



Università
per Stranieri
di Perugia

RESPECTING DIVERSITY AND BRIDGING DISTANCES: TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT OF MULTI PROFILES - FROM LITERACY TO PLURILINGUALISM

**ALTE 56TH MEETING AND CONFERENCE
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Plurilingual assessment of linguistic, textual, and communicative skills in multicultural Italian primary schools

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Experimentation:

- **multi-ethnic classes (pupils aged 11-13)** characterized by a **high percentage of pupils with different L1s** (mostly Chinese) and **pupils with SLD** (special learning disorders).

Some basic questions:

- How can we improve learners' **language skills** and their **underlying linguistic proficiency** as a whole, through the active use of all the languages included in the linguistic repertoire of the class?
- How can we make **language learning** an experience of plurality and diversity, also for learners with SLD?
- How can we link **assessment** more closely to the teaching-learning process?
- How can we **assess** learners' linguistic competences without sacrificing their idiolect, their own plurilingual repertoire?
- How can we promote learners' **cultural** awareness and respect for cultural diversity?
- ³ How can we promote **dialogue** and **intercultural** education? © Copyright ALTE

Dialogic Approach (Coppola 2009; 2011; 2019)

is an **integrated approach** to languages that **fully recognizes all languages spoken and learned** by students

It promotes intercultural dialogue and adopts a broad, complex, interactive conception of the language teaching-learning process.



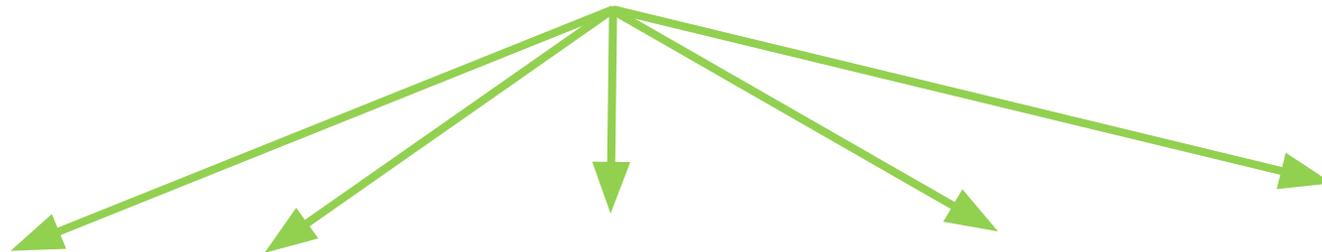
Learning and Teaching are the two sides of the same process of inter-action

Teaching – Learning / Learning- Teaching is a cooperative process of active construction of knowledge and competences that involves teachers and students



DIALOGIC TECHNIQUES

students work together in heterogeneous groups sharing their languages, knowledge and abilities through authentic tasks



The linguistic repertoire of the whole class (L1, L2, FL) is fully recognized

Cooperative
- tasks
- teamwork
- tests

Heterogeneous groups include pupils with different L1s and different levels of proficiency (in languages, competences, skills etc.), and pupils with SLD-

Dialogue, cultural awareness, intercultural education

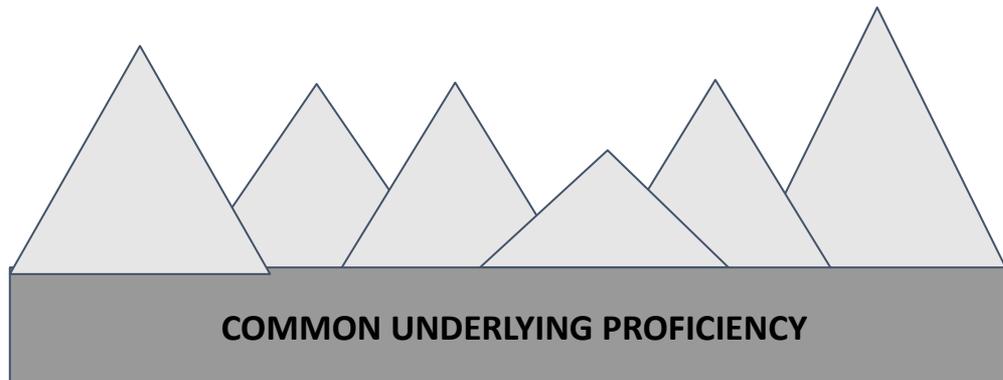
Digital resources to support language learning and to strengthen cooperation during teamwork

Cooperative Byod



A significant part of the experimentation was devoted to the **assessment of linguistic, textual, and communicative skills through plurilingual tests** specifically designed for that purpose. These tests were constructed to take into account both the **pupils' plurilingual competence** (Shoamy, 2011) and the **interdependence between all the languages that make up their linguistic repertoire** (Cummins, 2008).

This image modifies Cummins' iceberg metaphor: many languages on the surface but a single underlying linguistic competence.



In every communicative event, the speakers draw on a single source (**the underlying linguistic competence**), using **all languages and codes** of their own repertoire (including the non-verbal ones) useful to their **communicative purposes**.

Language acquisition **is closely linked, in a dynamic and interrelated way, to the linguistic and cognitive resources** available through the practice of **translanguaging**.

Plurilingual experimentation

In 2014 we projected a plurilingual experimentation that was conducted from 2015 to 2017 (32 hours each year).

- 133 learners from 11 to 13 years old
- 90 Italian L1+ 43 other native languages (33 Chinese, 3 Albanian, 2 Moroccan Arabic, 2 Romanian, 2 Peruvian Spanish, 1 Russian)

Classes in the sample were characterised by:

- a great variety of taught languages (Italian, English, Spanish, Chinese)
- a great variety of learners with “immigrant languages”- **32,3%** (against the Italian average of 10%)
- learners with S.L.D. (dyslexia, anorthography) - **11,3%** (against the Italian average of 3,5%)

Research sample

EXPERIMENTAL GROUP					CONTROL GROUP				
n. learners	Italian L1	other languages	with S.L.D	with cognitive disabilities	n. learners	Italian L1	other languages	with S.L.D	with cognitive disabilities
65	45	20	7*	2	68	45	23	8*	1

The topics of the experimentation

The main topic of the experimentation was **food**:

- how to prepare **traditional recipes**

Food has been selected as a **cultural indicator** close to the experience of learners.

Other topics were:

Spare time, sports, friends and school

Methodologies

EXPERIMENTAL GROUP

Cooperative learning groups (heterogeneous for languages and abilities)

Dialogic approach through an **integrated didactic** combined with technology (Cooperative BYOD)

Meaningful tasks to prepare recipes

Plurilingual inputs

Different languages taught at school (English, Spanish, Italian, Chinese)

Translanguaging

CONTROL GROUP

Lessons in a **single language**

Lectures

Exercises on books

Linguistic objectives of Experimentation

Specific Learning Objectives:

- **DEVELOPING A PLURILINGUAL LEXICAL REPERTOIRE**
- **DEVELOPING PLURILINGUAL TEXTUAL SKILLS**
- **DEVELOPING METALINGUISTIC SKILLS**

Plurilingual and Pluricultural Competences

from FREPA (Framework of reference for pluralistic approaches to languages and cultures):

- Developing Competence of distancing (C5)
- Developing Competence in the construction and broadening of a plural linguistic and cultural repertoire (C2) Competence of decentring (C3) Competence in recognising the "other" and otherness (C7)
- Developing the Competence in profiting from one's own intercultural/ inter-language experiences (C2.1) Competence in making sense of unfamiliar linguistic and/or cultural features(C4)
- Developing Competence of critical analysis of the (communicative and/or learning) situation and activities one is involved in (C6)

Experimentation: Developing plurilingual and pluricultural competences

In order to help learners to construct and to continuously broaden and deepen their own plurilingual competence, learners have been urged to develop a set of items of:

knowledge (savoirs), **skills** (savoir-faire) and **attitudes** (savoir-être)
(Moretti, Verdigi, 2021).

Competences which activate knowledge, skills and attitudes in action and reflection:

- **valid for all languages and cultures**
- **concerning the relationships between languages and between cultures**

Knowledge

From source related to the **section Culture** we selected from :

- **General characteristics** (K 8.2)
- **Cultural diversity and social diversity** (K 9.3)
- **Cultures and intercultural relations** (K 10.9)
- **Culture** (K 12.5)
- **Language and Identity** (K 14.6)

Knowledge

From resources related to knowledge **section Language**, we selected from section:

Language as a Semiological System (K 1.4)

Language and Society (K 2.5.3)

Plurality, Diversity, Multilingualism and Plurilingualism (K 5.1; K 5.3)

Similarities and Differences between Languages (K 7.2)

Language and Acquisition/Learning (K 7.1.2; K 7.1.3)

Qualitative analysis of learners' attitudes in working groups

Learners used spontaneously (Coppola D., Moretti R., 2020):

- Plurilingual communication
- Comparison between languages
- Metalinguistic observations about languages

- high level of autonomy
- deep awareness of one's own learning process
- high ability to transfer linguistic learnings and procedures
- High ability to use of helpful resources (such as plurilingual mates, digital resources, vocabularies, videos, etc...)

Key concepts used in the formative evaluation introduced to the primary school in 2020 with O.M. n. 172

CEFR levels (Companion Volume)

At the time of our experimentation, the CEFR Companion Volume wasn't available yet, but now we could be able to assess our learners using the CEFR scale of evaluation.

“The reason for associating descriptors of FREPA with CEFR levels is to provide support to curriculum developers and teachers in their efforts

1. **to broaden the perspective of language education in their context**
2. **to acknowledge and value the linguistic and cultural diversity of their learners”**

Evaluation scale for:

- **Building on pluricultural repertoire**
- **Plurilingual comprehension**
- **Building on plurilingual repertoire**

LEVEL OF LEARNERS OF
THE EXPERIMENTAL
GROUP: from B1 to B2

Building on pluricultural repertoire

Progression up the scale is characterised as follows:

- **at B1** they can generally respond to the most commonly used cultural cues, **act according to socio-pragmatic conventions and explain or discuss features of their own and other cultures**
- **at B2**, the user/ learner can **engage effectively in communication, coping with most difficulties that occur**, and is usually able to **recognise and repair misunderstandings**

Plurilingual comprehension

The main notion represented by this scale is capacity to use knowledge of and proficiency (even partial) in one or more languages as leverage for approaching texts in other languages, in order to achieve a communication goal.

- **At the B levels, exploiting similarities, recognising “false friends” and exploiting parallel sources in different languages**

Building on pluricultural repertoire

Progression up the scale is characterised as follows:

- **From the B levels**, language begins to be **manipulated creatively**, with the user/learner alternating flexibly between languages at B2 in order to make others feel more comfortable, **provide clarifications**, communicate specialised information and **in general increase the efficiency of communication**

Cooperative lexical tasks (Coppola D., Moretti R., 2019)

GUARDA L'IMMAGINE 观察图片



COSA STANNO FACENDO? USA LA LINGUA CHE PREFERISCI 他们在做什么? 用你比较喜欢的语言

La tua risposta _____

PUOI FARE LA STESSA COSA CON QUESTO? 你可以做同样的事情吗?



- SI
 NO

Scrivi la tua risposta

Individual lexical tasks

COOSA VEDI NELLA FOTO? 你在图片中可以看到什么?



SCEGLI LE RISPOSTE GIUSTE 从中选择正确的答案。

- SOPA
- RICE
- ARROZ
- PERRITO CALIENTE
- 大米 (dà mǐ)
- RISO
- SUGAR

GUARDA L'IMMAGINE 观察图片



SI CHIAMA "APPLE" L'OGGETTO NELLA FOTO? 图片中的物品叫 APPLE?

- SI
- NO

Textual plurilingual productions

Text written by a dyslexic learner

Hello, Ni hao

My name is Achille xxx, my favorite subject is maths. My scool is big. i stady little englis, spanish, italian and istory.

Yo no pratico sport ma i love play videogame.

In mi familia siamo 5: i have 2 brother.

il mio piatto preferito e la pasta al pomodoro:

ingredienti pasta,passata di pomodoro, olio e sale

procedimento boil water with sal put pasta and wait 6-8 minutes. Sauce tomate,sal,aciete cook tomatoes

goodbye

Achille



Textual plurilingual productions

你好, 最近怎样? (ciao, come va?)

Text written by a chinese learner

hi

im sofia me gusta giocare con la wii e il nintendo me gusta il rice, fish and alga .mi piace giocare con il mio gatto achille.

我和我的家人以及表兄弟住在Firenze (Abito vicino a Firenze con la mia famiglia e i miei cugini).
我学4种语言: 中文, 意大利语, 英语和西班牙语, 但英语很难. (Studio 4 lingue: cinese, italiano, Inglese e spagnolo, ma inglese è difficile).

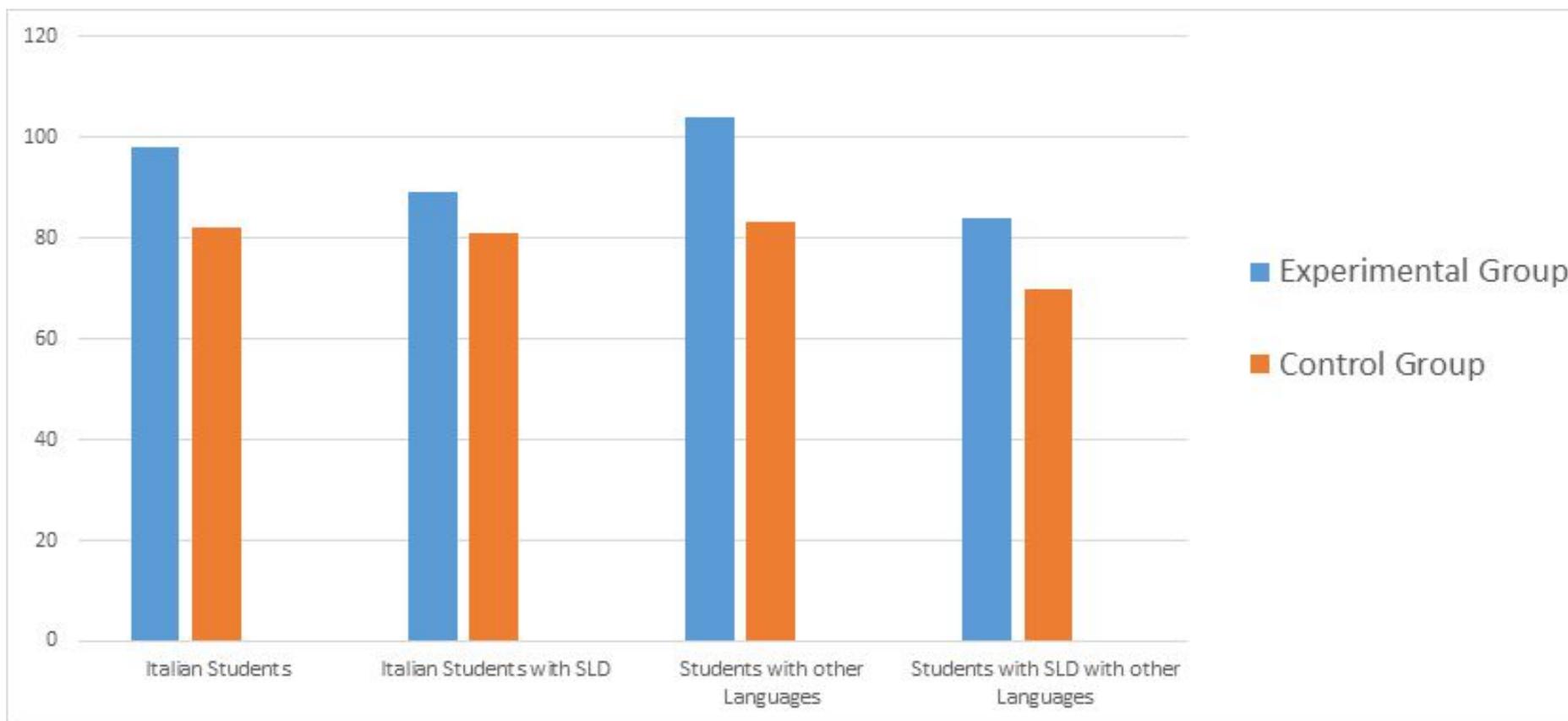
un abrazo

sofia

Results (plurilingual texts)

Average percentage of words written in the 4 languages taught/learned at school	EXPERIMENTAL GROUP	CONTROL GROUP
ITALIAN	41,4%	48,1%
ENGLISH	39,2%	38,6%
SPANISH	15,2%	12,5%
CHINESE	3,5%	0,8%

Results (orthographic and morphosyntactic accuracy)



Digital resources supporting language learning

- Digital resources can be used in multilingual context to support the development of lexical competence
- All the languages are visible and recognised in digital resources, supporting the idea that each L2 is a cognitive resource (*scaffolding* for language learning)
- Digital resources make the learning process interactive and personalised
- The task should be clear and well defined, in order to avoid students' distractions

Digital resources in classrooms

Plurilingual lexical competence can be improved with the use of digital resources:

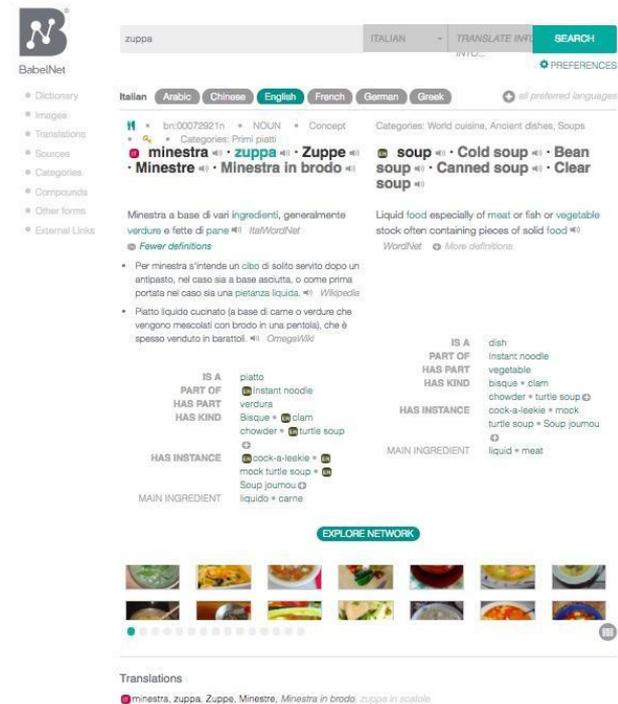
- building collaboratively a multilingual domain lexicon
- promoting metalinguistic reasoning about the meaning of words in different languages

Two digital resources (ImagAct, BabelNet) have been used in the experimentation

- for the creation of learning materials
- for the testing at the end of the experiment

BabelNet

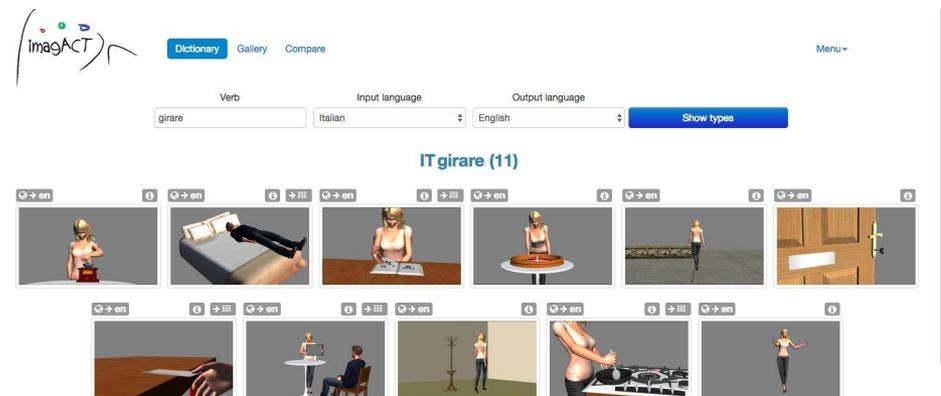
- BabelNet (Navigli & Ponzetto 2012) is a multilingual encyclopedic dictionary (more than 500 languages), with wide lexicographic and encyclopedic coverage of terms. For concrete nouns it also contains pictures mapped from ImageNet (Russakovsky et al. 2015)
- It can be used to explore specific semantic fields, such as the language of food
- Learners can learn a word in multiple languages through multilingual definitions and pictures
- The comparison between languages at the sense level enables metalinguistic awareness
- Naming the object in the picture in multiple languages is one of the activities included in the testing phase



The screenshot displays the BabelNet interface for the word "zuppa" in Italian. At the top, there is a search bar with "zuppa" entered and a "SEARCH" button. Below the search bar, the word "zuppa" is shown in its Italian form, along with its multilingual equivalents: "minestra", "zuppa", "Zuppe", "Minestre", and "Minestra in brodo". The interface also shows the word's categories: "World cuisine", "Ancient dishes", and "Soups". A semantic network diagram is visible, showing relationships such as "IS A", "PART OF", "HAS PART", "HAS KIND", "HAS INSTANCE", and "MAIN INGREDIENT". The "EXPLORE NETWORK" section features a grid of image thumbnails. At the bottom, the "Translations" section lists the word in various languages: "minestra, zuppa, Zuppe, Minestre, Minestra in brodo, zuppa in scottale".

ImagAct

- IMAGACT (Moneglia et al. 2012) (www.imagact.it) is a corpus-based ontology of action concepts, derived from English and Italian spontaneous speech corpora, which makes use of the universal language of images to identify the different action types extended by verbs referring to action in English, Italian, Chinese and Spanish
- It has been used to improve metalinguistic awareness, comparing the actions denoted by the same verb (e.g., *girare*) in multiple languages



- Learners are invited to list the features that differentiate the actions
- In the testing phase, a video from ImagAct was included. We asked pupils to describe the essential features that characterize the action

Digital resources in language testing

- Technology-enhanced assessment in language testing has advantages and drawbacks
- Computer-Assisted Language Testing (CALT), started in the 90s, is today widely used but further advancements are possible (e.g., computer-adaptive tests, automatic generation of items)
- The use of multimedia makes the language tests more authentic (Suvorov & Hegelheimer 2014)
- Simple interface design, no technical interference
- Digital resources can be integrated in the testing phase if they have been available during teaching-learning process

- The results of our experimentation confirm the validity of the **methodology adopted**, based on plurilingual, heterogeneous, cooperative group work, in which students share their languages, knowledge, abilities and skills.
- The results also confirm that the **plurilingual tests** are adequate to assess pupils' linguistic and communicative competences in multi-ethnic classes, without sacrificing part of their linguistic repertoire. They seem also to be adequate in the case of **pupils with SLD** (test acceptance and accessibility).
- The use of **technology** in teamwork enhances the cooperative effects of the methodology adopted and enables students to work as a learning community. Digital resources can be successfully integrated in testing, with some caveats.

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