other (*ibidem*). In other words, students with high language anxiety tend to have high test anxiety and vice versa. It implies that reducing one type of anxiety automatically reduces the other type at least to some extent (*ibidem*). In the following paragraph I will have a closer look at the role test anxiety plays in the testing procedure and the impact it may have on test takers' performance.

4.6. Test Anxiety

Anxiety, that is fear, or nervousness, about what might happen, is a normal human emotion, and thus may occur in everybody. It is an uncomfortable affective state in which an individual feels himself/herself helpless and powerless in a threatening situation. McIntyre & Gardner (1989) classify anxiety into three main categories: trait, state, and situation-specific anxiety.

Trait anxiety is seen as an aspect of an individual's personalitythat refers to the permanent tendency toperceive and report negative emotions, such as fears, worries and anxiety in various situations (Scovel, 1978). State anxiety is defined as an unpleasant emotional arousal upon threatening demands or dangers (Spielberg, 1983), while situation-specific anxiety applies to a single context or situation. It can be stable over time, but not necessarily consistent across situations(McIntyre & Gardner, 1989). Some scholars state that "[…] foreign language anxiety is

the separate complicated phenomenon of self-perception, beliefs, feelings and behavior related to classroom language learning process" (Horwitz *et al.,*1986:190).

Learning a foreign language has always been associated with some extent of tension. In the educational environment it may anyhow be harmful, since anxiety is often felt as a consequence of tests or exams. Some tension is expected when taking a test, and it most often soothes away, when the frightening situation is over. That is why we talk about situation specific anxiety: the state arouses when a situation requires the use of a foreign language that the individual does not fully master and it fades awayimmediately after (McIntyre & Gardner, 1989). Foreign language anxiety is indeed classified as a situational specific anxiety rather than a personalitytrait of individuals, just like public speaking anxiety, which is generally classified in this category (Horwitz, 2001). This form of anxiety may result from the inherent inauthenticity connected with weak foreign language communicative skills (Horwitz *et al.,* 1986). Moreover, these scholars claim that "[…] complex and nonspontaneous mental operations arerequired in order to communicate at all, any performance inthe L2is likely to challenge an individual's self-concept asa competent communicator and lead to reticence, self-consciousness, fear, or even panic"(*ibid*.:128).

The definition of the three components of Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA), and namely the fear of negative evaluation, communication apprehension and test anxiety, can be used as a basis to determine the various types of anxiety. The first notion consists of the feelings of apprehension related to other people's judgments, which make individuals avoid (socially) stressful, or threatening situations, in which they could be evaluated or classified negatively. It also consists of the false perception of always being judged the same (negative) way, both by the individuals' teachers and their peers (Cakici, 2016). Communication apprehension (CA), instead, can take place even when individuals have mature ideas, thoughts and personal opinions, but at the same time their communication skills are not developed to the same extent. CA can profoundly affect a student's oral communication and self-esteem (*ibidem*). Students suffering from CA are afraid of performing poorly and avoid oral communication events in presence of many people, or when they feel they are judged (*ibidem*).

Test Anxiety (TA) is a disturbing feeling of apprehension over academic evaluation. Individuals are not only worried about a failure, but also about the consequences of such a failure. This type of anxiety occurs when an individual perceives a situation as dangerous or threatening, that is, for example, before or during an exam or a test. Worry and emotionality are the two main components of the fear of failing that may have significant negative effects on individuals' test performance as well as on their attitude towards evaluation situations in general (Nemati, 2012). Liebert and Morris

(1967) divide test anxiety into two key components, cognitive worry and somatic anxiety, which are separate and generated differently through various prior conditions. Furthermore, they claim that whereas somatic anxiety increases prior to evaluation or competition, cognitive worry does not change, unless the individual's performance changes during this time. In other words, the excitement or emotionality element arouses when a person is expecting the frightening event to be experienced, whereas worry, more connected to academic performance than emotionality, is focused on the future consequences of an imagined, anticipated failure.

Text Anxiety can have significant negative effects on students' ability to perform at their maximum level. Test takers may face difficulties in reading,and/or understanding the questions on the test paper. They may not be able to organize their thoughts, and as a result, they are likely to perform poorly on the test even though they master the topic. Mental blocking is another important (side) effect of test anxiety. It can lead to going blank on questions, which the test taker remembers as soon as the threatening testing situation is over (Nemati, 2012). Anyhow, most test takers succeed in dealing well with this kind of setting. In fact, most students cope well with worry "[…] but there is a subset of 30% of students, that experiences severe anxiety, a condition most often called test anxiety" (Huberty, 2009:12). The study refers to adolescents (*ibidem*), but the situation is likely to mirror adult test takers' condition as well.

Likewise, some scholars have stated that "Adults typically perceive themselves as reasonablyintelligent, socially-adept individuals, sensitive to different socio-cultural mores" (Horwitz*et al*., 1986:128). These assumptions are rarely challenged when communicating in a native language as it is not usually difficult to understand others or to makeoneself understood. However, learning a foreign language stands in marked contrast. When an individual'slanguage knowledge is evaluated according to uncertain or even unknown linguistic and socio-cultural standards, second language communication entails risk-taking, and is necessarily problematic. Even if gender, different ethnic and age groups as well as socio-economic background are relevant variables that may have a significant impact on TA, relatively little is known about the relationship between test anxiety and study behavior (Aydin, 2009). Therefore, the research, conducted among students from a community college, which aimed to determine the correlational values between thevariables of test anxiety, study behavior and the student characteristics of age, gender and ethnicity, plays an important role in this field (Rasor &Rasor, 1998). The principal findings of this study include:

- non-white students may need more instruction about study habits and help with combating test anxiety than whites;
- younger students, especially males, may need additional instruction about study habits;
- female students are in greater need for help than males with overcoming test anxiety;
- the best predictor of higher levels of test anxiety is lower study skills. (Ibid.:1)

In the same vein, Cakici's (2016) research reveals a significant relationship between gender and TA. The findings of this study show that female students exhibit higher levels of TA scores than male counterparts (*ibidem*). The results are in harmony with most relevant studies on gender effects on TA that prove that "Test anxiety and gender are significantly correlated" (*ibid.*:195). Even if males and females experience similar levels of test apprehension, gender differences in TA are evident, because females seem to have higher levels of the excitement or emotionality component (Deffenbacher, 1980).

Another explanation could be in "socialization patterns"(Cakici, 2016:195), as females are put more pressure than males on their success in educational context in general, and in testing settings in particular, and this is likely to lead to more anxiety and stress. On the other side of the coin, males are more defensive, and do not admit their apprehension. An admission of fear could be considered threatening to their masculinity, therefore males try to cope with test stress by denying it, or by finding alternative ways to overcome it (Mousavi, Haghshenas & Alishahi, cited in Cakici, 2016).

As to further sources that cause TA, Neely and Shaughnessy (cited in Aydin, 2009) point out six problems which are frequently cited regarding the use of tests: inappropriate content and standardization samples, examiner and language bias, inequitable social consequences, measurement of different constructs, and differential predictive validity. In the same vein, Young (1986) lists factors that are likely to affect student reactions to language tests. These are perceptions of test validity, time limit, test techniques, format, and length, testing environment and clarity of test instructions (*ibidem*). These findings seem to lead to the conclusion that lower levels of language proficiency and study skills are factors that have a negative impact on test anxiety among language learners (*ibidem*).

As to testing procedures and techniques, Phillips (1992) measured the correlation between test anxiety and oral test performance. The findings of this research prove that there is only a moderate relationship between them (*ibidem*). Shohamy's (1982) research proved that foreign language students prefer oral interviews rather than cloze tests. On the contrary, according to some scholars, oral interaction, writing and reading in the foreign language cause anxiety; test anxiety being at its highest level in oral proficiency (Haskin *et al.*, 2003).

The results of Young's (1986) study show that anxiety does not exert as much influence on scores as ability does, but anxiety is likely to increase, when oral proficiency interview is used as an official test. Accordingly, Lee's (1988) research on reducing test taker's anxiety in oral communicative exchange highlights, not only the importance of the examiner's flexibility and relaxed manner in administering the oral interaction, but also that of a comfortable testing arrangement, for example, the examiner and the examinee not sitting in direct opposition.

Some test formats seem to encourage learners' participation and do not increase their anxiety (Salehi & Marefat, 2014). Learners usually enjoy test formats that involve pair or group work, problem solving and role plays (Young, 1991). These types of testing are cooperative by nature, and thus reduce the competitiveness that can arouse anxiety and increase the fear of losing face. Since evidence also proves that the type of tasks the test takers are familiar with tend to reduce apprehension, adequate opportunities to be prepared to the test format, and time to practice the test items should be offered to the students (Bailey, 1983). According to Scott (1986), students do not necessarily react in a different way towards various test formats, i.e., their anxiety level does not seem to increase or decrease, when taking an oral interview or writing an essay. Contrastingly, Mandelson (1973) believes that different testing procedures and techniques, even different test instructions, may affect levels of anxiety. Test formats experienced as comfortable by one group of learners, may be perceived stressful by others, for example, learners coming from a different culturalgroupmay be used to different types of classroom management, or test setting (*ibidem*). Thus, when considering the relationship between testing procedures, testing techniques and the issue of TA, it is also important tokeep cultural differences in mind.

Students from culturally diverse backgrounds are likely to experience test anxiety because of social, cultural and psychological stress and beliefs they feel when they perceive that their poor performance reinforces negative stereotypes. Self-concept, which can be defined as an image of oneself, is an important factor that contributes to the arousal of test anxiety (Nemati, 2012). Low self-awareness is another factor that may cause test anxiety when being assessed or observed by evaluators or peers. The perception of being negatively judged as a stereotype creates a gap between one's concept of self and one's expectation of success.

Hansen (1984) examined cultural differences in second language aural comprehension levels among Asians under the constraints of background noise that is an important component of language proficiency, because it is constantly present where most human interactions take place. Students from Hong Kong, Seoul (Korea), Tokyo (Japan) and the South Pacific Islands participated in two noise tests, a noise dictation and the Embedded Conversations Test, as well as written exams

(Hansen, 1984). The researcher found significant differences among the three groups and in comparison with similar ESL (English as a Second Language) tests, the noise tests were those that produced most anxiety in each group. However, the results contradict the research hypothesis that urban Asians have an advantage over South Pacific islanders on language tests presented with background noise. The students from the South Pacific Islands, which are characterized by strong oral traditions, tended to have better results on tests involving listening and speaking than on the written sections, whereas the students from Hong Kong and Korea scored higher on the written parts. The results of this research suggest that for ESL program placement, the use of scores from a single test, as assessment of overall English language skills, might put some learners at a disadvantage (*ibidem*).

As a matter of fact, even if language anxiety is a situation specific anxiety, language proficiency and general language background seem to have considerable effects on TA. The best predictor of higher levels of test anxiety seems to be lower study skills (Rasor & Rasor, 1998), whereas it is also claimed that insufficient language learning isa cause rather than a result of language anxiety. Horwitz (2001:118) conceptualizes foreign language anxiety as a result of poor language learning ability: "A student does poorly in language learning and consequently feels anxious about his/her language class. Conversely, a student might do well in the class, and feel very confident. The challenge is to determine the extent to which anxiety is a cause, rather than a result of poor language learning". Conversely, Cakici (2016) states that highly anxious foreign language learners tend to perform, relatively and significantly worse than those that are less anxious.

Test anxiety may arouse because of the means (oral interview, paper and pencil, computer, etc.) through which tests are administered. Today, tests are more and more often administered at computer terminals, because of the advantages of computerized tests over paper and pencil tests, such as speed, efficiency, cost and staff time reduction, that make them practical and flexible. From the test takers' viewpoint, instead, computer based tests include test anxiety-producing as well as anxiety-reducing factors. On the one hand, computer-based tools in testing produce a noncompetitive testing environment free from the examiners and give the test takers opportunity to take the test at their own pace,thus allowing them to have a greater control in the administration of the test. Computer-based assessment may also provide an environment for practice. Moreover, students also get immediate feedback for their answers from computer-based tests unlike paper tests. On the other hand, computerized testing may have disadvantages for students with high levels of test anxiety, since it tends to increase it, and consequently, it is likely to produce negative effects on their performance. Unlike more collaborative evaluation methods, online tests may be perceived

impersonal and thus make students feel alienated. Moreover, students that are not computer literate may feel more anxious than more experienced computer users.

The results of a study that aimed to investigate the effects of a cooperative group composition on the one hand and the student ability during computer-based instruction on the other, demonstrated that the students who took computerized tests, showed significantly higher levels of anxiety (Hooper *et al.*, 1989). The target group of this research reported that they perceived computerized tests more difficult than paper and pencil tests.

Standardized tests seem to produce apprehension and anxiety that are likely to impair students' test performance. Hence, other forms of assessment are required to decrease test takers' anxiety and to achieve results that mirror test takers' actual language competence. In authentic assessment, for example, test takers are informed of the standards that they will be graded on in advance. Knowing the criteria for performance assessment in advance is likely to reduce test takers' anxiety. By being assessed/observed throughout the learning process, but above all, by being an active part of the evaluation process, students have the opportunity to reflect upon their work and evaluatethemselves. This means that language learning process as well as students' language awareness are closely correlated with testing, forming in this way an indissoluble whole.

Tests in the migration flow are not always connected with the learning process. This may cause evaluation problems, since authentic assessment should be a continual process and observe potential test takers' language progress and proficiency over time. Authentic assessment increases self-awareness and reduces test anxiety by making learners more involved in the evaluation process. On the one hand, students are likely to be more motivated and less stressed, because they are engaged in meaningful activities. On the other, authentic methods of assessment, such as project work, story (re)telling, portfolios, and presentations provide a more realistic picture of what learners know, since the tool by which their knowledge is shown is multiple, thereby allowing students more independence, both in preparing their topics and choosing the most suitable presentation form.

Assessing students'language performance through alternative tools may prove more accurate than using standardized tests as they integrate information from a number of sources,and give an overall picture of students' language proficiency. Teachers should be prepared to manage the time intensive nature of authentic assessment, ensure curricula validity and minimize evaluator bias. On the other side of the coin, students are expected to do their part as alternative, authentic-seeming forms of assessment require strong student involvement and commitment, calling for self-assessment.

Learners are often required to assess their own developing skills throughout the process of acquiring a new language. As a matter of fact, self-assessment can facilitate students' learning by allowing them to develop strategies that enhancetheir language skills, and help them cope with their test anxiety. Even if some scholars claim that a small amount of anxiety may have a positive effect on learning (Scovel, 1991; Horwitz, 2001), for highly anxious learners, confronting their perceived limitations can be painful and de-motivating (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989). In any case, self-perceptions of competence and performance are useful when informally assessing proficiency of particular language abilities. Nonetheless, self-assessment can lead to errors, failing to correspondwith objective, external indices of proficiency. Certainly, language students/test takers may underestimate, or overestimate, their language ability. Underestimating one's language skills is likely to produce a false self-concept, and increase apprehension, and worry, mainly in the pre- and during-stages of a test (Joy, 2013). All participants in Joy's research reported that none of their teachers helped them to cope with their test anxiety in the most important stages of testing, thus producing high anxiety among the test takers.

In the light of these observations, teachers could play an important role by suggesting anxiety-reducing strategies to overcome anxiety-provoking situations. Participants of Williams and Andrade's research (2008) reported that their test anxiety was caused by language teachers as well as by other people. Thus, teachers/examiners need to be aware of the factors that can have an impact on the students'/test takers' anxiety level. Additionally, teachers/examiners should be informed on some aspects related to the test itself, such as test validity, time limit, test techniques, test format, test length, testing environment and clarity of test instructions. They should also know test takers' personal data such as their age, gender, ethnic group, socio-economic background that are closely correlated with the amount of TA (Cakici, 2016). This means that strategies to reduce TA are connected with the level of information provided during the testing procedures, through students' overall communication skills, and the individual differences among test takers. Therefore, teachers/examiners should take into account learner differences both when defining the appropriate test techniques and when choosing the test formats.

Test validity is one of the most significant factors that cause test anxiety. If a test has face validity, then it looks like a valid test to those who use it. Face validity is as important as content validity, because examiners and examinees need to believe that a test is credible, if it is to work. On the one hand, Young (1991) proved that test takers experienced anxiety if the test included content that was not taught in class. On the other, face validity, which describes how far the test actually measures what it is expected to measure, plays an important role here. If a test lacks face validity, it

is likely to lead to higher levels of worry and apprehension and produce a negative attitude towards instruction as a whole. In other words, tests that are perceived as less valid by students produce higher levels of worry and anxiety.

In order to be able to propose test-taking strategies, teachers/examiners should be involved in pre-service and in-service training on both general psychology and language anxiety (Cakici, 2016). These kinds of training programs may enhance both foreign language anxiety and test anxiety, in a manner that enables teachers/examiners to face test takers' problems of apprehension, worry and fear in a test setting. Salehi and Marefat (2014) proved that language anxiety and test anxiety are related to each other. In other words, the students with high language anxiety tend to have the same, high level of test anxiety as well. Consequently, they claim that, if a teacher/examiner succeeds in relieving one type of anxiety, the other type reduces automatically. Taking into consideration the debilitating role of both types of anxiety, teachers/examiners should take all the possible measures to reduce them by creating a comfortable classroom/testing atmosphere and by enhancing students' self-confidence through meaningful activities and tasks (Matsuda & Gobel, 2004).

Global classroom atmosphere rather than specific instructional activities may reduce student anxiety levels. Activities such as pair work, small group work, games and role plays may enhance classroom atmosphere because students feel more comfortable about speaking with a small number of people than about confronting the whole class. To promote low stress classroom atmosphere, teachers could begin with pair work, give their students enough time and training before moving towards more challenging activities, which involve more people and are likely to increase anxiety, such as group work and whole-class work.

The findings of von Wörde's (2003) study appear to support other studies in suggesting that anxiety can negatively affect the language learning experience in various ways, and that reducing anxiety seems to increase language acquisition, retention, and learner motivation. Thus, the sense of anxiety for foreign language learninghas to be taken into serious consideration by both teachers/test makers and students/test takers. This may be successfully realized through workshops or presentations that aim to elaborate foreign language anxiety by exploring the positive motivational aspects of anxiety reduction. Recommendations suggested by von Wörde's study include that teachers should strive to:

- create a low stress, friendly and supportive learning environment;
- foster a proactive role on the part of the students themselves to create an atmosphere of group solidarity and support;

- be sensitive to students' fears and insecurities and help them to confront those fears;
- use gentle or non-threatening methods of error correction and offer words of encouragement;
- make judicious use of purposeful group work or collaborative activities;
- use relevant and interesting topics for class discussions and exercises;
- consider decreasing the amount of new material to be covered in one semester;
- consider ways to layer and reinforce the material in an attempt to aid acquisition and retention;
- give written directions for homework assignments;
- speak more slowly or consider using English to clarify key points or give specific directions;
- attend to the learning styles or preferences of the students; and hear and appreciate the voices of students for valuable insights, ideas and suggestions. (Ibid:12-13)

Students' self-aid suggestions to reduce both language anxiety and test anxiety, can be found in a study conducted by Hurd (2007). In this study, a sample of five hundred distance language learners, attending the Open University's lower-intermediate French course '*Ouverture',* were asked if they were used to applying strategies to reduce anxiety and what they would recommend other students suffering from anxiety. A third of the students involved in the research answered affirmatively. This group was then asked to list the top anxiety-reducing strategies in the perspective of giving advice to their colleagues:

- Actively encourage myself to take risks in language learning, such as guessing meanings or trying to speak, even though I might make some mistakes;
- Use positive self-talk;
- Imagine that when I am speaking in front of others, it is just a friendly informal chat;
- Use relaxation techniques;
- Share my worries with other students;
- Let my tutor know you're anxious;
- Give myself a reward or treat when I do well;
- Be aware of physical signs of stress that might affect my language learning;
- Tell myself when I speak that it will not take too long;
- Other;
- Write down my feelings in a diary or notebook. (Ibid.:12)

Taking risks was the strategy used by the majority of the students who also considered it the most important. *Positive self-talk*came next in both categories; it means it was used by 64.6% of the respondents, and ranked second. It was followed by *imagining you are having an informal chat,* whereas *use of relaxation techniques* or *calling on support from tutor or peers* were used by about a fifth of students, but not considered the top suggestions by most students. About 6.3% had used *other* strategies, such as ticking completed tasks, reviewing material already covered to check their progress,revision, and repetition to build confidence, joining a French self-help group, and outdoor activities like gardening *to clear confusion* (*ibid.*:13).Considering both teachers'/examiners', and learners'/test takers' viewpoints, Phillips (1992) offers some suggestions as how to cope with

language and test anxiety. In the first place, teachers should address the issue of anxiety to the students in class in order to reassure them. It seems important to talk about anxiety as soon as possible, thus preparing the students, and anticipating that apprehension, worry and fear are normal human feelings. When learners become aware that their teachers/evaluators are prepared to understand their feelings, this condition reduces, at leastpartially, the stress associated with the assessment/performance in class. Secondly, teachers should discuss the real character of language learning, because it relieves students of some of the anxiety-producing prejudices. In other words, students should be informed that language learning is a long process and that errors and mistakes are a natural part of this (life-long) process. This may help them form more realistic expectations as to the development of their language competence, which will be inevitably made of ups and downs.

It is quite complicated to find anxiety-reducing formats and techniques suitable for large-scale language tests. Large-scale implementations are basically limited for two main reasons: costs and reliability, as some tests require extensive and expensive training for interviewer-raters (Daugherity, 2008). These are often replaced by semi-direct tests that are cheaper and easier to administer (*ibidem*). In semi-direct tests candidates either listen to recorded dialogues or short readings, then they answer some questions about them. In another form of a semi-direct test, test takers are given written questions and their answers are recorded. In this case, commissions of raters evaluate the recorded answers. Results from Qian's (2009) study show that test takers do not like semi-direct testing method, since it does not offer them the opportunity to interact with the examiner during the test, thus creating a psychological barrier for the test taker.

Learning Communities (LC) offer an interesting alternative to traditional forms of assessment (Daugherity, 2008). The participants in an LC are periodically evaluated in informal, real-life communicative situations by other participants in the group. This form of authentic-seeming assessment does not completely eliminate, but at least, decreases test anxiety in part, as it is based on mutual comprehension and interaction between peers (*ibidem*). The main disadvantage of this approach is that the evaluation is often perceived as subjective and lacking necessary criteria of reliability and validity.

Teaching students/test takers how to cope with test anxiety can be quite challenging, and may often require all stakeholders' efforts, but it is likely to give rewarding, more realistic results of candidates' language skills as they do no feel under pressure. In the first place, it is the responsibility of the teachersin class to help test takers overcome test anxiety as they are in direct contact with the learners. In order to do well on tests, test takers have the right to know what to study. Students who suffer from anxiety may also have bad study habits and lack adequate test

taking and study skills.Hence, students need to know how to study and should be taught successful learning and test taking strategies.

Since students are unique as to age, gender, ethnic group, socio-economic background and native tongue, different study strategies should be suggested. Suggestions to reduce test anxiety should be offered not only by teachers, but also by peers, who have learnt to cope with the test stress. Such strategies may be beneficial to students by helping them relax and stay focused before and during the assessment event/testing procedure. The greater confidence test takers have in their test taking skills, the more comfortable they are likely to feel in the test setting. On the other side of the coin, this means that students should be able to make realistic self-assessment of their abilities, and not underestimate or overestimate them.

Prospective test takers could write about their thoughts and feelings before taking a test in order to manage the 'during-stage' with less anxiety. They could make a list of their negative thoughts and then create a positive statement for each one. Fulton (2016:35) gives the following concrete suggestions: "For example, instead of saying "I'm going to fail this test," test takers should say: "I'm going to try my best", or alternatively, "I have the ability to do this."

It is fundamental to provide test takers with all possible anxiety-reducing strategies to promote self-confidence and good learning results. If this is not guaranteed, and students are not given the opportunity toacquire positive techniques to deal with testing situations, they are likely to learn to cope inappropriately through avoidance behaviors and defensiveness that interferes negatively with their performance.

Additionally, students should be trained to make efficient use of both of their individual study time and the given test time. To reduce anxiety, practice tests should be given so that students are provided with the opportunity to get familiar with the test format and time limits. If teachers provide their students with main (self) study strategies to locate, organize and remember information and content, that is, how to read for main ideas, understand key words and definitions, create an individual study plan, use time efficiently and complete familiar questions before moving on to more complex tasks, anxiety levels may be reduced, taking into consideration that "[…] by its very nature, the test is likely to evoke evaluative anxiety" (Messick, 1996:5).

Relatedly, Messick (*ibid.*:4) also claims that "In the case of language testing, the assessment should include authentic and direct samples of the communicative behaviors of listening, speaking, reading, and writing of the language being learned. Ideally, the move from learning exercises to test exercises should be seamless." As a consequence, for optimal, beneficial washback there should belittle, if any, difference between activities used when learning the language and test tasks. This

does not mean that language courses should be test-driven. On the contrary, good teaching practice should not focus (only) on testing purposes, but on the progress of language learners' profile as a whole.

4.7. Washback

Washback or *backwash* is "the extent to which the test influences language teachers and learners to do things they would not otherwise necessarily do" (Alderson & Wall, 1993:1). Washback is undoubtedly an important area for a number of people who have an interest in the testing procedure, such as test takers, test designers, communities, policy makers etc. The growing interest in testing is due to the more and more widespread use of tests at the regional, national, and international level on high-stakes events which may also regard migrants' conditions as prospective candidates for admission to a new country, long-term residence permit and citizenship. In the light of the importance given to language tests all over the world, the far-reaching consequences of the test use, especially concerning validity and ethicality of test results, should be taken into account when reflecting on the testing procedure as a whole. According to Hughes (1994:2-3) there are at least five conditions whichhave to be met before all the possible washback consequences are to take place:

1) Success on the test must be important to the learners;
2) Teachers must want their learners to succeed;
3) Participants must be familiar with the test and understand the implications of its nature and content;
4) Participants must have the expertise which is demanded by the test (including teaching methods, syllabus design and materials writing expertise);
5) The necessary resources for successful test preparation must be available. (Ibid., 2-3)

As to the terminology, *impact* is generally used to describe the consequences of tests (Bachman, 1990; Bachman and Palmer, 1996). However, some language testers consider *washback* as one dimension of *impact*, describing its effects on the educational context (Hamp-Lyons, 1998); others see *washback* and *impact* as separate concepts relating respectively to 'micro' and 'macro'effects within society (Bachman and Palmer, 1996). The two scholars (*ibidem*), consider washback to be a subset of the impact of the test on society, educational systems as well as individuals, claiming that test impact operates at two main levels, that is, at a micro and a macro level. On the one hand, the consequences of a test at the micro level involve individual students and teachers, while on the other, the test impact operates at the macro level involving the educational system as a whole (*ibidem*).

The terms *'backwash'* or *'washback'* are equally used to refer to the way a test affects teaching materials and classroom management (Hughes, 1989). Washback from tests can involve individual teachers and students, as well as whole classes and educational systems and programs. *'Washback'* is generally perceived as being either negative (harmful) or positive (beneficial) (*ibidem*).

Negative washback is said to take place when a test content or format is based on a narrow definition of language ability which constrains the teaching/learning process. It refers to those consequences of a test that are unexpected and harmful, for example, in case instruction concentrates exclusively on test preparation at the expense of other activities that would develop students' learning profile as a whole: "If, for example, the skill of writing is tested only by multiple choice items then there is great pressure to practise such items rather than to practise the skill of writing itself" (Davies *et al*.,1999:225).

Positive washback means that the expected test effects are reached. In other words, beneficial washback is said to occur when the testing procedure backs up good teaching practice. It means, for example, that a teacher does not introduce an oral proficiency test only in the view of focusing on the testing purposes, but in the expectation that itpromotes the development of speaking skills in general and positively affects the progress of the learner profile as a whole. Additionally, a test with positive washback is likely to encourage and motivate learners to study harder.

In the light of these findings, it seems clear that testing, particularly large-scale high-stakes testing, is likely to cause all the stakeholders consequences of different types. Tests may influence educational processes in various ways, because of the impact of tests on individuals and society since "testing is never a neutralprocess and always has consequences" (Stobart, 2003:140).

In this respect, great attention should be paid to the mode through which instruction is provided. Teachers may be influenced by the information that their students are planning to sit a particular test, and for this reason adapt their teaching by narrowing the lesson content to reflect the test content. In fact, test-curriculum orientation highlights the relationship between test content and curriculum, which can result in limiting the course content by only focusing on the test purposes (*ibidem*), whereas measurement-driven instruction determines that testing should drive instruction. Alderson and Wall (1993:120-121) made the following fifteen washback hypotheses which focus on possible consequences on teachers' and learners' behaviors and attitudes on the one side and on different test consequences on the other:

1) A test will influence teaching;

2) A test will influence learning;
3) A test will influence what teachers teach;
4) A test will influence how teachers teach;
5) A test will influence what learners learn;
6) A test will influence how learners learn;
7) A test will influence the rate and sequence of teaching;
8) A test will influence the rate and sequence of learning;
9) A test will influence the degree and depth of teaching;
10) A test will influence the degree and depth of learning;
11) A test will influence attitudes to content, method, etc. of teaching/learning;
12) Tests that have important consequences will have washback;
13) Tests that do not have important consequences will have no washback;
14) Tests will have washback on all learners and teachers;
15) Tests will have washback effects for some teachers and some learners, but not for others. (Ibid.:120-121)

Three years later, Alderson and Wall revisited their 1993 Washback Hypotheses as follows: "Tests will have different amounts and types of washback on some teachers and learners than on other teachers and learners. The amount, and type of washback will vary according to (1) the status of the test (the level of the stakes); (2) the extent to which the test is counter to current practice; (3) the extent to which teachers and textbook writers think about appropriate methods for test preparation; and (4) the extent to which teachers and textbook writers are willing and able to innovate" (Alderson and Wall, 1996:296).

Hughes (1994) made a distinction between washback on the basis of three constituents of an educational system, that is, the participants, the processes and the products. The *participants* include classroom teachers and students, educational administrators, policy makers, bureaucrats, textbook developers and publishers "[…] all of whose perceptions and attitudes towards their work may be affected by a test" (*ibid.*:2). The *processes* instead consist of "[…] any actions taken by the participants which may contribute to the process of learning" (*ibidem*) such as materials development, syllabus design, changes in teaching methodology, use of test-taking strategies, etc. Finally the third constituent, that is, the *products*,refers to "[…] what is learned and the quality of the learning" (*ibidem*).

This means that language tests may affect individuals' choices in life (school, employment, a change in the place where they work or live etc.), as their results may have a relevant impact on individual test takers' career or life opportunities. On the one hand, it means that tests can promote, or hinder individuals' access to educational or working possibilities. On the other, tests can impact on society as a whole, for instance, when they are used to make decisions about school curriculum planning or immigration policy. Additionally, the growth and spread of testing contexts give

publishers and institutions the opportunity to produce more and more test preparation materials and administer test preparation courses. This inevitably gives language institutes and certification bodies a great economic power in the language testing business and leads to long-term social consequences as they have opportunities to control testing and the testing market all over the world.

In the last past few years, more and more scholars have located the concepts of *impact* and *washback* within the theoretical notion of 'consequential validity' in which the social consequences of testing are considered a part of a broader, unified concept of test validity (Messick, 1996). Hence, the role of consequential validity, together with related concepts of fairness and ethics, has been extensively debated amonglanguage professionals and testers (Kunnan, 2000). Most professionals now recognize that washback and impact are highly complex phenomena, while others take a stronger view derived from a critical theory. Shohamy (2001:374) stated that "Given the importance of tests, testers in recent years have begun to focus on the uses, impact and consequences of tests and their role in educational, social, political and economic contexts."

As a matter of fact, both the impact of testing on teaching/learning process as well as the use-oriented testing, "[…] which is concerned with the uses of tests in their relation to curriculum, ethicality, social class, politics and knowledge, and their impact on individuals and educational systems" (*ibid*.:374), have been increasingly discussed from the point ofview of Critical Language Testing (CLT).

This discussion has particularly involved the role of ethics and fairness in language testing (Hamp-Lyons, 1997; Kunnan, 2000; Davies, 2008), which are expressions of social concern. Shohamy (2001) pointed out the political uses and abuses of language tests andcalled for examining the hidden agendas of the testing industry which produces test results that are endowed with economic value, and can therefore provide a means for controlling knowledge. In the same vein, Kunnan (2000) discussed the role of tests as instruments of social policy and control. Hamp-Lyons (1997) argued for an encompassing ethics framework to examine the consequences of testing on language learning not only at the classroom but also at the educational, social, and political levels. The discussion on "tests as tools of power"(Shohamy, 2001:374) has gradually led to the creation of a Code of Ethics adopted by the International Language Testing Association (ILTA).[6]

In the recent years, the power of tests has been enhanced by a number of mechanisms, such as using tests as a gatekeeping strategy in the migration flow, creating test-dependency from an early age, and focusing on the perception of test results' social importance (Shohamy, 2001). Washback has consequently become a more and more significant element in testing, because it

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[6]http://www.iltaonline.com/index.php/enUS/component/content/article?id=57.

underlines the continuity of the testing process, that does not end "[…] when psychometrically sound results had been satisfactorily achieved"(*ibid*.:374). On the contrary, the follow-up stage has become as important as the other stages of testing insofar it verifies that tests and their results are used for the originally intended objective, and that they are not used to manipulate educational or social systems for undeclared, hidden goals.

In the light of these ideas and findings, washback is of critical importance in the management of language tests in the migration flow, both for the migrants themselves and for those in charge to establish the goals and to provide the funding for the provision at the national level. The delivery of courses and tests (plus alternative forms of evaluation of language skills) aimed at migrants, are interlinked areas that authorities should take into account, together with quality assurance, when reflecting on the testing procedure as a whole (*Council of Europe*, 2014).

In the EU area, national government agencies usually oversee the quality assurance and regularly review the quality, not only of the language courses, but also of the testing procedure of migrants' language competence in order to make the necessary adjustments over time. The government agencies are to take care of the quality control and management measures on a regular basis. This is particularly important because language courses are organized by a various range of providers, such as voluntary bodies, education institutes and community associations etc. over wide national areas. In order to achieve and maintain standards in line with government policies, "In some countries quality control takes the form of accreditation under a mandatory scheme involving a more formal periodic audit" (*ibid*.:46).

Assuring quality in a test throughout the assessment procedure (test construction, administration and logistics, marking and grading, test analysis, and communication among the stakeholders) is one of the top priorities in testing. In this regard, every stakeholder plays an integral part in maintaining high quality standards. Those responsible for the administration of tests should thus ensure that examination regulations and procedures are upheld in every testing event. This safeguards objectivity and consistency when the exams/tests are administered and marked.

CHAPTER V

5. Case study

5.1. Methodological approach

The present study has been conducted to investigate the following research issues:

- What language do the migrants primarily use, and in what domains do they use it in their daily life in Italy?

- Do migrants perceive that their language skills are equally balanced? If not, what skill(s) do they think are the most, and the least developed?

- Do migrants feel anxious when they communicate in Italian? If so, what factors do they think may increase or decrease their anxiety?

- What factors can make the migrants feel at ease when speaking Italian?

- How do migrants themselves perceive their proficiency in Italian?

- What modality do migrants consider the most suitable to assess their knowledge of the host country's official language(s)?

This survey is primarily a descriptive study that utilizes a two-pronged approach to data collection, namely a survey questionnaire and formal student assessment. The study focuses on a specific target group in order to show to what extent adult literate migrants are aware of their Italian language proficiency. It seeks to illuminate particular perceptions rather than to generalize about the global experience of learning and using Italian both in and beyond the classroom.

Firstly, a survey method was utilized to collect the data in order to obtain as complete a picture of the participants as possible.The questionnaire included forty-five questions divided into four different sections that regard general information about the respondent (ten questions), the respondent's educational background (four questions), social conditions and familiar situation (eight questions), and their overall language knowledge (twenty-one questions). Moreover, other two extra questions were posed to take note of the administration modality and timing.

Secondly, these data were compared with the students' formal evaluation of the first part of the four-month period of the school year 2016/2017. This new form of evaluation was introduced this year by the school official of the *Centro provinciale per l'istruzione agli adulti* (CPIA), the Provincial centre for adult education and training, located in Agrigento, a city on the southern coast

of Sicily, where the questionnaire was administered. The purpose of this extra assessment is to give the students and the hosting communities feedback as early as possible in order to make adjustments in the students' individual training pact.

This performance evaluation primarily focuses on the students' progress in respect of their initial situation. It does not include marks for single subjects but for four different knowledge areas, namely linguistic, historical and geographic areas, scientific and technological areas. The mid-term evaluation gives the teachers the opportunity to reflect on the overall educational expectations and to reset the learning goals. It also helps students look at their own learning experience. In this specific context, I focused on the evaluation of the linguistic area.

5.2. Participant selection

The group was gathered on a voluntary basis among adult migrants attending evening classes at the CPIA of Agrigento. The CPIAs are state schools established by the Ministry of Education, Universities and Research. These schools offer both Italian and foreign citizens adult education services and activities that aim to encourage the personal, cultural, social and economic growth of all citizens from the perspective of lifelong learning.

The internal structure of the CPIAs is comprised of different sections, grades, levels and sites where courses are delivered. In other words, it is a service network for adult learners. The educational pathways are organized in two periods: first-level courses for first cycle qualifications and certification ofthe basic skills and competences (400 hours) and second level courses for technical, vocational and artistic qualifications (825 hours).[1]

Foreign adults of working age, including those with certificates issued in their country of origin, can enroll in literacy courses and Italian language courses. The centers can enroll 16-year-old students who do not possess a first-cycle certificate. The CPIAs can also admit 15-year-oldstudents, but only in exceptional and justified circumstances and where specific agreements between the Regions and the Regional School Offices are in place.[2]

The section of Villaseta of the CPIA of Agrigento organizes courses chiefly for adult migrants. This year, one hundred and sixty-seven migrants enrolled in the Italian language literacy course. As to the presence of genders in the courses delivered by the section of Villaseta, the records show that no female students are attending the literacy course addressed to migrants. Likewise, the learners enrolled in the first cycle are all adult male migrants. In the first-level cycle,

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[1] http://www.indire.it/lucabas/lkmw_img/eurydice/quaderno_eurydice_30_per_web.pdf.
[2] *Ibidem.*

there are sixty learners: forty-eight adult male migrants, nine Italian male adults and three Italian women.

The sample group was originally composed of ten participants, but as the students started to complete the questionnaire, I found out that three of them had not reached the age at which a person is legally an adult in Italy as they were born in 1999. They were immediately informed that one of the main requirements for the participation was the adult age (together with literacy and third-country nationality), and for that reason, I could not take their responses into consideration. Anyhow, they wanted to remain in class and answer the questions.

As to the composition of the target group, all the initial requirements were satisfied. As to the age, the respondents were all legally adults: the oldest was born in 1987, and the three youngest in 1998. As to the respondents' nationality, they were all third-country nationals, coming from four different countries, namely the Gambia, Mali, Pakistan and Nigeria. The CPIA's teacher staff guaranteed the literacy skills of the adult migrant students. The genders could not be equally represented, as there were no female migrant students attending evening classes. Consequently, the target group comprised 100 % male respondents.

5.3. Survey questionnaire

The questionnaire was comprised of four sections, namely general information about the respondent, respondent's educational background; his social conditions and familiar situation, and his overall language knowledge. In the first section of the survey questionnaire, *Informazioni generali*, eight open-ended questions and two closed-ended questions were proposed, in the second section, *Situazione scolastica del migrante*, two open-ended questions and two closed-ended questions were posed. The third and fourth sections *Situazione socio-familiare del migrante* and *Situazione linguistica generale del migrante* presented only closed-ended questions. The questionnaire also included two optional sub-sections addressed exclusively to those migrants who had taken an official Italian language test, and/or to those who had previously attended an Italian language course.

The most frequent and important types of responses were anticipated, so it was possible to develop closed-ended questions which are the majority of the total number of the questions. Only a few personal, open-ended questions were asked; in these cases the respondents did not have to providemuch detail in the answers. Some questions had multiple parts, so I needed to branch to sub-questions. I constructed the sequence of questions in advance, moving from general information on the respondents' personal data to more specific questions on their perceptions and awareness of

their language proficiency. In the case the subject matter of the question was complicated, detailed background for the question was given orallyto the respondents.

Three administration modalities were available: 1) the students could fill in the form all by themselves; 2) the questions could be read out loud to the respondents, but also in this case the students were to complete the questionnaire by themselves; 3) those responsible for the administration acted as facilitators, but the students completed the questionnaire by themselves. The development of an online module was originally proposed as an alternative to the paper-and-pencil mode. Finally, only the latter was chosen, as it allowed to gather a sample group that corresponded to the main requirements of the study (third-country nationality, adult age and literacy) more easily. Moreover, it made it possible to administer the questionnaire face-to face and simultaneously to all the participants. In such a manner, the respondents had the opportunity to speak with their colleagues and to ask for assistance from their teachers.

I administered the questionnaire as an extra-curricular activity in the presence of an Italian teacher and an English teacher of the CPIA. We all three acted as facilitators. Firstly, I explained the purpose of my research to the respondents, then I handed out the questionnaire together with the two teachers of the CPIA. The procedure took about one hour, ten minutes for the introduction, presentation and instructions, and fifty minutes on average for the completion.

The language register in the questionnaire was formal because it is the standard variety of language that is normally used in an interview or in a classroom. It means that the language is comparatively rigid, and has a set of agreed vocabulary that is well documented. Moreover, in Italian it is important to distinguish between formal and informal contexts in order to choose the register that fits best to the situation in which it is utilized. The use of the courtesy form '*Lei*' rather than '*tu*' was a direct consequence of this choice. The English second person singular pronoun 'you' tends to have two versions across Europe: '*tu*' and '*Vous*' in French; '*du*' and '*Sie*' in German, and '*tu*' and '*Lei*' in Italian. The first form is used with close friends, family members, social inferiors and children; the second is used in formal situations for unknown adults, colleagues and superiors.

Contrastingly, it is quite normal that in the spoken language (adult) migrants are addressed with '*tu*' by adults, young people and children, overturning the common rules of both courtesy and communication. However, if they have to complete any written document, the register is formal as for the native speakers. According to the philosopher Eco (2015), the newcomers should be taught how to use '*tu*' and '*Lei*' in Italian: if the migrants do not understand the difference between the

courtesy address and the informal *'tu'*, it could be harmful for their integration, as they would immediately qualify themselves as linguistically and culturally inferior.[3]

Additionally, upon observing the respondents, I noticed that those who spoke with their mates did not use Italian but English, or another language, they told me to be Pulaar, a language spoken in Senegal, Mauritania, the Gambia, and westernMali.[4] The respondents used Italian to communicate with the facilitators, even if in two cases, English was used as a *lingua franca.*

5.3.1 General information

As far as the gender issue is concerned, it was not possible to gather a mixed-gender group, as there were no female migrants enrolled at the CPIA of Agrigento. Hence, all the respondents were male. As to their age, they were born between 1987 and 1998, that is, 14 % was born in 1987, 14% in 1997 and 14% in 1998.

As to the respondents origin, the group can be divided according to the country of birth of the respondents into 'first-generation immigrants'(foreign-born population) and 'second-generation immigrants'(native- born population with at least one foreign-bornparent). In this case, 86% of the respondents belonged to the first generation of migrants, and 14% belonged to the 'second generation immigrants' .

Another terminological choice had to be made between '*nazionalità'* and *'cittadinanza'*. Public international law uses the term *nationality* to refer to the legal bond between an individual and a sovereign state, whereas several domestic laws use the term *citizenship*or its equivalent.[5] At the European level, the Eudo Citizenship observatory uses the terms *citizenship* and *nationality* as synonyms.[6] As from the legal and bureaucratic perspective migrants are likely to encounter the notion of '*cittadinanza'*, for example, when they apply for Italian citizenship, the term '*cittadinanza'* was chosen instead of '*nazionalità'*. The respondents were all third-country nationals from four different countries, namely the Gambia (29%), Mali (14%), Pakistan (14%) and Nigeria (43%) (*Table 1*).

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[3] http://www.huffingtonpost.it/2015/09/14/umberto-eco-dare-del-tu-e-del-lei_n_8131926.html.
[4] http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/fulani_%28Dizionario-di-Storia%29/ .
[5] http://eudo-citizenship.eu/databases/citizenship-glossary/terminology.
[6] *Ibidem.*

Country of Origin

Nigeria 43%
The Gambia 29%
Pakistan 14%
Mali 14%
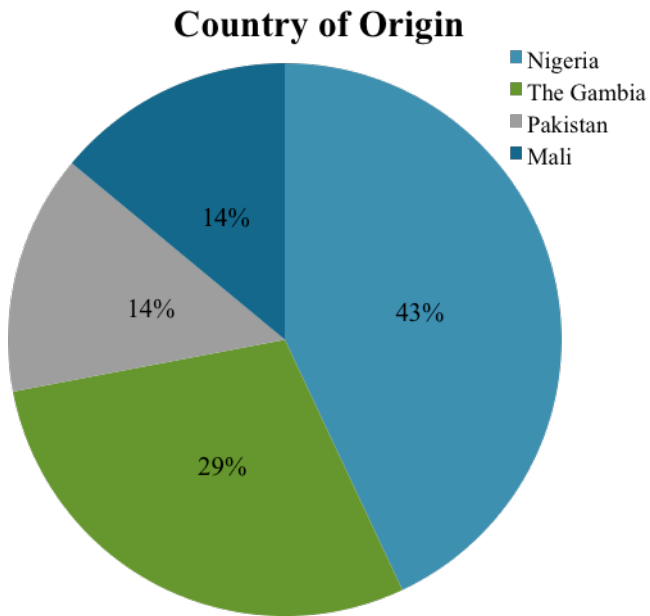
Table 1.

The respondents of this questionnaire arrived in Sicily between 2014 (43%) and 2015 (57%). Sicily was for all of them the first place they reached in Italy after leaving their home countries (*Table 2*).

Year of arrival in Sicily

2014 43%
2015 57%
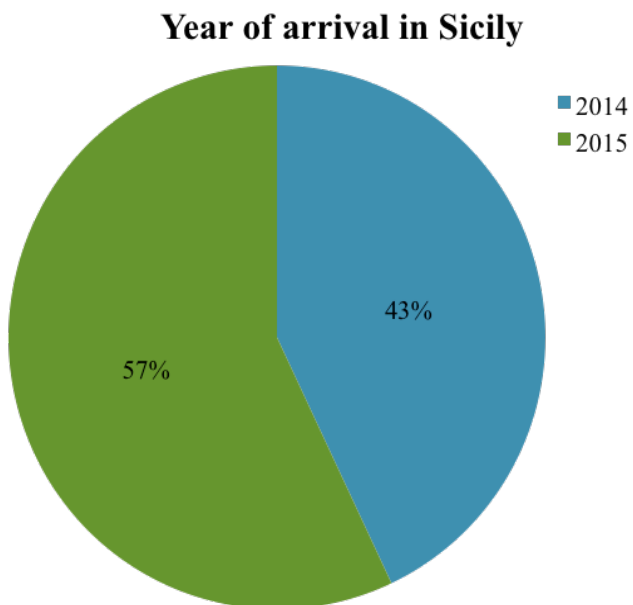
Table 2.

Political reasons (58%) were the main drivers for the migration, followed by economic reasons (14%) and education (14%), while the remaining 14% did not specify the reason why they had left their home country for Italy (*Table 3*).

Migration purposes

- Political reasons
- Economic reasons
- Familiar reasons
- Educational reasons
- Religious reasons
- Other
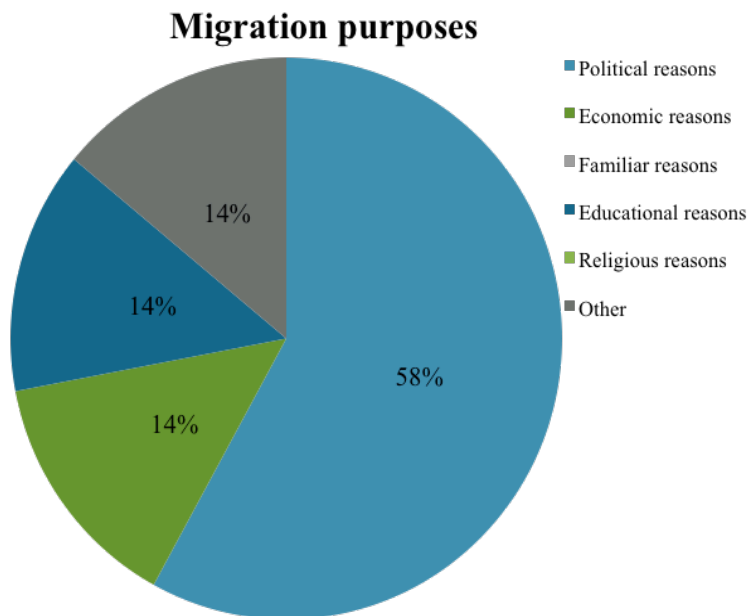
Table 3.

5.3.2. Migrants' educational situation

As to the respondents' educational background, 29% did not attend any grade of school in their home country, while other 29% attended school for five years. Anyhow, 42% attended school for eight up to twelve years. The majority of the respondents (71%) did not complete their studies in their home country, in fact, only 29% declared having completed the middle school/lower secondary school.

Completion of studies
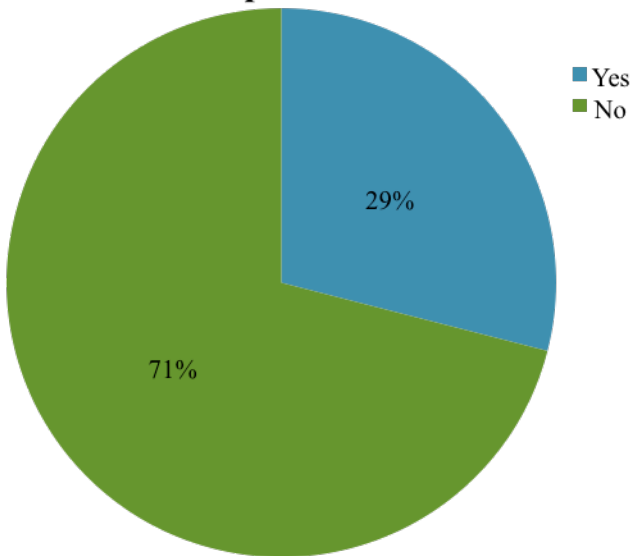
Table 3.

As to the school attendance in Italy, 57% was currently going to school for less than a year, 29% for a year, and the remaining 14 % for more than a year. As to the grade, 29% was attending the primary school, while other 29% was attending the first cycle, 42% did not specify the level (*Table 4*). None of them has completed a cycle of studies in Italy.

Years of school attendance in Italy
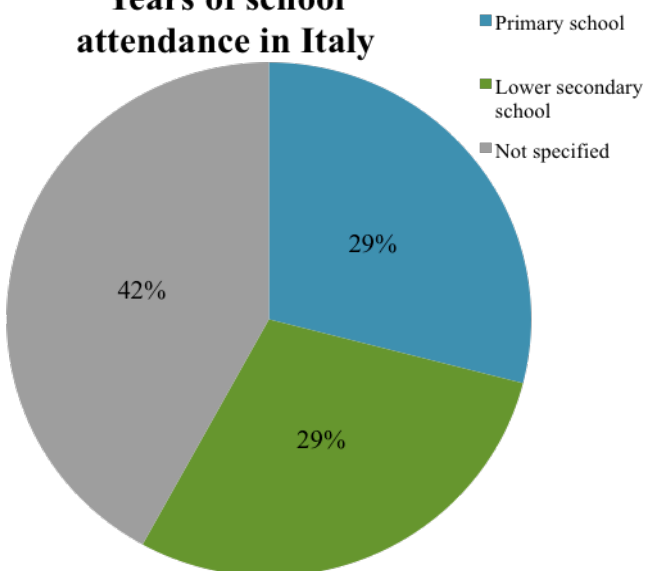
Table 4.

5.3.3. Migrants' social and familiar situation

The question about the respondents' familiar situation in Sicily went beyond the term '*family nucleus',* consisting of either a married couple without children; a married couple with one or more never-married children; one parent with one or more never-married children.[7] The '*nucleo familiare'* was intended as a household which may, or may not, include family members. As a matter of fact, none of the respondents lived with their parents, partner (and children) or children. All the respondents reported that they lived in a community together with other people of the same nationality or other ethnic groups.

As to their occupational situation, 86% was a full-time student at the CPIA, while 14% had a part-time job in the secondary sector (*Table 5*).

**Student status
(number of full-time students)**

14%

86%

Yes
No
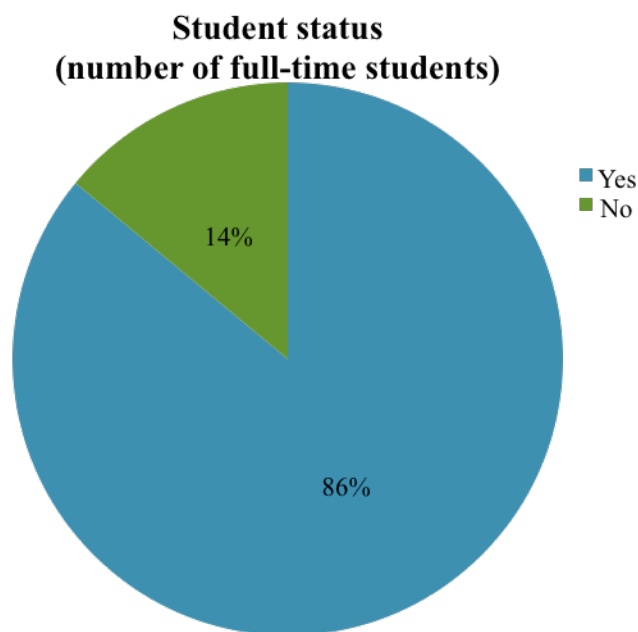
Table 5.

All the respondents felt totally satisfied with their situation both at school and at the workplace. As to their contacts at school and/or at work, the majority (42%) indicated that they were in touch with people of different ethnic origin, while 29% had most contacts with Italians. Other 29% of the questioned reported that they mostly met people coming from their same country of origin.

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[7]http://en-ii.demopaedia.org/wiki/Family_nucleus.

As to the social participation, 43% of the respondents was a member of an association (only 14% specified the purpose of the association, namely a football club), 57% declared not being actively involved in associative life. Their social contacts after school/work were mostly with Italians (57%), whereas 29% of the questioned reported that their social contacts were mainly with people of different ethnic origin. Only 14% of the respondents declared meeting with people coming from their same country of origin in their *vita sociale*, social life.

5.3.4. Migrants' general linguistic situation

As far as the respondents' individual linguistic repertoire was concerned, 86% reported that they had a monolingual repertoire, while 14% answered that they had a multilingual repertoire. As to the individual linguistic capital before arriving in Italy, 45% of the respondents spoke English, 22% Pulaar/Fula, 11% French, 11% Pakistani language, and 11% Bambara,which is a language spoken in West Africa, mostly in Mali, where it is used as a *lingua franca* (*Table 6*).[8]
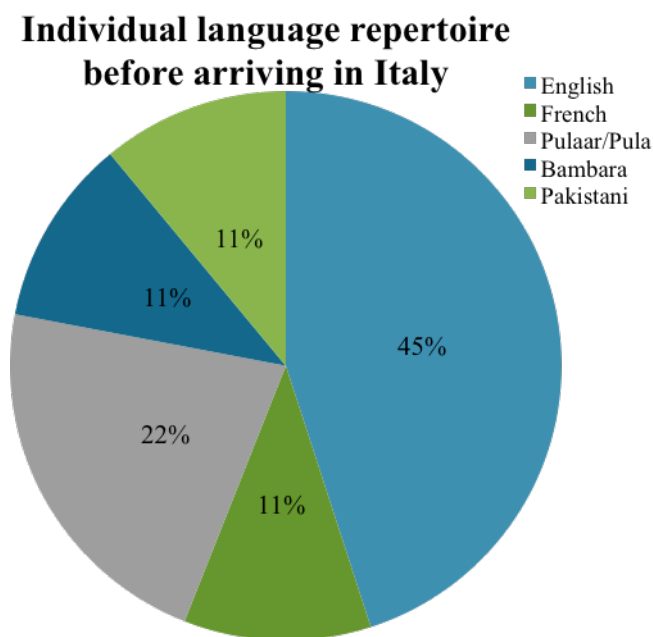
Table 6.

The following questions regarded the use of the Italian language in the migrants' daily life. Their responses revealed that 72% of the questioned spoke Italian with their friends, 14% with their colleagues/schoolmates and other 14% with their teachers (*Table 7*). They used Italian above all

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[8] https://www.britannica.com/topic/Bambara-language.

when surfing the Net, watching TV or with friends (72%), whereas 28% of the questioned used English on similar occasions.

People migrants usually speak Italian with

- Family
- Friends
- Neighbours
- Colleagues
- Other

14%

14%

72%
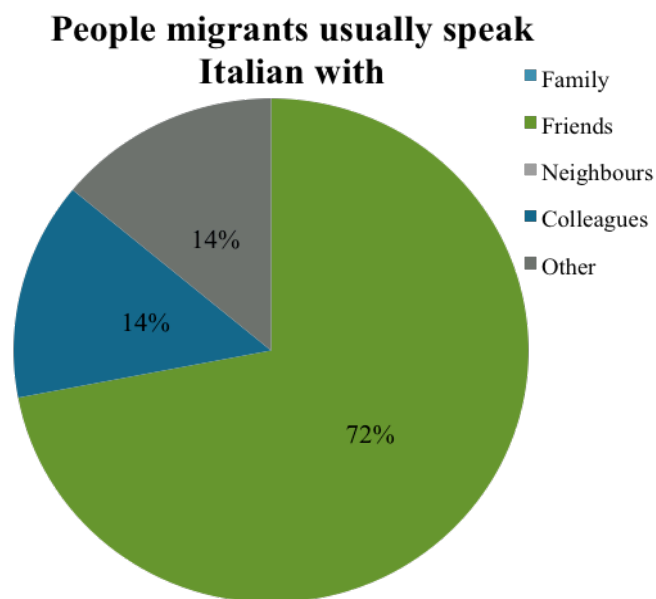
Table 7.

A question on the importance of writing skills was also posed here. All the respondents declared that they needed to know how to write in Italian. Their responses revealed that the main reason was '*(per il) mio futuro'*(44%), for my future, other 28% thought that they would need this productive skill at the workplace, while other 28% regarded writing as an important skill at school (*Table 8*).

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Needs for writing in Italian

- Work
- Education
- Other

28%

28%

44%
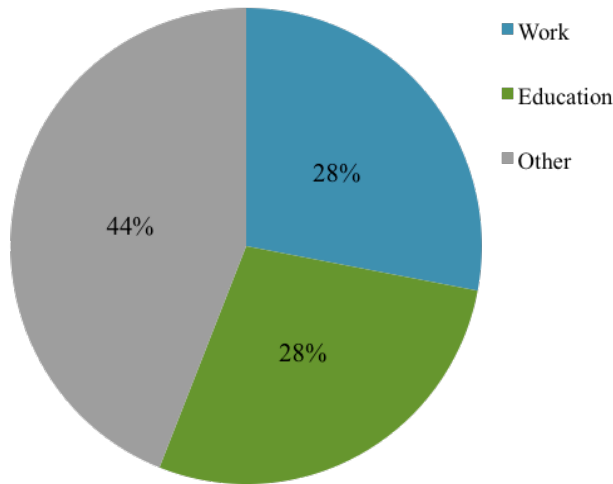
Table 8.

As to the balance between the four skills, more than half of the questioned (57%), were aware of the difference between their writing and speaking skills. Surprisingly, exactly half of the respondents believed that their writing skills were the most developed, while another half thought that these skills were the least developed.

The following sequence of questions focused on the respondents' experience as students of the Italian language at the CPIA. The duration of school attendance, which was specified in months and/or years, not in hours, varied from three months (86%) to one year (14%). As to the language level, 72% of the participants was attending a basic course, while 28% was attending an intermediate course. They were both in-class courses in which instruction was delivered fully on-site. No blended delivery was available (*Table 9*).

The level of the Italian course the respondent is attending

- ■ Basic
- ■ Intermediate
- ■ Advanced

28%

72%
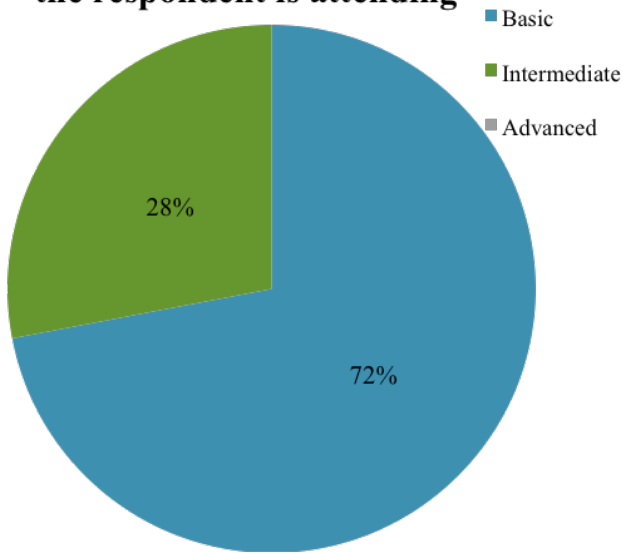
Table 9.

The migrants were given five options and they were asked to choose the classroom activity they liked best. 44% of the participants chose frontal lessons, 28% group work and other 28% task-based activities. The other two options, namely pair work and presentations, were not taken into account by the respondents (*Table 10*).

Classroom activities the respondents consider the most efficient for their needs

- ■ Frontal lessons
- ■ Group work
- ■ Pair work
- ■ Task-based activities
- ■ Presentations

28%

44%

28%

Table 10.

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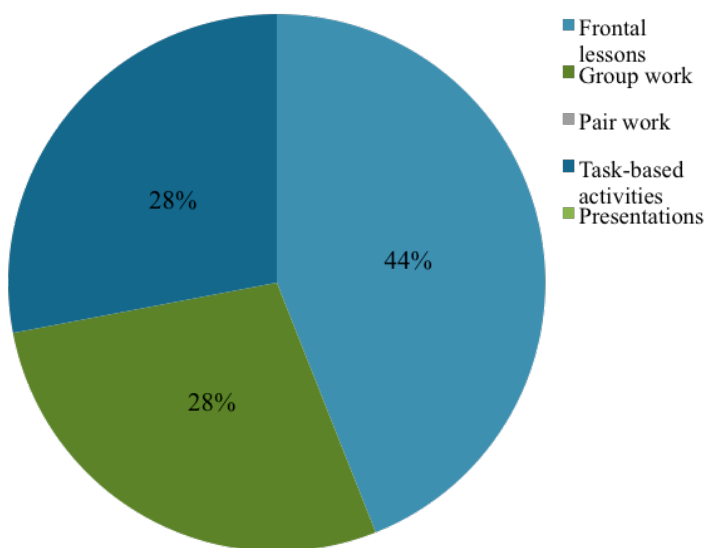
The following set of questions was exclusively addressed to those students who had taken an official Italian language test. 44% of the questioned had taken a test at the CPIA (*Table 11*). 34% of these respondents answered that they possessed a certificate at level A1 of the CEFR, and 66% at level A2 (*Table 12*). None of the respondents had taken a test with any of the four official certification bodies: *Università per Stranieri di Perugia / CVCL*, *L'Università per Stranieri di Siena / Centro CILS*, *Roma Tre / Ufficio della Certificazione - Dipartimento di Linguistica* and *La Società Dante Alighieri / Progetto PLIDA*. Additionally, 66% of those who had taken the Italian language test at the CPIA did not know what the six CEFR levels meant.
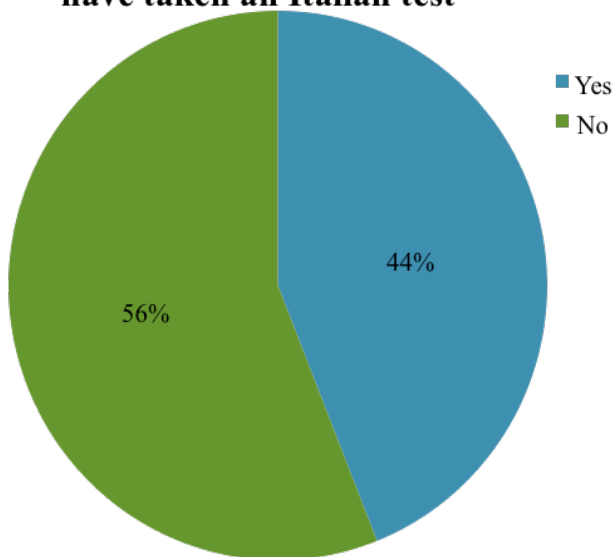
Table 11.

Level of the Italian language certificate

- A1 of the CEFR
- A2 of the CEFR
- B1 of the CEFR
- B2 of the CEFR
- C1 of the CEFR
- C2 of the CEFR

34%

66%
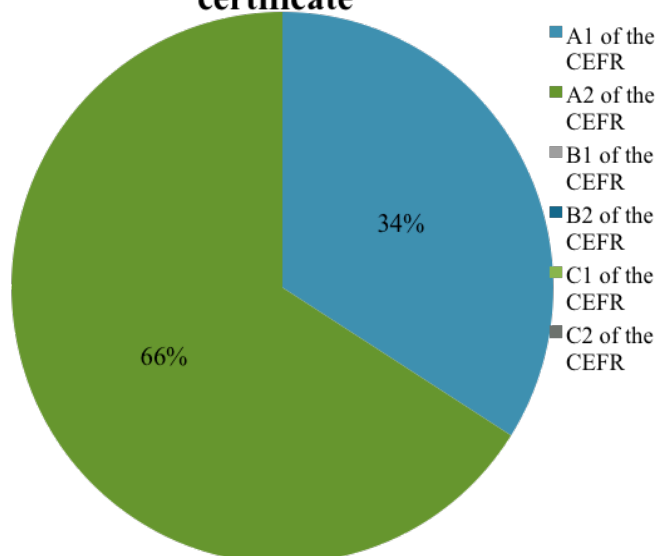
Table 12.

The migrants' self-awareness of their Italian language knowledge was absolutely positive, none of them had a negative perception of their language performance. In fact, 71% reported that they felt at ease with Italian, only 29% answered that they felt anxious when communicating in Italian, and this when interacting orally. Half of those who felt worried, perceived the presence of unknown people as a threatening factor, another half linked anxiety to a testing situation.

Respondents who report noticing differences between writing and speaking skills

- Yes
- No

14%

86%
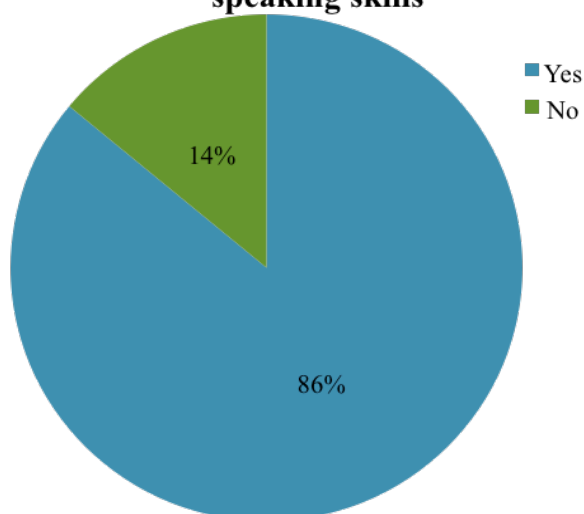
Table 13.

Effective communication with people of different cultures is especially challenging. Cultures provide people with a rich variety of ways of thinking, seeing, hearing and interpreting the world. When the languages are different, the potential for misunderstandings is likely to increase. The respondents were invited to reflect on how often cultural differences may interfere with effective cross-cultural understanding.

The respondents were given five options, namely '*sempre*' (always), '*spesso*' (sometimes), '*qualche volta*'(sometimes), '*raramente*' (rarely) and '*mai*' (never). The answers showed that according to the respondents' opinion the differences tended to lead to communication problems only on some occasions. In fact, 86% of the questioned chose the option *'qualche volta'*, while 14% answered that in their opinion misunderstandings due to cultural differences *never* take place (*Table 14*).
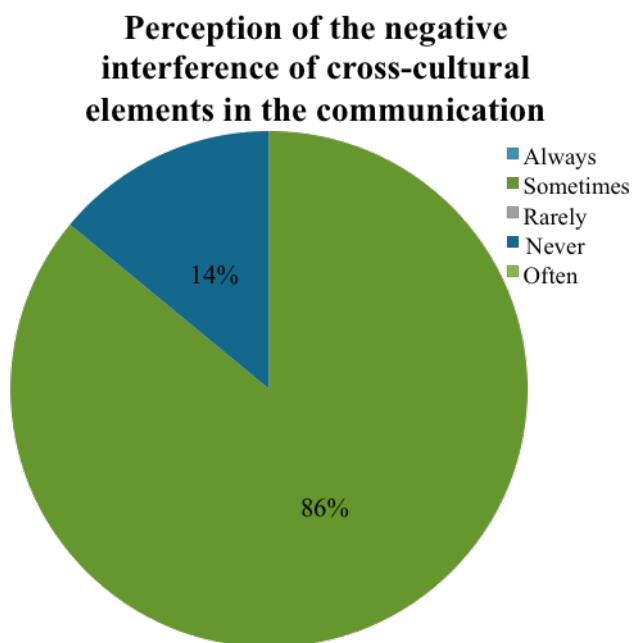
Table 14.

The question number 17 in this section was a ranking question that askedthe respondents to explain what elements increased their self-confidence when speaking in Italian. They were invited tochoose three factors in a list of nine items. The respondents were asked to list their responses in order of importance,scoring with 1 for the most important element. The results revealed that familiarity with the speaker helped students feel confident and relaxed, followed by the collaborative approach of the speaker and familiarity with the topic.

According to some of the respondents, looking the other person in the eye also increased their self-confidence if compared to a telephone conversation in which they could just hear the other

person's voice. A positive communication environment and lack of social pressure also helped migrants feel at ease and optimize communication(*Table 15*).

Factors that increase the respondents' self-confidence when speaking in Italian
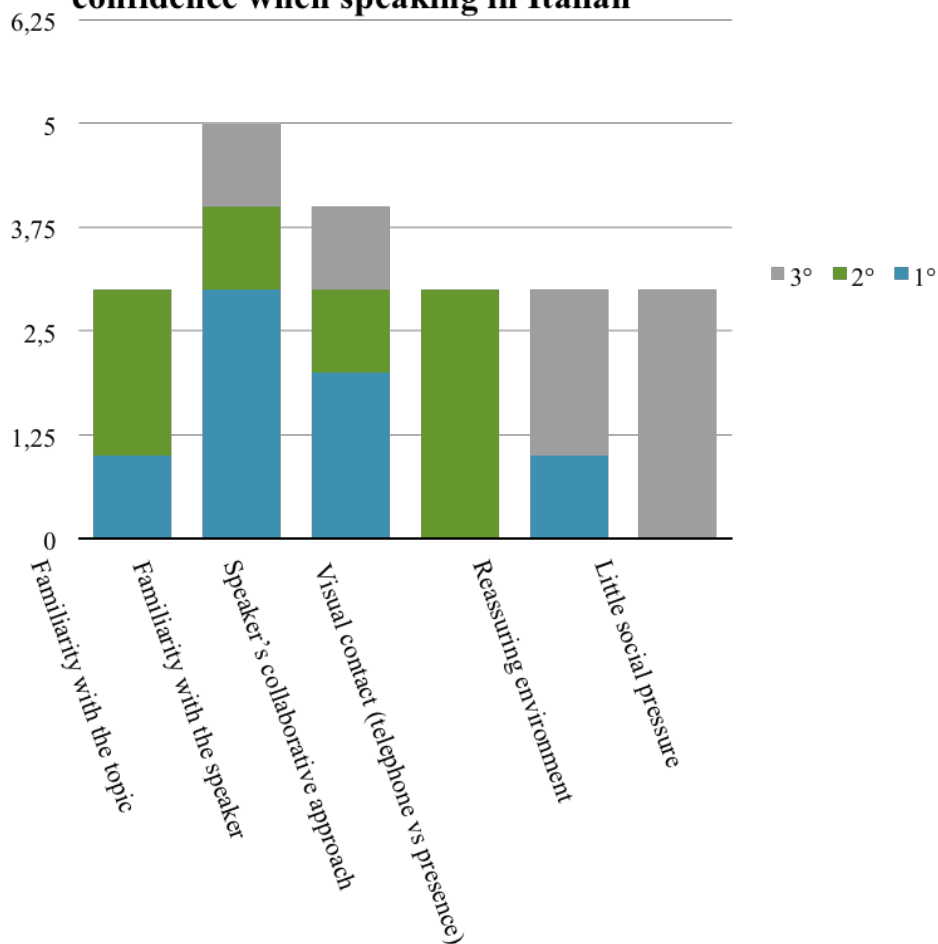
Table 15.

The last two questions in this section regarded the most suitable modality to evaluate the migrants' mastery of the Italian language. The respondents were asked to choose one of the following options: standardized tests; observation charts; task-based observation in migrants' social space; evaluation made by people who are in daily contact with the migrant such as their neighbors, colleagues, employers, etc.; language portfolio; blended language course with placement, mid-module and end-of-module test; storytelling.

In line with the studies of Shohamy (1993, 1997, 2001, 2001), most respondents (43%) reported that a standardized test was the best way to assess their Italian knowledge, while 29% of them mentioned that the people in their social and/or professional network could assess their

language knowledge best. Finally, 14% of the respondents chose the observation charts, while the remaining 14% opted for storytelling (*Table 16*).

The modality the respondents consider the most efficient in order to assess their real language skills

Legend:
- Standardized test
- Observation charts
- Task-based evaluation in the migrants' social space
- Evaluation by the members of the migrants' social and professional network
- Language portfolio
- Blended course with placement test, mid-course and end-of-course evaluation
- Storytelling
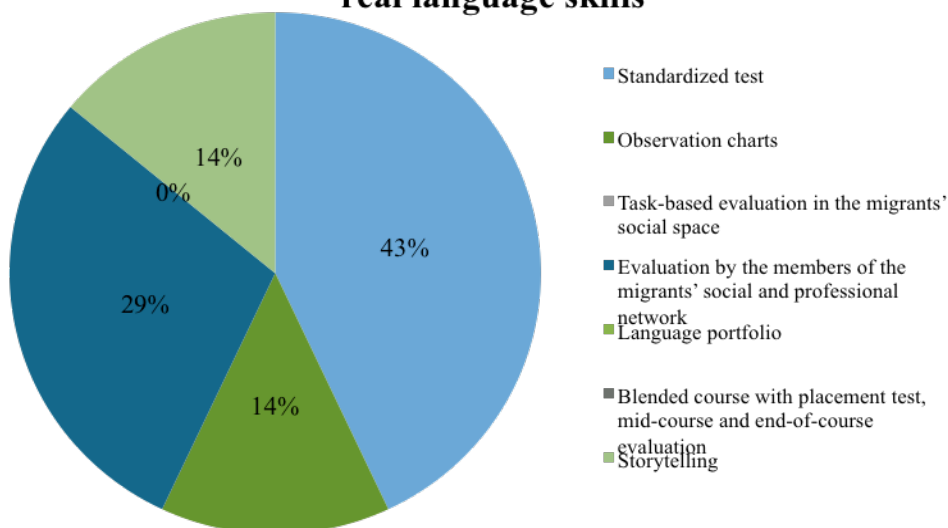
Table 16.

The respondents were also invited to indicate the person (employer, teacher, friend, neighbor, other) who could provide the most realistic description of their knowledge of Italian. All the respondents agreed on choosing their teacher as the person who could assess their performance best.

5.4. Periodic student assessment at the CPIA

At the CPIA learners are assessed at the end of two four-month periods. The first cycle is comprised of four hundred hours of lessons that the learners attend according to an individual learning plan. In agreement with the decree by the President of the Republic N. 263/2012, the four hundred hours include a forty-hour module of reception and three-hundred and sixty hours of teaching.[9] This year the school official at the CPIA of Agrigento introduced a further moment of assessment that takes place about two months before the official evaluation. This evaluation is carried out by the Level Councils and is based on the initial forty-hour reception phase, learners' attitude towards their individual educational pathway and their first steps in the four educational areas the teaching and training is organized.

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[9] http://www.indire.it/lucabas/lkmw_img/eurydice/quaderno_eurydice_30_per_web.pdf.

The evaluation of the students'learning outcomes in each area is expressed in numerical marks out of ten (from 0 to 10). The seven respondents of my questionnaire, were all assigned a global pass mark of 6 in the linguistic area. The pass mark means that the learners have a sufficient knowledge and are familiar with the fundamental aspects of the topics. Yet they are not able to work in an independent, self-sufficient manner and still need guidance from their teachers in order to achieve the learning goals adequately. Moreover, it means that they still have to develop their sense of awareness of their skills.

6. Concluding remarks

The noticeable increase of the phenomenon of immigration to Europe over the last decades has caused a true 'migration crisis'. For this reason the European Union (EU) and its Member States (MSs) have been obliged look for solutions to cope with an ever-increasing influx of migrants arriving from every corner of the world. The research reported in this thesis has investigated some of the complex situations due to the massive arrival of third-country nationals to the MSs, primarily focusing on the role of language testing as an integral part of European immigration/integration policies.

In the last past few years the EU has struggled to identify a common response to this question and national governments have taken the problem in their hands transposing the most important Directives of this field into domestic laws. There are two key Directives which have had a far-reaching impact on the European integration policies, namely Council Directive 2003/109/EC of 25 November 2003 concerning the status of non-EU nationals who are long-term residents and Council Directive 2003/86/EC of 22 September 2003 on the right to family reunification. Apart from the specific purposes of the two Directives, both allow the EU countries to require additional conditions of integration (Böcker & Strik, 2011; Caponio, 2013; Groenendijk, 2011; Strik *et al*., 2010).

Chapter I illustrated how solving the migration crisis has become one of the most critical questions for European policymakers and national, regional and local governments all over Europe. Consequently, both the EU institutions and most MSs have become increasingly active in developing strategies and searching for solutions to the pressing challenge of both migration flow and migrants' integration into receiving societies. Under these circumstances, language tests, often accompanied by Knowledge-of-Society tests (KoS-tests), have thus become a central part of immigration/integration policies as a condition for entering an MS, for family reunification, long-term residence permit or citizenship (Extra & Spotti, 2009).

However, this thesis showed that the search for a common European solution has proven to be complicated as social and political differences between the MSs have become more and more evident as this serious crisis is stretching economic resources, radicalizing and toughening Member States' immigration policies that involve critical fields such as education, employment and social cohesion (Blommaert, 2006a).

To better understand the large regulatory context of the European Union in the immigration flow and, specifically, the issues concerning family reunification, long–term residence permit and citizenship, *hard laws* and *soft laws* were discussed in Chapter I. The approach taken in this thesis

started from the European legislative framework that puts the role of *language* at the centre of the question as a selection criterion in the migration flow. However, the use of language tests has raised a set of problematic questions formulated by language experts and scholars such as Böcker & Strik (2011), Groenendijk (2011), Kunnan (2004), McNamara (2005), Shohamy (2001, 2009), Strik *et al.* (2010), and Van Avermaet (2006, 2010, 2011). The review of essential literature, that supported the need for a new perspective on language testing, was described not only in Chapter I but also in Chapter II.

Chapter I further described the dynamics of linguistic integration of adult migrants and current policies implemented through documents such as Directives, Communications, Recommendations, and so forth, which are applied to immigration contexts in the European Union. The thesis is continually focused on the different aspects of the host countries' linguistic requirements which, interestingly enough, vary a lot across Europe. This part also shed light on the different inclusion models adopted in Europe, professional and institutional frameworks of training and testing that have been established in three pioneering Member States for integration policies such as France, Germany and the Netherlands. A more thorough discussion concerned the Italian context, since Sicily, and particularly Agrigento, was the site for the Case study reported in Chapter V. In this context, it was of interest to compare the strategies and implementations of the three pioneer countries, that share the toughening up of immigration/integration policies, to Italy that does not belong to the strict mainstream as to the language requirements for migrants. This comparison showed a great variety of strategic positions, language and integration policies within the European context.

Chapter II introduced the evolution of language testing supported by theories and definitions of scholars who have made history of this field such as Carroll (1961), Lado (1961), Kunnan (2004), McNamara (1996, 2005, 2008, 2010), Shohamy (1982, 1993, 1997, 2000, 2001, 2009) and Van Avermaet (2009, 2010). The exploration of the theoretical implications and connections with established studies in this area demonstrated the actual need for more democratic evaluation methods due to various political, economic, social and cultural questions which were further questioned in this paper (Chapter V). Chapter II thus describes the state of art of the ethical perspective on language testing as well as that of the sphere related to human rights. The framework of both ethics and fairness supported the formulation of new, alternative approaches to assessment practices of adult migrants' language knowledge such as storytelling, portfolios, language ateliers, and so forth. It was demonstrated how a language, an extraordinary instrument of human relationships and form of integration, can become a means of social exclusion and segregation

(McNamara, 2005; Shohamy, 2001, 2009; Blommaert, 2006a; Avermaet, 2010), if it becomes a tool in the service of power and policy (Shohamy, 1993; McNamara & Roever, 2006). It was highlighted that there is no real relationship between real–life language skills and a mandatory language test imposed by national governments as a condition for family reunification, long-term residence permit and citizenship (Strik *et al.*, 2010; Böcker & Strik, 2011; Groenendijk, 2011).

Some study questions were posed in Chapters I and II: Are the courses and tests free of charge or do the candidates have to pay a fee for them? Can the prospective candidates afford for them? Are the test takers' human and civil rights guaranteed in the testing procedure? Are vulnerable categories such as women and girls safeguarded in the testing procedure? The answers to these questions do not depict a reassuring picture. The analysis of various documents issued by the Council of Europe (2010, 2014, 2016a, 2016b) show that in most cases migrants' have to take the responsibility of the whole process of testing, they have thus to face the financial costs as most tests are not free of charge. Most prospective candidates have difficulties to pay for them. The careful study of the INTEC report (Strik *et al.*, 2010) clearly showed that even if gender equality has come to the forefront, and the migrant family has become one of the central targets in the integration process, it is not possible to guarantee equal treatment to each and every candidate paying attention to his/her particular conditions under any and all circumstances. However, the assumption that tests are commonly perceived as objective, allowing every test taker to have the same opportunities and testing conditions, was demonstrated in Chapter V. Likewise, the experimental part, supported by assumptions of scholars such as McNamara (2006), Shohamy (2009) and Van Avermaet (2010) showed that tests are seldom criticized as they are considered symbols of merit, standards and productivity.

Chapter II also discussed both the fair use of language tests (Hamp-Lyons, 2000) and the far-reaching impact they may have on individuals' private and professional lives. As described in the literary review, tests are often used as tools of power in undemocratic and unethical ways to carry out hidden policy agendas (Shohamy, 2009). Not the less, as has been argued in this thesis, notwithstanding a general trust in tests, alternative forms of assessment, which help value migrants' individual language repertoire, their cultural and affective dimension, should be more widely introduced as opposed to large-scale testing.

Chapter II also discusses the close link between professionalism and ethics, which can be identified as the standards of a profession. The study of the Codes of Ethics introduced by professional associations such as the Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE) and the International Language Testing Association (ILTA) was functional to the analysis of the role of a

community of practice (Fulcher & Davidson, 2013). The results of the analysis showed the importance of shared responsibility that requires each member of the community of practitioners to share news, facts and experiences with their peers and other stakeholder groups in order. This argument seemed to be closely related to democratic approach to testing and assessment that excludes the assumption that test developers and testers are the only ones who 'know it all'.

Chapter III discussed two key aspects of the formal language requirements of migrants, namely the right to family reunification and the concept of citizenship. The chapter investigated the crucial question of family reunification which is one of the most significant reasons for immigration shifts into the EU. The results of this part showed that many MSs have not always followed the guidelines in the transposition of the EU Directives into a national law to facilitate family reunion.

The notion of citizenship was discussed from the perspective of "personhood rather than nationhood" (Shohamy, 2009:53) as well as in the light of a broader concept of "*universal citizenship*" (*ibid.:*53) which could allow third-country nationals to maintain their cultures, language repertoire and basic identities. From this new viewpoint, Chapter III showed that legal citizenship cannot be seen as the ultimate goal of *migrants' long journey to citizenship*; on the contrary, it has to be viewed as a continual process in which language learning becomes a part of the individual's life-long learning process.

Chapter IV "Concepts in assessment and validation testing" focused on the investigation of the meanings of concepts such as *validity*, *reliability*, *authenticity* and *anxiety*. The analysis of the key concepts was necessary in order to compare large-scale language tests to more democratic methods of assessment such as storytelling which has gradually come to the forefront of alternative practices to measure migrants' functional language skills. The analysis of the central factors of language testing showed that if students are given time and prior access to testing settings, but above all if they are familiar with the test format, their anxiety level will decrease, and at the same time, their performance will improve.

The case study, presented in Chapter V of my research confirms that there is still wide public acceptance and trust in tests among migrants (Bourdieu, 1991, cited in Shohamy 2001; McNamara & Shohamy, 2008). In fact, 43% of the respondents reported that a standardized test was the most suitable way to assess their Italian knowledge. Moreover, all the respondents agreed on choosing their teacher as the person who can assess their performance best. This means that migrants totally rely on the institutions and those who represent them as to the evaluation of their language skills. Their trust in school as institution is also confirmed by the sufficient mark in the mid-term

evaluation. It shows they have a positive attitude towards education and points out their motivation and willingness to learn.

Yet, standardized, formalized tests are often used for undeclared purposes in order to exclude migrants rather than include them in a new society (Shohamy, 1993, 1997, 2000, 2001). This inevitably raises questions about the respect of human and civil rights in the testing procedure. In addition, large-scale tests hardly correspond to the migrants' real-life language needs in their social space. Still the majority of test takers believe in their objective, neutral character as the case study of this thesis showed.

Despite most test takers' trust in tests, those who are being tested/evaluated should be provided with alternative forms of assessment according to one of the principles of democratic forms of evaluation which implies "[…] the need to conduct and administer testing in collaboration and cooperation with those tested" (Shohamy, 2001:376). The research showed, if only to a limited extent, that new approaches to assessment should include tasks that are centered around contents migrants are familiar with and "[…] incorporate L1 skills and knowledge of negotiation" (Shohamy, 2009:56). However, this minimal result gave a new input to the proposal to introduce storytelling as an alternative method to assess migrants' language knowledge. Consequently, test designers and teachers should bear in mind that migrants may not know all the assessment/test formats used in the receiving country. Thus strategies that are familiar to those who have to be evaluated should be employed. In this regard, the respondents of the questionnaire, who opted for the storytelling, focused on the need for new models of assessment. As the studies of eminent scholars (McNamara, 1996, 2000, 2005, 2010; Shohamy, 1993, 1997, 2000, 2001; Van Avermaet, 2010) have shown, fair assessment practices should be based on the principles of shared power in order to put the evaluatee at the centre of the assessment procedure.

This means that contents should be tailored to migrants' needs, background and contexts. Second, migrants' individual language capital should be valued in order to build on their mother tongue or multilingual language repertoire. In such a manner, migrants' linguistic heritage can become an important element of integration in a multilingual/multicultural society. It is thus important to be willing "to consider the voices of diverse groups in multicultural societies" (*ibid.*:376).

In this regard, the proposal developed in this thesis is intended to consider the introduction of storytelling into the range of activities and assessment methods aimed to measure adult migrants' language knowledge. Indeed, telling a story is something central to human existence and involves a collaborative, synergetic exchange between the narrator and the listener most people learn to

negotiate in the childhood. Understanding and creating narratives, which can be biographical, fictional or a mixture of the two, is a fundamental literacy skill, besides being a universal human activity.

Storytelling is possibly the world's oldest art form, but it is not used only to entertain, but to educate and inform. Besides, it is also a narrative inquiry method of research. In the storytelling situation the researcher/teacher/evaluator listens to a story told by a narrator or an evaluatee, trying to capture the link between the personal experiences of the individual and his/her social context. As a matter of fact, narratives are always constructed in a social situation interactionally. If used in the assessment procedure, the enhancement of the evaluatee's participatory role makes the relationship between the evaluator and evaluatee more balanced than in a traditional setting thanks to symbiotic relational dynamics.

Hymes (1996), who pioneered in the field of ethnopoetics from the middle of the 20th century using ethnopoetic analysis to capture the heritage of Native American oral tradition, considered narrative as a central modality of language use, in which, cognitive, emotional, affective, cultural, social and aesthetic elements are intertwined. According to Hymes (*ibidem*), a narrator has to possess two main competences to tell a story: the competence to organize experiences and events in a 'telling' way, and the competence to arrange them in sequence in a measured form.

According to Blommaert (2006b: 230-231), Hymes sees ethnopoetic analysis as "[…] a tactic for restoring, reconstructing and repatriating the functions of narratives", "[…] a form of structural linguistics" (*ibid.*:234) and "[…] part of a larger theoretical vision revolving around narrative and performance and ultimately embedded in a view of language in society" (*ibid.*:232). This means that Hymes (1996) aimed to describe languages as repertoires or sociolinguistic systems.

Yet, reconstructing the functions of narratives is not only a question of restoring cultural heritage. It is a political action that involves people from different (ethnic) minority groups as tradition-bearers and cultural producers. From this perspective, ethnopoetics can help hear, give and understand different voices. It can be used as an instrument to investigate how these voices are manipulated to form in- and out-groups (Blommaert, 2006b).

Blommaert (2007:181) argues that "[…] ethnopoetics could be productively applied to data in which different meaning making meet – a condition that defines many important service-providing systems in globalizing context". As a matter of fact, storytelling takes place in many different forms, contexts and situations. In the migration flow cross-cultural storytelling plays an important role as migrants as narrators produce a great amount of narratives in bureaucratic and

institutional contexts. These range from family reunification, asylum, long-term, citizenship applications, meetings with social assistants for social housing and welfare, police interviews to court hearings (*ibidem*).

On these occasions, migrants tell a story that essentially follows a question-answer model. The encounters are complicated and layered speech events in which the migrants' narratives are characterized by a poor command of the host country's language. Moreover, in bureaucratic or institutional contexts a limited language knowledge may lead to harmful misunderstanding.

Today, migrants, expats, asylum seekers and refugees no longer make blind journeys across borders. The changing landscape of migration is documented through traditional means of communication such newspapers, radio and TV, but more and more frequently through many-to-many channels, such as the Internet, which allow the migrants to share their voice and tell their story.

Digital storytelling allows migrants themselves to post a short digital narrative on the Internet, with the migrant narrating her/his journey or story, accompanied by background music and images. Publishing stories through blog posts, videos and social media allows migrants to share their voice with online communities about their reality and create a better cross-cultural understanding. In such a manner it is also possible to highlight the metaphorical dimension of their journeys when they move "[…] from *society and culture* to another, from one *language community* to another" (Norton, 1995, 2000 cited in Saville 2009:18).

Migrants may also be allowed to tell (their) stories in a creative way in the framework of an educational context. The School of Italian for Foreigners of the University of Palermo carried out a three-year project '*Dai barconi all'università*' (Amoruso, D'Agostino, Jaralla, 2015) from 2012 to 2015. The project 'From migrant boats to University' focused on the reality of unaccompanied foreign minors whose number has significantly increased in Italy in recent years. [10] A group of the minors between 16 and 17, who attended Italian language courses at *Itastra* , the School of Italian for Foreigners of the University of Palermo, were also engaged in a wide range of learner-centered activities such as storytelling embedded in a theatrical experimentation.

The Narration and Theatre project was realized together with a theater company, '*Teatro dell'oppresso*' and staged intentionally outside the University, in the oratory of *Santa Chiara*, in the historical center of Palermo. The students were involved in the representation of improvisational theater in which most of all that is performed is created on stage at the very moment it is performed. Amoruso (2015:250) explains the rationale of this approach: "*Narrare storie, pensavamo, li*

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[10] https://www.unicef.org/emergencies/childrenonthemove/files/Child_Alert_Final_PDF.pdf .

avrebbe aiutati a ricomporre i pezzi, a ripensare ad essi oggettivandoli, a connettere il prima e il dopo. Il racconto avrebbe tessuto i fili, la rappresentanza scenica i avrebbe aiutati ad averne più piena consapevolezza."[11]

In the light of these considerations storytelling has incredible potential: it can be used under a variety of circumstances and delivered through different means such as books, the Internet, theater, etc. Migrants use the method of storytelling unconsciously in their daily life in a wide range of formal and informal situations. Consequently, migrants' familiarity with this method could be further exploited in assessing their knowledge of the host country's language as storytelling is a democratic, participatory and evaluatee-centered method that builds on the migrant's L1 skills and experiences.

Lastly, some final conclusions may be drawn. Firstly, it can be noticed that the sample may not be totally representative of the migrant population, not the less the insight gained thanks to the investigation on that sample that anyhow helped to arrive to new conclusions. Limitations in this research are mainly due to time constraints and difficulties in finding respondents corresponding to the requirements. Moreover, the use of English as a *lingua franca* in the communication between the migrants of different origin, with their teachers and in their social spaces would have surely deserved particular attention in this research.

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[11]"We thought that storytelling would have helped them to put all the pieces back together, to rethink about them through objectification, to reconnect the *before* and the *after*. The narrative would have reset everything, the performance on stage would have helped them to increase their awareness.", my translation.

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Appendix

QUESTIONARIO DI CONOSCENZA E CONSAPEVOLEZZA LINGUISTICA

MIGRANTI ADULTI ALFABETIZZATI

Jaana Helena Simpanen

PhD Student

University of Palermo

Department of Human Sciences

INFORMAZIONI GENERALI

1.Nome:	
2.Cognome:	
3.Sesso:	F □ M □
4.Anno di nascita:	
5.Prima generazione di immigrati □ Seconda generazione di immigrati □	
6.Anno di arrivo in Italia:	
7.Anno di arrivo in Sicilia:	
8.Motivo dell'immigrazione in Italia:	Motivi: politici □ lavorativi □ economici □ familiari □ di studio □ religiosi □ altro □ specificare: _____
9.Paese di origine:	
10.Cittadinanza:	

SITUAZIONE SCOLASTICA DEL MIGRANTE

1.Quanti anni di scuola ha frequentato nel paese di origine?	Numero di anni:_____ Ciclo di riferimento:_____

	_____
2.Ha completato il percorso di studi nel paese di origine?	Si □ No □
3.Quanti anni di scuola ha frequentato in Italia?	Numero di anni:_____ Ciclo di riferimento:_____ _____
4.Ha completato il percorso di studi in Italia?	Si □ No □

SITUAZIONE SOCIO-FAMILIARE DEL MIGRANTE

1.Com'è composto il Suo nucleo familiare, ovvero, con chi vive nello stesso alloggio?	Scelga una opzione tra le seguenti: 1. Sposo/a 2. Sposo/a e figli 3. Figli 4. Genitori 5. Parenti 6. Solo/a 7. Amici connazionali
2.Ha un posto di lavoro?	Si □ No □ Se la risposta è si, il Suo contratto è: 1. a tempo determinato□ 2. a tempo indeterminato □ 3. di apprendistato □ 4. a tempo parziale □ 5. a progetto □ 6. accessorio □ 7. di somministrazione di lavoro □
3.Qual è il Suo settore occupazionale?	1. Agricoltura/pesca, etc. (settore primario) □ 2. Industria, costruzione, attività manifatturiere, etc. (settore secondario) □ 3. Servizi, turismo, trasporti, comunicazione, etc. (settore terziario) □
4.E' studente a tempo pieno?	Si □ No □ Se la risposta è si: indichi il nome e il grado

	dell'istituzione: _____
5.Si sente soddisfatto della Sua situazione occupazionale/di studio:	Si □ No □ Se la risposta è no, scelga una tra le seguenti opzioni: 1. Stipendio basso □ 2. Ambiente negativo □ 3. Precarietà del lavoro □ 4. Orari di lavoro lunghi □ 5. Altro □ specificare_____
6.Nella Sua vita lavorativa/di studio, con chi ha più contatti:	Scelga una tra le seguenti opzioni: 1. Italiani □ 2. Suoi connazionali □ 3. persone con diverse origini etniche □
7.Fa parte di qualche associazione?	Si □ No □ Se la risposta è si, indichi quale: _____
8.Nella Sua vita sociale, con chi ha più contatti:	Scelga una tra le seguenti opzioni: 1. Italiani □ 2. Suoi connazionali □ 3. Persone con diverse origini etniche □

SITUAZIONE LINGUISTICA GENERALE DEL MIGRANTE

1.Che lingua/e parlava prima di arrivare in Italia?	Indichi la/e lingua/e: _____
2.Con chi parla abitualmente l'italiano?	Scelga una tra le seguenti opzioni: 1. Il Suo nucleo familiare □ 2. amici □ 3. vicini di casa □ 4. colleghi □ 5. altro □ specificare:_____
3.Quale lingua usa più frequentemente (con amici, a casa, navigazione Internet, TV, etc.)?	Scelga una tra le seguenti opzioni: 1. Italiano □ 2. la Sua lingua madre□ 3. inglese □

	4. altro □ specificare:_____
4. Ha esigenze di scrivere in italiano?	Si □ No □ Se la risposta è si: indichi il motivo principale: 1. lavoro 2. studio 3. altro □ specificare:_____
5. Ha studiato la lingua italiana?	Si □ No □ Se la risposta è si: indichi i seguenti fattori: Livello del corso: 1. base □ 2. intermedio □ 3. avanzato □ Modalità di somministrazione: 1. online□ 2. frequenza in classe □ 3. modalità mista: (in classe/online) □ Durata del corso:_____ Organizzatore del corso:_____
6. Se la risposta è no: in che modo ha imparato l'italiano?	Scelga tra le seguenti alternative (fino a tre opzioni): 1. corsi di autoapprendimento (libri, CD, etc.)□ 2. Internet □ 3. TV □ 4. sul lavoro in Italia □ 5. tramite rapporti sociali in Italia□ 6. altro □
Risponda solo chi ha seguito un corso di lingua italiana. Domande 7 - 8	
7. .Se ha seguito un corso, quali attività ha ritenuto più efficienti per lo sviluppo delle Sue competenze di italiano?	Scelga tra le seguenti alternative (fino a tre opzioni): 1. Spiegazione frontale □ 2. Lavori di gruppo □ 3. Lavori in coppia □ 4. Attività pratiche□ 5. Presentazioni □

8.Secondo Lei, fino a che punto il corso ha colmato i Suoi reali bisogni linguistici?	Scelga una tra le seguenti opzioni: 1. Completamente □ 2. In modo sufficiente □ 3. Solo parzialmente □ 4. In maniera insufficiente □ 5. In nessun modo□
Risponda solo chi ha fatto il test di italiano come lingua straniera? Domande9 – 14.	
9.Quale livello è il Suo attestato?	Scelga una tra le seguenti opzioni: 1. A1 □; 2. A2 □ 3. B1 □ 4. B2 □ 5. C1 □ 6. C2 □
10. Sa cosa è il Quadro Comune di Riferimento per le lingue e cosa rappresentano i parametri di valutazione (A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, C2)?	Si □ No □
11. Con quale ente certificatore ha conseguito il titolo?	Scelga una tra le seguenti opzioni: 1. Università per Stranieri di Perugia / CVCL□ 2. L'Università per Stranieri di Siena / Centro CILS□ 3. Roma Tre / Ufficio della Certificazione - Dipartimento di Linguistica□ 4. La Società Dante Alighieri / Progetto PLIDA □
12. Dopo quanto tempo di soggiorno in Italia ha fatto il test?	Scelga una tra le seguenti opzioni: 1. Meno di un anno □ 2. 1-2 anni □ 3. 3-4 anni □ 4. Più di 4 anni □
13. Ha seguito un corso prima di fare il test?	Si □ No □
14. Ritiene che il risultato del test corrisponda alle Sue reali competenze linguistiche, ovvero, quello che sa fare in italiano?	Scelga una tra le seguenti opzioni: 6. Completamente □ 7. In modo sufficiente □ 8. Solo parzialmente □

	9. In maniera insufficiente□
15.Nota differenze tra le Sue competenze scritte e orali?	Si □ No □ Se la risposta è si: indichi con il segno più (**+)** la competenza che ritiene la più sviluppata e con il segno meno (**-**) quella meno sviluppata: 1. Scrivere □ 2. Leggere □ 3. Parlare □ 4. Ascoltare □
16.Come definirebbe la percezione che ha della Sua conoscenza di italiano?	Scelga una tra le due opzioni: 1. Positiva 2. Negativa
17.Quali elementi aumentano la Sua sicurezza nell'esposizione in italiano?	Indichi i tre fattori prioritari in ordine di importanza da 1 a 3: 1. Familiarità con l'argomento □ 2. Conoscenza con l'interlocutore □ 3. Atteggiamento collaborativo dell'interlocutore □ 4. Contatto visivo con l'interlocutore (telefono vs di presenza) □ 5. Ambiente rassicurante□ 6. Situazione poco formale □ 7. Poca pressione sociale 8. Condivisione di elementi interculturali con l'interlocutore □ 9. Coinvolgimento emotivo □
18.Si sente ansioso/a quando deve comunicare in italiano?	Si □ No □ Se la risposta è sì, si sente ansioso/a quando deve 1. Scrivere □ 2. Leggere ad alta voce □ 3. Interagire oralmente (ascoltare e parlare) □ Quali fattori fanno crescere la Sua ansia? 1. Presenza di persone che non conosce □ 2. Presenza di insegnanti/valutatori □ 3. Ambiente nuovo □ 4. Esame/test di lingua □
19.Pensa che le differenze culturali possano influire negativamente quando comunica in italiano?	Scelga una tra le seguenti opzioni: 1. Sempre □

	2. Spesso □ 3. Qualche volta □ 4. Raramente □ 5. Mai □
20.Secondo Lei, qual è il modo più adeguato per valutare le Sue competenze di italiano?	Indichi il modo più idoneo: 1. **Test standardizzato**, preparato da un ente certificatore riconosciuto che comprende le quattro abilità (scrivere, parlare, ascoltare e leggere). □ 2. **Griglie di osservazione sistematica** sulla partecipazione, collaborazione e progressi rispetto agli obiettivi prefissati a cura di un docente all'interno di un corso.□ 3. Valutazione iniziale, intermedia e finale sull'esecuzione di **azioni quotidiane, che richiedono l'immersione nello spazio sociale,** da parte di un formatore-animatore che accompagna i corsisti, ad esempio, alla stazione per leggere l'orario dei treni,alla posta per inviare un pacco, a scuola per partecipare ad una riunione dei genitori. □ 4. **Valutazione sulle competenze linguistiche da parte dei componenti della rete sociale** (amici, vicini di casa, etc.) e **professionale** (colleghi, datore di lavoro, clienti, etc.)del migrante. □ 5. **Portfolio linguistico** dove il migrante stesso può registrare i propri apprendimenti *linguistici.* □ 6. **Percorso di apprendimento in classe e modalità a distanza con un tutor** con verifiche iniziali, intermedie e finali dei progressi compiuti. □ 7. *Storytelling*ovvero il "raccontare" in forma narrativa strutturata che permette di focalizzare sull'elemento autobiografico di chi racconta.
21.Secondo Lei, tra tutte le persone italiane che conosce, chi è quella più attendibile a fornire la valutazione della Sua conoscenza di lingua italiana?	Indichi la persona più idonea: 1. datore di lavoro □ 2. docente (di corso, di scuola, etc.) □ 3. amico/a □ 4. vicino di casa □ 5. altro□ specificare _____

Modalità di somministrazione del questionario:

1. Forma scritta(il rispondente ha compilato la scheda da solo/a)□
2. Forma orale (il somministratore ha letto le domande ad alta voce al rispondente)□
3. Mista (il somministratore ha operato solo come facilitatore) □
4. Online□

Luogo:_____

Data: _____

Tempo impiegato:_____