

LANGUAGE TEACHER TRAINING AND BILINGUAL EDUCATION

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1. Introduction

Bilingual education has become a focus of interest in European countries today and Italy is no exception. The information presented below attempts to describe the present situation in Italy regarding the training of teachers and bilingual education and identify the needs still required in (language) teacher training for the promotion of forms of bilingual education in Italy on a much larger scale than is the case at present.

The indications provided of activities underway in the field of bilingual education do not take into consideration the issues related to the teaching of pupils of recent immigration from non-community countries. This decision was taken in consideration of the generally negative replies that were received to the enquiry concerning actions undertaken to protect non-Community minority languages in the schools.

1.1. The national linguistic situation

From the linguistic point of view Italy is an interesting example of linguistic pluralism. Apart from Italian which is the national language, the country is characterised by the presence of a great number of dialects by means of which, in the past, all forms of communication (with, to a certain extent, the exception of literary communication) in the numerous states, republics and kingdoms of the area now known as Italy took place.

In addition to the presence of these dialects (understood here to mean autonomous language systems of romance origin, different from Italian) which are still spoken by a number of people particularly in certain areas and which in many cases represent the first language and therefore mother tongue of the speakers, Italy is also characterised by the presence throughout her territory of other languages or varieties of languages which are official or national languages of other European nations. These languages are classified geographically as linguistic *peninsulas*, that is, portions of territory that are contiguous with the borders of other nations where that same language or variety of the same language is spoken (e.g., German in Trentino-Alto-Adige - an area which shares its borders with Austria). Alternatively, they are classified as linguistic *islands* as the languages spoken there are isolated or cut off from the parent family (e.g., the case of the Albanian communities in the southern areas of Italy). We have thus the following situation (adapted from Zuanelli-Sonino, 1984):

Peninsulas	Italy	Foreign nation
Franco-provençal	Val d'Aosta	France
Provençal (Occitane)	Piedmont	France
German dialects (Bavarian-Tirolean)	Trentino-Alto-Adige	Austria
German dialect (Ditsch or Walser)	Val d'Aosta	Switzerland
Slovene dialects	Friuli-Venezia-Giulia	Slovenia
Ladin	Trentino-Alto-Adige	Switzerland (Romansh)
Islands		
Franco-provençal	Puglia	France
Provençal (occitane)	Calabria	France
Greek dialects ('Greco' and 'Grico')	Puglia	Greece
Serbo-Croat	Molise	ex-Yugoslavia
Albanian dialects	Abruzzo, Molise Campania, Puglia, Basilicata, Calabria, Sicilia	Albania
Catalan	Sardegna (Alghero)	Spain (Catalonia)
German dialects (Bavarian-Tirolean)	The Veneto; Friuli	Austria
Ladin	Friuli	Switzerland (Romansh)

In short therefore, to consider Italy a majority of minority languages and cultures (Pellegrini cited in Zuanelli-Sonino, 1984:280) is not exaggerated and finds justification in the presence throughout the whole territory not only of standard Italian and its regional varieties but also the myriad of dialects, alloglot languages and their standard varieties. For it must be pointed out that, when considering these idioms, we must keep in mind the fact that alongside the local alloglot forms, we can find the regional variety, and the standard variety (literary and scholastic). For example, in the province of Bolzano there is the German dialect (the local as well as the regional variety), standard German (used in schools), Ladin, and standard Italian (Zuanelli Sonino, 1984). The situation in the Valle d'Aosta is even more complex with the presence of five languages: Franco-provençal, French, Walser, the Piedmontese dialect, and Italian (Guichonnet, 1992: 53-64).

Parallel to this composite linguistic situation is the composite way in which the languages are considered from an official, legal point of view. For, despite the fact that articles 3 and 6 of the constitution guarantee protection and equal status for all the linguistic minorities of Italy, it cannot be said that this is in fact the case. It is only in those Special Statute (*a statuto speciale*) areas and there again only in three of them (Trentino-Alto Adige, Valle d'Aosta, and to a lesser extent Friuli-Venezia-

Giulia) that such protection and parity is attempted. In the other 'special statute' areas (Sicily, Sardegna), as well as in other areas of Italy which do not enjoy special statute status, no norms have been passed in defence of their linguistic patrimony.

A consequence deriving from the fact that these laws for the defence of certain alloglot languages are regional rather than national is that the **same** languages in different areas are not afforded the same treatment, and, **different** languages in the **same** administrative area are afforded different treatment. For example, the German dialects of Alto-Adige are protected but similar varieties in the Veneto and Friuli are not (see however the new law of 1996 concerning Cimbra and Mochena in schools). Franco-provençal is officially recognised in Valle d'Aosta (although it is French that is officially promoted) but ignored in Puglia and Calabria. In addition, although present in the Valle d'Aosta, the German Ditsch or Walser is excluded from the protection that the norms of the special statute afford Franco-provençal and French in the same region.

Of course this is the situation of the alloglot languages. No such measures can be said to exist for the defence of the very numerous dialects of Italy with the notable exceptions of Friulan and Sardinian (for the situation in Friuli see Francescato in Freddi, 1983; for the situation in Sardinia see Sole in Freddi, 1983).

1.2. Area specific understanding of bilingual education

The term *bilingual education* is currently used in Italy to refer to two quite distinct situations:

- i) the teaching of foreign languages
- ii) the use of a language, other than the national language Italian, as a vehicular language for teaching other subjects .

As far as regards **foreign language teaching** the term is used both to refer to

- a) the situation of foreign language teaching in primary schools (the teaching of one foreign language in the primary school was made compulsory in 1985 and was officially applied in 1992 after several years of experimentation).
- b) the situation in lower and upper secondary schools where a second foreign language (or more rarely a third foreign language) is introduced as part of experimental programmes. These are sometimes called experiments in bilingualism or bilingual instruction.

We are not concerned here with this use of the term 'bilingual education'.

Our interest is focused on the second meaning of the term - the use of a second/foreign language as a language of instruction in the curriculum. Not all the experiences mentioned here however actually use the term *bilingual education* to refer to their programmes where a language other than Italian is used as a vehicular language.

- i) The term *bilingual education* is specifically used with reference to the bilingual school system in the Valle d'Aosta.
- ii) Ladin schools in the Province of Bolzano talk of *plurilingual education*;

- iii) The term *educazione linguistica* (language education) in the schools in the Val di Fassa area of Trentino covers the vehicular use of Ladino and Italian which can be either first or second language for the pupils;
- iv) The cautious introduction of the vehicular use of German in Italian schools in Alto Adige is called *mini-immersion*;
- v) The vehicular use of a modern foreign language in the Licei Linguistici Europei / Licei Classici Europei is generally referred to within the concept of *European education*.

Various forms of bilingual education are practised in Italian schools - public and private, from primary (as well as nursery) to high school. Some aim at the conservation of a minority language (Ladin, Cimbra, Mochena), some to promote the dominant language in minority language speakers (German and Italian in the Ladin schools of Alto Adige), some aim at promoting two second languages (Ladin schools in Alto Adige and schools in the Valle d'Aosta); some aim at promoting competence in a foreign language (Licei Europei, International schools). To render effective these aims, two basic forms are adopted:

- a) monolingual schools where only one vehicle language of instruction is adopted;
- b) bilingual schools where two languages - either a minority (alloglot) language or a foreign language alongside the national language Italian - are used as vehicle languages of instruction. The quantitative distribution of time allotted to the two languages varies from situation to situation as do the subjects taught through the two languages.

Two are the regions where there is a declared intent in promoting bilingualism - Valle D'Aosta and Trentino-Alto-Adige. Friuli-Venezia-Giulia too has just passed a regional law (March, 1996 n. 15) for the promotion of the Friulan language in all sectors of society and has called for the creation of a service aimed at promoting and protecting the linguistic patrimony of the area. No mention is made however of its role in schools.

I. The understanding of bilingual education in Trentino-Alto-Adige

First of all a distinction has to be made between the Province of Bolzano and the Province of Trento. In these two areas, which together constitute the region of Trentino-Alto-Adige, the promotion of bilingualism in the community through the scholastic institutions is quite different. This difference has been made possible through the Statuto Speciale of 1972, known as the "Pacchetto", which devolves autonomous legislative powers to the two provinces.

a) Province of Bolzano

A careful reading of article 19 of the Statute for the Province of Bolzano shows that, despite the fact that there are two ethnic communities living side by side in the region, the intention of the legislator is to keep them separate. This intention is reflected in the dispositions of the Statute regarding the school system where it is specified that each group is to have its own school. All schooling has to be imparted in the mother tongue of the pupils by mother-tongue teachers. "Bilingualism" is promoted through the teaching of the second language by a native speaker from the second or third class of primary school upwards. Thus, a German speaker will attend a German school (because it is there that he will (obligatorily) receive his education in his mother

tongue) and will be taught Italian as a separate subject by a native speaker of Italian. Likewise, an Italian speaker. He will attend an Italian school and will be taught German (standard German - not the German of the region) as a second language by a native speaker of German. In this way the schools remain totally separate - monuments of monolingualism in a bilingual region that has, and has had, serious problems of coexistence.

In short, therefore, the bilingualism of the region is maintained through the provision of mother tongue schools that promote, separately, the two languages of the province. Separate provision has been made in the Statute for the Ladin-speaking group in the Province.

The Ladin-speakers are to be found in two distinct areas of the region: Val Badia and Val Gardena. In a survey conducted in 1991 90% of the population in these two areas declared they belonged to the Ladin ethnic group. The total population of the two valleys today is 18,500 (cf. Rifesser, 1994).

The statute of 1948 specifies that the schools in the two areas be trilingual:

- i) German and Italian are taught not only as subjects from the *scuola materna* (nursery schools) upwards but also as vehicle languages for other subjects.
- ii) Ladin is to be taught as a subject and can be used as a *lingua strumentale*, that is as a language of explanation in the first year or two of primary school in order to help the pupils pass over to a full use of the two second languages. The statute specifies not only that equal weight be given to both Italian and German (both second languages for the great majority of the pupils) in school instruction but that equal competence in both the languages be reached (cf. 3.1. for more details of the school model).

The concept of bilingual education adopted in these schools would seem to be one of early partial immersion (Artigal Lauren, 1996) with elements of maintenance and enrichment and, possibly, submersion in the case of Ladin (Carli, 1993).

b) Province of Trento

In the Province of Trento, where Ladin is spoken in the Val di Fassa and where German is considered a foreign as opposed to a second language, there is not, as yet, true bilingual education. Up until now the sole language of instruction has been Italian, the national language. It has been estimated that in the Ladin families of the province 45.5% use Ladin with their children and 42.6% use Italian. In addition it must be remembered that Italian dominates in social contacts outside of the family environment. Thus in the Ladin speaking area Italian is the second language for over half the children and Ladin is a second language for nearly half the children. Aware however of the danger that Ladin faces of being submerged, a new provincial law has been passed promoting its use in the schools of the area (cf. 3.1.).

As far as regards the German-related minority languages in the province - Cimbra and Mochena - the Provincial Council passed a deliberation (n° 8023) in July 1996 approving the teaching of the two languages as subjects at the level of compulsory schooling (with however the subject being broached more from a cultural point of view at the lower secondary school). Of particular interest is the specification that Cimbra and Mochena can also be used as languages of instruction alongside Italian

from nursery school up to the end of primary school. The model of bilingual education proposed would seem to be one of early partial L2 immersion.

II The understanding of bilingualism in Friuli-Venezia-Giulia

At the present moment in Friuli-Venezia-Giulia a policy for the promotion of bilingualism through bilingual education exists only for the Slovene speakers of the area. The term bilingual education is used here to refer to schools where the **whole** curriculum is conducted through the Slovene language. It is in other words a monolingual model which uses the minority language of the area as the vehicular language. Most (but not all) of the students are mother tongue speakers of this language or have family connections with the Slovene group.

III The understanding of bilingualism in the Valle d'Aosta

The promotion of bilingualism in the Valle d'Aosta through the school system is a result of the Special Statute of 1948, article 38, which establishes equal rights to both French and Italian. Since 1985 all nursery schooling has been bilingual and since 1988 the primary schools also. The lower secondary school became bilingual in 1994-5 after an experimental period of three years and all upper secondary schools are introducing it at the present time (1996-7).

Bilingual education is conducted using both Italian and French as vehicle languages and both enjoy 50% of the curriculum time available. Generally speaking, the mother tongue of the pupils, especially in certain rural and mountain areas, is Franco-provençal (patois). Italian is, for most, a second language and French too is considered a second language for most of the inhabitants. French was the official language of the region as far back as the XVI century. It was the unification of Italy that brought Italian to the area. After the Fascist era and the end of the war the Special Statute recognised the particular linguistic and cultural patrimony of the area by assigning equal legal status to the two languages and cultures.

The type of education adopted is denominated bilingual education and it is strictly related to the political project concerning the defence of regional autonomy and the protection and promotion of French.

IV Other examples

Other forms of bilingual education exist on an established basis throughout the Italian territory in the form of European and International schools. These are few in number, (but growing), mostly private (an exception is the United World College of the Adriatic), sometimes part of an international consortium (e.g., European Schools, United World College, the International Baccalaureate Organisation) with a student population which is essentially international in nature. In some the curriculum is taught through the medium of two or more languages (including Italian which is the second language for many of the pupils), in others it is taught through one language only. Of particular interest, for the experience they have gathered and the solutions found for enacting bilingual education programmes where more than one language of instruction is used, are the schools that use two languages of instruction (e.g. European schools) (cf. Baetens Beardsmore, 1993).

(cf. 3.1. also for newly developing experimental bilingual programmes in certain upper secondary schools in Italy)

1. 3. Legislation and Language Teacher Training

From the Commission report entitled "The Italian Teacher Education System" by Santelli Beccegato it is clear that an integrated, coherent, and comprehensive **system** of training, either initial or INSET, for teachers at all level of schooling in Italy does not exist. Against this general picture, however, the situation of the **language teacher**, in terms of the training required and offered, can be considered to be better.

Initial training

The situation of the foreign language teacher in the primary school is different in certain respects from that of the foreign language teacher in the lower and upper secondary schools from the point of view of the training procedures and requirements.

a) Primary school

All teachers who wish to teach a foreign language in the primary school (now a compulsory subject from the 2° class onwards, for 3 hours a week in (normally) 3 separate days) receive specialised **initial** training.

In addition, those teachers who wish to teach the foreign language have to be fully qualified primary school teachers who are *di ruolo*, i.e., who have won tenure.

Two routes exist for **initial** training for those *who are already fully fledged teachers in the primary school..*

i) Teachers who profess some competence in the foreign language they wish to teach (English, German, French, Spanish) go before a commission who ascertain the level of that competence and assign them to one of three training courses: 300 hours; 150 hours; 100 hours.

Of these hours about 50 are devoted to language teaching methodology and work shop activities. In fact, however, methodology can also be covered during the hours devoted to language improvement by presenting topics concerning the field in the foreign language being learnt.

ii) Teachers without any competence follow a course of 500 hours of language learning and language teaching methodology. At the end of this course (and unlike the previous group) there is a written exam and an oral exam to ascertain the level of competence reached in both areas.

These courses are financed by the Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione (Ministry of Public Education) which attributes funds on the basis of the indications which each provincial Provveditore alla Pubblica Istruzione (the equivalent of the Local Education Authority) provides concerning numbers of teachers required for training to fill vacant positions in the schools. The Provveditorato itself can organise the courses or charge another agency (e.g. University Language Centres) or even private individuals to organise them.

Teachers who teach the foreign language are of two types:

- **specializzato**. This means that the teacher maintains his role as class/module teacher and is **obliged** to teach the foreign language to his class (or, if a module teacher, to the two or three classes the module operates over).

- **specialista**. This means that the teacher gives up his role as class teacher/module teacher to teach **only** the foreign language to 6-7 classes.

Specialisti are entered into a list which the Provveditore consults to choose foreign language teachers for foreign language teaching in schools that cannot be covered by the existing class teacher or module teachers though lack of competence and training.

The *specialista* (who represents an extra cost to the state) is destined to disappear as gradually more and more qualified teachers are trained to do the foreign language teaching as *specializzati*.

For those wishing to become primary school teachers and wish at the same time to acquire certification of competence in teaching a foreign language at the primary school level there is the possibility of sitting a language teaching component in the normal *concorso* (national exam/competition).

b) Lower Secondary and Upper Secondary schools

At the level of the secondary school, the legislation concerning the initial training for foreign language teachers is no different from that for teachers of other disciplines.

Unlike primary school teachers of a foreign language all secondary school foreign language teachers are required to have a degree in a foreign language and literature (see 4. 1. for changes that are coming about in this area).

The secondary school teacher can, if he wishes, teach not only the major language taken to degree level (the one studied for four years), but also the subsidiary language (the one studied for three years).

A *sine qua non* condition, however, for being able to do any of this is to sit and pass the *concorso* for lower secondary or upper secondary school level and get the *abilitazione* (teacher qualification). The *concorso* consists of a written and an oral exam. There is no practical part.

No organisation is officially encumbered with the responsibility of holding courses that will prepare future candidates to sit and pass these exams. Generally speaking, candidates prepare themselves by following courses organised privately by the teacher's associations, home study, or even courses abroad.

After passing the *concorso* the teachers are put on a list and can become *di ruolo* when a post becomes vacant in their discipline.

On becoming *di ruolo* there follows a probationary period of a year, called the *anno di formazione* (the training year), during which the teacher is followed by a tutor and at the end of which the teacher presents a research project which is discussed in front of a commission made up of the headmaster/mistress and four teachers. The evaluation is felt to be more or less purely pro forma unless there is gross inadequacy.

In service training

Refresher or up-dating courses (be they of a linguistic or methodological nature) have never been obligatory. However, as of 1995, a clause has been written into the national contract of all teachers whereby 100 hours of re-training/refresher courses must be followed by a teacher over a 6-year period if he wishes to pass up automatically to the next category on the pay scale.

Any course can be followed as long as they (the courses) meet the requirements of the provincial up-dating plan elaborated by the Provveditorati. Needless to say teachers choose courses more for the convenience offered (near home, time of year held, cost, etc.) rather than for reasons more pertinent to his/her profession and practice in the class.

The courses can be organised by anyone - the schools themselves, foreign agencies (British Council, Alliance Française, Goethe Institut), teachers unions, teachers associations, publishers, etc. The condition is that the aims and contents reflect the provincial plan.

2. Language Teacher Training in relation to Bilingual Education

We can perhaps single out two reasons behind the almost total lack of established **institutional** teacher training programmes specifically created for those teaching in programmes of bilingual education:

i) the traditional lack in Italy of training programmes *tout court* for anyone involved in the teaching profession. It is not too exaggerated to state that teachers train themselves and learn from mistakes on the spot once they have become teachers (see 1.3).

ii) With the exception of the plurilingual experience in the Ladin-speaking areas of the Province of Bolzano in Alto Adige, the various other experiences now being conducted in content-based language teaching throughout the country are too few in number and also too recent for them to have prompted the establishment of institutionalised initial bilingual education training programmes. Despite this however reports from those who run such existing programmes indicate quite clearly that they are fully aware of the need for such training. In fact, discussions are underway (personal communication) to organise such courses in the (still to be established) Università Europea di Bolzano which will cater for the specific methodological as well as linguistic needs of future teachers in the schools in the Alto-Adige region. These courses - for which a curriculum is currently being elaborated - should begin in 1988.

The situation concerning in-service training, as it exists at the moment with relation to consolidated programmes of bilingual education, is more positive. Whilst the INSET courses generally available are of the sort that are provided throughout the rest of Italy, in many of the bilingual areas other courses of a more specific type are also organised. Courses for language improvement in the languages being used as

languages of instruction in the bilingual programmes are a particular focus of attention (e.g. courses in Ladin and Ladin culture organised by the Istituto Pedagogico Ladino in Alto Adige) and specific courses on methodology and other issues pertaining to bilingual education are also organised (cf. Valle d'Aosta, *Parladino, Archimede*, training course approved by the European Commission for the teaching of the Ladino language and Culture called *Progetto Ladini Formazione 1995*).

3. New Developments in the Area of Language Teaching and Language Teacher Training in relation to Bilingual Education

Bilingual education is not new to Europe. Forms of bilingual education go back to the 1940s and 50s with the experiences in Wales, Danish schools in Germany in the 1920s, German schools in Denmark in the 1940s. The European Schools were founded in 1958 and the German model in Germany in the second half of the 1960s. Italy's pluralistic model began in Alto-Adige after the signing of the Special Statute in 1948. A review of some of these models (cf. Beardsmore, 1993) reveals a variety of solutions found to meet requests for bilingual education. And these solutions are rooted in the particular circumstances of the situation the requests originated from. This same vein of searching for solutions that suit the specific situations/aims the bilingual programmes are to operate in/for seems to characterise the schools in Italy to day in the moves to implement bilingual education.

Italy has a rigid centralised education system based essentially on monolingualism and monoculturalism (but the new primary and lower secondary school programmes indicate an opening in this sense). It is therefore considerably difficult to introduce change even on a minor scale. However, legal blocks to change and innovation can be overcome by proposing experimental projects for approval by the ministry.

The introduction of a form of bilingual education constitutes quite a major overhaul of the system. However, there is no doubt that a general interest in bilingual education is beginning to seep through the system. Awareness to issues of language has been sharpened by the necessity to think of the problems created by the recent influx of non-European migrant workers and their children at school as well as the realisation that Italian students need to compete on an international market, that Italy, as member of the EU, has obligations and duties towards promoting the intercultural understanding and multilingualism of her citizens as required by Maastricht.

Over the last decade therefore attempts to implement forms of bilingual education in schools have begun in experimental form. As opposed to the large scale, more established and, important key to success, legally protected experiences in Alto-Adige and the Valle d'Aosta, these experiments are small in number and limited in the extent to which the new vehicular language is used. Indeed, a term that could describe all of them, to use the expression that is used by the Archimedes experiment to describe its own programme, is **mini-immersion**. The term mini-immersion describes a situation where one or at the most two subjects in the school curriculum are taught through the medium of another language.

3.1. With respect to the nature of the schools (bi-multilingual schools, content-based language teaching ...)

Immersion models

I. Valle d'Aosta

Unlike the situation in Alto-Adige in the Ladin schools (see below), there is complete freedom as to which disciplines are to be taught either through French or through Italian and there are absolutely no indications as to how this teaching is to be done. All teachers have to be ascertained as being bilingual through a special exam. Every single student passes through the bilingual education process with no exceptions made, not even for handicapped pupils. A characteristic feature of the structure is the fact that the alternation of the two vehicular languages of the curriculum is carried out by a single teacher who operates in terms of a macro-alternation or micro-alternation of the two languages (cf. 4.4.).

II. Alto-Adige

i) The Ladin school model

Three languages are taught as subjects in the Ladin schools of Alto Adige and are also used as vehicular languages for teaching the subjects of the curriculum. German and Italian, established by Statute as equal languages, are equally divided in the curriculum. Ladin is used, briefly, as a language of explanation, but is then only taught as a subject .

a) Primary school. When children enrol at primary school they have the option of enrolling in a class with Italian-Ladin or in a class that has German-Ladin. The choice is made on the basis of the existing knowledge of either German or Italian. Ladin is present to help the pupil at these initial stages. In the second class of primary school the second vehicular language (Italian or German) is introduced alongside the first one. As this second vehicular language is generally the language least known or not known at all by the pupils the language is taught through one hour of conversation in the first class. The use of Ladin as an instrumental language gradually disappears in the second class to be substituted by the teaching of Ladin as a subject for 2 hours a week. According to a survey conducted by the Istituto Pedagogico Ladino in 1992, a knowledge of the three languages is higher in the tourist areas (30% of pupils in first class of primary school) and between 8%-20% in more rural areas. In rural areas Ladin is known by 100% of all pupils enrolling in first class and about 50% in all other areas.(cf. Verra, 1995).

Up till recently there was just one primary school teacher in the class who alternated the use of the vehicular languages in accordance with the principle of equal quantity using her own criteria: one language per week; one in the morning and one in the afternoon; or alternate days. Alternation was never operated according to subject.

As from 1991-2 a new system operates in all Italian primary schools called the *modulo* whereby 3 teachers operate together in two classes or 4 teachers together in three classes. A result of this organisation is that teachers specialise in 'areas' (e.g., linguistic-expressive; the sciences; etc.). It also means that at certain times two

teachers are co-present. This situation can therefore allow teachers to specialise in the use of one of the vehicular languages of the curriculum with particular reference also to a specific curriculum area.

b) Secondary school. The decision of which subjects to teach in which language was decided in 1962. In the upper secondary school some of the subjects that were originally taught in one of the languages during lower secondary schooling will be taught in the other language.

Whereas for the nursery and primary school teachers there is the **obligation** that they belong to the Ladin-speaking group, there is no such obligation for secondary school teachers. Secondary school teachers are either German or Italian mother tongue speakers and generally speaking have no knowledge of the other two school languages.

Mini-immersion models

As we have noted, there is no bilingual education for the two major linguistic groups, Italian and German, in Alto Adige. The situation is one where two ethnic groups live side by side on the same territory and **non-contact** between the two is endorsed (by Statute) as essential to the linguistic and cultural survival of the minority language group. The rigidity of the stance taken by the minority group towards any slackening of the established situation has its roots in the not too distant past with Fascism and the Second World War.

A move to breach the established situation came in 1992 from *Archimede* a lower secondary Italian-language school with a proposal for mini-immersion or, as it has also been called, late partial immersion. Since then three other Italian-language lower secondary schools have implemented similar models. Furthermore, three primary schools have also elaborated their own projects of mini immersion.

i) The *Archimede* experiment .

The experimental mini-immersion programme is now in its fifth year. It consists in the teaching of geography (anthropological and cultural aspects) through German for two hours a week by the second language teacher (German native speaker). Alongside this exposure to German as a vehicular language, the pupils also have 6 hours a week of the teaching of German as a subject.

The move to introduce the experiment - which has caused considerable resistance from the minority German group at the political level - was dictated by the need to find a way of improving the pupils' competence in German (which for Italian speakers is notoriously bad despite the high number of hours devoted to its teaching) and, on a more formative level, by the need to create a means for generating greater understanding between the two groups, and possibilities for contact and dialogue. The experiment is part of an overall project in plurilingual education.

As far as regards the mini-immersion projects of the primary schools, the second language is used for 4 hours a week as a vehicular language alongside 5 hours devoted to the teaching of German as a subject. In the primary schools an interdisciplinary approach centering upon project work to stimulate research and

discovery methods is adopted and the L2 teacher works alongside the class teacher responsible for the specific area involved (e.g., music education; social studies, art, etc.). An interactive approach to teaching and learning is adopted with an alternation between the two teachers and, consequently, between the two languages. Co-presence can be of two types - *logical co-presence* where the class is split into two groups which are followed separately by the two teachers or *physical co-presence* where the teachers alternate their work with the whole class contemporaneously. This latter form is adopted in these experiments.

ii) Trentino

In the Trentino area of Alto-Adige there is at present no bilingual education programmes underway. Ladin has been a **compulsory** subject of the curriculum since 1988 in compulsory schooling but has been taught as an added non-compulsory subject for over twenty years. In 1993 however, a law was passed (n.592) not only making Ladin a compulsory subject of study for **all** levels of school but stipulating that Ladin can also be used as a vehicle language.

On the basis of this decree law the Province of Trento elaborated school programmes for Ladin and specified, through a Provincial law (8.1.1997, and still under discussion for approval by Central Government) that, as of 1997-8, Ladin would be taught as a compulsory school subject for one hour a week and used as a vehicular language for **at least** 2 hours a week in relation to history, geography, the environment and studies on language.

iii) Upper secondary schools

Two experimental projects that require the vehicular use of a foreign language in the school curriculum are currently underway in some upper secondary schools throughout Italy. The two projects are *Liceo Classici Europeo* (cf. Portolano, 1996 for a detailed description of the project) and *Liceo Linguistico Europeo*. Both these projects, which began in 1992, can be defined as experiments in mini-immersion programmes on account of the limited number of hours the foreign language is used as a vehicle language as well as its restricted range of use (one or two subjects of the school curriculum).

Two types of upper secondary schools are involved. The former project was formulated by the State School sector of the Ministry for Public Education for the *Licei Classici*, schools that provide a specialisation in the Classics. In particular the project was designed to suit the special characteristics of the *Convitti Nazionali* some of which have boarding facilities and all of which (unusual for the school system in Italy) provide a full day, until 6.00p.m. The latter project, formulated by the Private School sector of the Ministry, was designed for the *Licei Linguistici*, private schools, that provide courses of study that lead to a qualification in modern languages. (A peculiar feature of the Italian school system is that those students wishing to specialise in modern languages have to attend private schools. As a result of the demand for foreign languages however, attempts are made to redress this situation in the State sector through the running of programmes that are qualified as experimental in nature). 20 *Licei Classici* and 110 *Licei Linguistici* are currently involved in the projects.

Although designed separately for a different public, the two projects share common features. They both share the aim of creating a European dimension in the school curriculum (this, for example, has led to the introduction of two foreign languages into the curriculum of the Liceo Classico and to a re-appraisal of the subjects like Greek from a European viewpoint); both share the obligation that, as a characterising feature of the European curriculum, one or two of the school subjects be taught through one of the foreign languages being studied. Indications as to what disciplines can/cannot be taught through the foreign language however differ. In the Licei Classici it is suggested (but not enforced) that these disciplines be history and geography with the obligation however that Italian, history of art, Latin and Greek be taught through Italian. In the Licei Linguistici any of the subjects can be taught through the foreign language with the exception of foreign languages and Italian. The vehicular use of the foreign language begins in the third year but there are calls that it be anticipated to the first year (the upper secondary school lasts five years from 14-18 years of age). In both projects it is clear that the teacher who will do the vehicular teaching has to be qualified in the discipline being taught and competent in the language of instruction being used. This would seem to indicate that the teacher does not need to be a **native speaker** of the language of instruction.

Both projects are now in their fifth year and the first round of students are coming up for the final national exam. The five years of experience has brought to the fore a series of open questions that need to be discussed and solved if the projects are to be successful and ultimately to be incorporated as officially recognised features of the schools rather than as experimental programmes which, by the mere nature of their being experimental, are destined to come to an end. From the point of view of our own particular focus of interest here, these questions (cf. Pasolini, 1996) concern:

- Teachers: the difficulty in finding teachers with suitable qualifications in both spheres (the subject discipline and the language); the difficulty in ascertaining their linguistic competence.
- Exams: the problem of finding teachers sufficiently competent in both spheres to sit on the final exam commission; the need to decide whether the final exam be conducted in the foreign language or not; and the need to officially recognise, in the final exam certificate, the particular nature of the course of study followed.
- Texts: the enormous difficulty in finding texts suitable for teaching a discipline through a foreign language;
- Teaching: the consequences on the teaching-learning tempo of using a foreign language as a language of instruction. Teaching and learning is slowed down through the need to explain and repeat. Furthermore, the teacher lowers his expectations of the students. In the long run, it is the foreign language that benefits but the discipline suffers. Should then the contents of the programme for the discipline be reviewed and reduced as a result?

In addition to the two projects above, other experiences in the vehicular use of a foreign language are being carried out in a very small number of upper secondary schools. Those concerning the use of French are called *sections bilingues* and are directed by the Bureau Linguistique of the French Embassy in Rome. The teachers involved are French mother-tongue teachers paid directly by France. French and history are taught through French and the students sit the French maturité as their final exam. Other similar experiences called *sezioni internazionali* also exist for English and German.

Projects in the nursery schools and primary school

Three bilingual education projects have been carried out that concern some nursery schools and a primary school in the Ladin-speaking areas of the Province of Bolzano and the Province of Trento.

1) Parladino

Parladino is a project in bilingual education in a group of nursery schools in the Val di Fassa in the Province of Trento where there is a group of mixed mother tongue speaking children. Some have Italian as their mother tongue, others have Ladin. The project began in 1991 with the experimental phase lasting until 1993. The work still continues but the teachers involved now only receive indirect assistance.

The project was articulated along three dimensions for which three specific sets of aims were specified;

a) Pupils

- i) Lead the pupils towards an inculturation (in Italian or Ladin) and an enculturation (in Italian or Ladin) and encourage an attitude of cultural relativism.
- ii) Favour a balanced development of the child's idea of 'self' and nurture the idea of 'self' as a bilingual person instead of either being Ladin or Italian.
- iii) Favour cognitive development especially as far as regards strategies for language acquisition, both in the mother tongue as in the second language.

b) Teachers

- i) Increase theoretical knowledge of a) bilingualism; b) bilingual education.
- ii) Increase knowledge of a) the Ladin language; b) Ladin culture; c) bilingual education in other Ladin areas; d) common cultural and historical roots of the Ladin valleys.
- iii) Learn how to identify the dominant language in a pupil who, exposed to both languages, is potentially bilingual;
- iv) Learn how to anticipate interference, single it out, recognise it as such, and know how to intervene;
- v) Learn how to programme and manage teaching according to different models such as: a) one person/one language; b) one situation/one language; c) one place/one language; d) a particular time/one language.
- vi) Learn how to exploit the resources available in the social context, e.g., families, institutions, etc.

c) Research

- i) Study the structure of a curriculum of bilingual education (aims, objectives, contents, teaching techniques, testing techniques, connections between languages and non-verbal languages).
- ii) Elaborate some of the features studied in c.i) above on a concrete basis, e.g., the functional, linguistic contents and suitable teaching techniques.
- iii) Create data-collecting tools to be able to experiment the elements in c.i) and c.ii) above.

iv) Create instruments for measuring the attitude of the children towards the two languages and cultures in contact both at the beginning and at the end of the experimentation and compare with a control group.

The project therefore (cf. Balboni, 1996) provides a wealth of information on various aspects of the problem of the application of a programme of bilingual education.

2) **Plu adum cun plu lingac** (Transl. "More united with more languages")

As we have seen small children entering primary school in Ladin schools in the Province of Bolzano have considerable linguistic obstacles to overcome. A pilot project was activated in 1992-3 in Val Gardena (co-ordinated by Theodor Rifesser and Kurt Egger) to look into the possibility of designing a teaching approach that would provide the child with contact with all three languages - German, Italian and Ladin - in the nursery school. The project takes as its starting point the existing linguistic competence of the child and provides him with the possibility of learning basic structures of the new language(s) through game-like activities. The communicative games, that last overall 15-20 minutes, are carried out in the two languages, one day in one language and the other day in another language.

3) **Canazei**

An experimental project concerning the vehicular use of the Ladin language alongside that of Italian was started in 1995-6 in Canazei (Trentino) in the fifth class of a primary school. The linguistic aims of the project (improve pupils' competence in Ladin) intersected with the aims concerning the need to improve the pupils' knowledge of the environment. The principle adopted was one teacher two languages. The project was followed and evaluated by the Istituto Provinciale di Ricerca, Aggiornamento, e Sperimentazione Educative (I.P.R.A.S.E).

3.2. With respect to new technologies and autonomous learning

With the exception of the *Archimede* project where explicit reference is made to the use of specially created multimedia packages for study purposes the information to date concerning bilingual education programmes as well as information concerning activities undertaken to train teachers involved in these activities makes no mention whatever of the use of new technologies - meaning by this the computer, Internet and multimedia programmes as well as video - for autonomous learning, either by the students or the teachers .

3.3. With respect to initial and INSET training

The inadequacy of the training of teachers in Italy has been a topic of debate for decades. But resistance to the introduction of such disciplines as applied linguistics and language teaching methodology has been strong so much so that throughout Italy there are no more than ten university professors who actually specialise in the area. Awareness is growing however and it can be seen in the INSET courses being organised as part of the launching of new bilingual projects.

i) Archimede project.

Since its inception in 1992 the *Archimede* project has organised an articulated programme of activities to disseminate information about immersion, and to prepare and train those involved. All these actions can in fact be considered part of an overall programme of inservice training.

The programme of action comprises various working modes (conference; round table; lecture; class visits ; experimental workshops, production of materials); 'trainers' include national and international experts in the field; the topics focus on a variety of themes specifically related to the issue of bilingual education (psycholinguistic implications of bilingual education; geographical linguistic situation in Alto Adige; types of immersion programmes; second language vehicular teaching of specific disciplines like geography and mathematics; immersion in school and the influence of the family; methodology: problems and practice in immersion; bilingual schools in other parts of Europe).

An interesting feature of the programme of information dissemination and spread of knowledge concerns the inclusion of regular meetings between the teachers, heads of the schools and the families whose children are involved in the immersion programmes.

Experts are charged by the Scientific Committee of the Project to follow the project as it develops, and to provide indications to teachers in terms of teaching procedures to adopt in view of the aims of the project. This is done through classroom observation. Particular attention is given to :

- the developing language competence of the pupils ;
- (in the case of the primary school) the efficacy of the interaction between the two language teachers co-present.

Teachers also are invited to assist in the activities of classroom observation as are students intending writing their thesis on the subject (three written so far - University of Trento; University of Innsbruck; University of Vienna).

ii) Valle d'Aosta

The Valle d'Aosta implements bilingual education in all schools. The programme of in-service training here mentioned concerns the lower secondary school and it focuses on the relation between discipline subject and bilingualism. The course which lasts two years plus a term (for the writing and preparation of materials to be published) has been organised as a result of the negative outcome of the interdisciplinary approach to bilingual teaching that was originally adopted with very great enthusiasm on the part of the teachers during the experimental years. The INSET course has been designed to redress these problems. The aim of the course is to: help teachers master the disciplines they teach on the assumption that it is on the basis of this knowledge that interdisciplinary projects can also be developed; help teachers to reflect on language and languages as they concern all teaching both disciplinary and interdisciplinary.

The course in 1996 focused attention on the teaching of history and mathematics through French. In 1997 the focus extends to the teaching of art education through French. The course is open to teachers of mathematics, history, art education, and French, all from the lower secondary school. However, there are also some teachers

from the primary school and some from the upper secondary school as a means of ensuring continuity from one school level to another. The course, which is conducted via the formula of action research, aims to help the participants produce scientifically valid teaching procedures and strategies which are flexible, and generative. Teachers will produce a teaching sequence which will be experimented in class, verified, evaluated, amended and then published.

The course focuses on the bilingual teaching of disciplines and aims to help the teachers to know when to alternate the use of the two languages (macro-alternation or micro-alternation) and to relate the progression of the discipline with the language development through the specification of competence levels to be reached in the language and the text types to choose from and present over the three year period of study. In this way linguistic competence will increase gradually alongside contact with the discipline.

iii) Progetto Formazione Ladini-1995

This project- organised by Provincia Autonoma di Trento and financed by the European Union - aims to develop a basic training course that provides teachers working in bilingual schools with the appropriate teaching strategies for this particular type of context. Ultimately, the project has a threefold aim:

- investigate the problems that are specifically related to the application of the new school programmes concerning the Ladin language and culture;
- analyse the programmes for the implications they have in terms of teaching competencies needed.

The course, divided into a linguistic part for improvement of proficiency in Ladin and a non-linguistic part, adopts a variety of working modes (periods of study; seminars; field work; *stages*; materials production). The themes covered are, like the *Archimede* and *Parladino* projects, specifically related to the whole issue of bilingual education (general indications for intercultural pedagogy: bilingual programmes (nature and models; construction, implementation, monitoring, evaluation; criteria for quality); bilingual schools: models, programmes, functioning, effectiveness, curriculum renewal strategies, organisational models; bilingual literacy (forms, problems of learning); active methods in teaching: co-operative learning; peer teaching; the implications of language planning in didactics; environmental research; teaching materials and aids: criteria for quality, production, use; discipline teaching; evaluation of results; dialoguing with parents and the school community).

iv) Parladino

The Parladino project (later renamed Bam.bi (Bambino Bilingue) due to the misunderstanding, created by the title, that the project was concerned with the promotion and teaching of Ladin whereas in fact the project is concerned with promoting the concept of a balanced bilingual, in promoting in the child a feeling of his being a 'persona bilingue') presented a rich programme of in-service training (see 3.1. above).

As far as regards the working mode with the teachers the scheda or cataloguing card was used as an instrument for several purposes as a means of getting the teachers to

reflect on the new knowledge being acquired and on the situations that arise in the classroom during their practice. Cards were of several type some of which were collected for the creation of a Data Bank managed by the *Gruppo di Ricerca sull'Educazione Bilingue* (GREB): theoretical issues studied ; teaching techniques adopted; practical problems in the classroom; observation of the children; sensitising.

A recurring criticism regarding bilingual education programmes is the lack of (or bad quality of) pedagogical and/or linguistic training of the teachers involved (cf. Baker, 1993: 20-23; Sondergaard, 1993: 82; Masch, 1993: 157-8). However, a richness is apparent in the in-service courses briefly described above not only in terms of content but also in terms of the modes adopted for training the teachers. A craft model or a mere transmission model are abolished in favour of an integration of transmission with workshop activities and field work that favour a reflection-in-action model of learning which, ultimately, makes the learning more significant, and bridges the gap between the theory and the actual practice. An attempt however to involve the teacher in research activities in the form of action research failed in the case of the Parladino project (Balboni, 1996:132).

3.4. With respect to the mobility of language teachers

The bilingual education experiences in the Valle d'Aosta, in the Ladin schools in Alto Adige, and that of the *Archimede* project in Bolzano, all seem to have created connections with institutions abroad or in other areas of Italy for the purposes of language improvement (for the teachers and the pupils) and teacher training.

The Valle d'Aosta has a long-standing connection with schools and other institutions in the Haute-Savoie and, at the level of primary school, teacher exchanges are carried out with the teachers from the Valle d'Aosta going to teach in the schools in the Haute-Savoie and vice versa. In addition, almost all the school institutions are in some way involved in community programmes.

The *Archimede* project has established connections with German schools in Bolzano and organises outings and holidays for the pupils from the schools together. Generally speaking however, apart from the situation of the Valle d'Aosta , it would seem that there is no articulated procedure for the exploitation of community programmes for those involved in bilingual education - teachers and students alike.

3.5. With respect to methodology and innovations (open and distance learning)

From the documentation available on the experiences underway five features of a methodological nature would seem to be the object of interest in the bilingual education programmes currently underway:

1. Bilingual education as opposed to bilingual instruction;
2. Switching - of language and/or of teacher;
3. Interdisciplinary /disciplinary teaching
4. The discipline - language connection
5. Interaction

1. Bilingual education as opposed to bilingual instruction.

This distinction highlights a difference in the aims posed as a justification for the use of a second or foreign language as a vehicular language in the school curriculum. Following Freddi (1983) *bilingual instruction* is when there is not only the study of the two languages (the mother tongue and another) but also when the remaining subjects are taught through those two languages. The term *bilingual instruction* refers therefore to the strictly technical aspect of teaching through more than one language (p. 240).

With the term *educazione bilingue* however there is an underlying educational project with formative aims specific to the presence of the two languages in the curriculum and to their use as vehicular languages.

The bilingual education programmes so far mentioned would seem to recognise this distinction by striving to insert the use of the vehicular language in the larger context of projects that concern language education, plurilingual education, the environment, and with the specification of aims like the culturalisation and socialisation of the pupil.

2. Switching - of language and/or of teacher

The way the language is used is an important element in bilingual education as it involves questions of quality and quantity. To date, however, there does not seem to have been any research on this variable such that a school wishing to adopt a bilingual education programme cannot know with certainty which solution to opt for. The different programmes mentioned above adopt different solutions - solutions that are to a large extent rooted in the situation regarding the school system, e.g., in Alto Adige (for German and Italian) the teachers have to teach in their native language. They cannot therefore switch languages; in the Valle d'Aosta the teachers have to be bilingual. A consequence is that they can (and do) switch languages. In primary schools there is the possibility of co-presence - languages therefore can be alternated by the teachers within the same situation. In secondary schools this is far more difficult to realise.

What is clear however is that the projects watch the development closely - e.g., through classroom observation, and/or by incorporating the issue as a topic in the teacher training courses (e.g. Valle d'Aosta's work on macro- and micro-language alternation or code switch/code mixing; Parladino's work the various combinations possible).

3. Interdisciplinary /disciplinary teaching

The reasons professed for the adoption of an interdisciplinary approach (particularly preferred by the primary schools but also adopted by the lower secondary schools) in the bilingual programmes are various:

- it is common procedure in primary schools where the concept of 'discipline' does not play a part;
- it allows for co-operative learning and teaching;
- it results in interaction (and therefore more talk)
- it allows for multiple uses of language

- it can more easily be integrated into the bilingual curriculum with a formative function (e.g., as part of work on language and languages; culture, etc.).

However, it is interesting to note that there is an attempt to recuperate the discipline dimension (Valle d'Aosta). Teaching a discipline requires that the teacher know what constitutes the specificity of that discipline in terms not only of content but also in terms of the cognitive strategies required to learn and understand that discipline. In addition, it requires that the teacher know what is required of the student linguistically in that discipline - genres, text types, formulas, specialised vocabulary, etc. These are features that cannot be ignored if we decide that it is not only the discipline but also the second/foreign language which are the focus of our attention. In the Valle d'Aosta experience it became apparent that such specificity was being lost sight of in the interdisciplinary approach adopted.

4. Discipline-language connection

Whatever the focus, the connection between the discipline and the language needs to be better articulated. The attempts therefore to investigate ways in which the language competence can gradually be developed through content-based study is very important. Work in the Valle d'Aosta is precisely in this direction with an analysis of the texts (genres, types) commonly associated with the discipline in order to find a way of gradually introducing them according to criteria of complexity and according to the objectives to be reached.

5. Interaction

Interaction has been the object of study by scholars in the field of first language acquisition and second language acquisition over the last two decades (Long, 1983;1989; Long & Porter, 1985; Gass & Madden, 1985; Snow, 1985;) for the contribution it is held to give, indirectly, to the acquisition of the language. A particular aspect of interaction - negotiation of meaning - is felt to be of prime importance in helping learners assimilate the language. It is through the need to work out meaning in order to comprehend that the learners are provided with input and are forced to exploit their existing competence to make comprehensible output (Swain, 1985). It is evident that teacher-led (frontal) classroom activities will not provide the pupils with the opportunities for interaction (Malamah-Thomas, 1987) that foreign/second language acquisition requires. Hence the solution for interdisciplinary project work. From the classroom observations carried out in the mini-immersion experiments in the primary classrooms in Bolzano (cf. above) it would appear that the teacher is an extremely important variable in the acquisition process for, if the interaction between the two teachers co-present is not balanced, then the quality of acquisition by the pupils is affected.

4. New needs in the area of language teacher training in relation to bilingual education

4.1. In initial language teacher training programmes

4.1.1. At university level

A total reform concerning the way teachers are to be trained is about to be introduced through the creation of a four-year degree course called *Scienze della Formazione Primaria* for the initial training of all primary and nursery school teachers and through the creation of a two-year post-graduate course denominated *Scuola di Specializzazione per la Formazione degli Insegnanti di Scuola Secondaria* for the initial training of all secondary school teachers. The courses, which will be organised on an inter-university regional basis, are inter faculty and both incorporate a teaching practice component as part of the course content. It is hoped that the new reform will come into practice in 1998. From the point of view of the issue here at hand, the need is to see how specific training for teachers involved in bilingual education programmes can be met by the two above-mentioned courses.

Teachers

An important question to debate concerns who is to be trained for teaching in (envisaged) bilingual education programmes.

A first issue concerns whether it will be the language teacher, the discipline teacher, or both, who will teach in such programmes.

A second issue concerns whether the vehicular language teacher is to be a mother tongue speaker of that language or a non-native speaker of the language. In the first case moves will need to be made to facilitate the availability and circulation of such teachers through the official recognition of qualifications gained in other member countries of the EU. In the second case, measures need to be taken to allow for the possibility that future teachers have a recognised competence in a linguistic and non-linguistic discipline. As it stands at the moment in Italy a teacher trained to teach foreign languages does not receive teaching qualifications to teach another, non-linguistic, discipline. The same can be said of a teacher who acquires teaching qualifications in a non-language discipline. This situation is an obstacle towards potentialising the spread of bilingual education.

Possible solutions might be to require that all degree courses carry a language component to a specified level. In this way, an acceptable level of foreign/second language competence by degree students of other disciplines will be ensured. Alternatively (or even in addition), create the possibility whereby language students can study a non-language discipline to *triennio* level (a three-year course of study). This would allow the future language teacher to qualify for training as a bilingual teacher in a particular discipline. Whatever the choice candidates would need to have the possibility of extending their knowledge and competence in those areas where it is most lacking through additional disciplinary courses provided in the two-year post graduate training course.

Training

Essentially what must be created is a **new** category of teacher with five levels of competence: i) language ii) language teaching competence iii) non language discipline iv) specific teaching competence in that discipline v) knowledge and competence related to the issues of bilingualism and bilingual education.

The question of a **new** figure for the primary school level is less problematical in that the primary teachers do not specialise in disciplines as such (except for the foreign language which is an additional qualification, cf. 1.4).

The element that most characterises expertise to teach in bilingual education programmes is point v).

What is needed is courses or modules that cover theoretical and applied questions related to the issue. The modules could be divided into a common core module which teachers of all disciplines and of all school levels would follow and where issues relating to bilingualism, bilingual programmes, language learning and acquisition, etc. would be dealt with. The other, satellite modules, could cater for the specific needs, in bilingual education, of the teachers of the separate disciplines and of the separate school levels. Modules on the issue could also be followed in another country of the EU as part of a training abroad course component.

4.2. In INSET language teacher training programmes

4.2.1. At university level

A characteristic feature to keep in mind when talking of INSET with reference to the Italian situation is that for many teachers (those who are already *di ruolo*) it has and will continue to constitute their only source of training. Furthermore, precisely because there is no programming of the INSET courses (within the schools, provincially, or regionally) with a view to covering essential areas, the majority of teachers' knowledge concerning didactics is patchy. In consideration also of that fact that only very recently has INSET been made 'obligatory', only the most motivated teachers actually followed such courses. INSET courses in Italy therefore have to take into account this situation by providing input that would normally be dealt with in initial training courses. However, they can also capitalise on one aspect that distinguishes these teachers from students in initial training and this is the fact that these teachers teach, have a class, and have acquired knowledge through experience and built up their own theories in action. All this can represent the springboard for courses that stand firmly in the classroom reality and relate issues emanating from it to theoretical considerations. Until the new figure of the bilingual teacher appears who will have passed through the new training route then it will be other teachers who are already in service who will do the teaching in bilingual education programmes (as already happens in the experiences presented).

University INSET courses could be of two types:

a) specialisation courses, monographic in nature, organised with the aim of systematising the patchwork knowledge of the teachers.

A feature of bilingual education **in Europe** that springs to attention is the fact that very little classroom-based research has been conducted to investigate what happens, what techniques work/do not work; how pupils react/work/do not work; the quality of language; the dynamics of interaction; the difference between L2 situations and foreign language situations, etc., (but see the Ladin schools of Alto Adige where a research project I.E.A. on the reading ability of the pupils in the bilingual schools has

been carried out; and a research project on the written production of children in Ladin schools conducted by Prof. Sture Ureland of the University of Mannheim in 1987-8). Work of this sort needs to be done in order for data to be collected that can inform our actions in bilingual education classes. Research of this type can ideally be carried out through the scientific expertise offered by the university and the classroom knowledge of the teacher together. However, information on the implementation and the running of such research projects needs to be disseminated to a wider group of people than those actually involved. Thus:

b) INSET courses can be built up around an action research project in bilingual education in which some of the teachers themselves are involved. The meetings will be held at crucial moments in the research process for discussion of decisions, findings and implications. In this way, even the teachers who are not actually involved in the project can be informed of how a research project can be set up, can evolve, of the instruments for the collection of data, evaluation, etc. The expertise provided at university level should guarantee the required scientific foundation of the research and provide at the same time the necessary scientific knowledge to teachers who might want in the future to investigate their own situations.

4.2.2. At non-university level

a) Dissemination

Given the 'novelty' of bilingual education and the myths there might be surrounding it (e.g., it creates instant bilinguals/ it creates linguistic confusion/it slows down the pupils, etc.) there is a need for a cycle of courses that could be called Dissemination of Information Courses. A special national agency could be created to organise the courses and function as a central information service (cf. 5.).

The aim of these courses is to inform teachers and head teachers (as well as School Inspectors and IRRSAE officers) about all issues related to bilingual education, bilingualism, models, experiments, research, etc. The cycle of meetings, held by experts (foreign and national) in the field, could be held on a regional or a provincial level.

b) INSET network

Schools that want to implement a bilingual education experiment, even on a small limited scale, need to network with other schools conducting, or wishing to conduct, similar experiments. INSET courses can be organised by these schools on topics directly related to the experiments envisaged or underway. Normally speaking, INSET courses are organised following a top-down procedure with the organisers creating the course on the basis of what they think the course followers will need - a sort of rough tuning. Through the network however the request for an INSET course comes from those who will follow it. In other words it is a bottom-up procedure which will allow for a tailor-made course finely tuned to suit the needs of the teachers. A further characteristic of INSET courses is that they are fragmentary. Courses are offered on topics without there being an underlying guiding thread from one course to the other. The type of INSET courses needed however are ones that are coherently related one with the other. This can be done through the bilingual

education experiences underway in the schools and through the problems and issues that crop up as the experiences progress over time.

c) INSET abroad

The *White Paper* and the *Final Report* by the Scientific Committee on Languages specifically call for teaching staff to be able to teach in other member states and for language teachers to be able to spend periods of time in other countries of the EU. Every bilingual language teacher should have the possibility of following courses that will increase her knowledge and expertise in bilingual education. This can be done by following courses provided by institutions in other member countries. An ideal solution would be for teachers, involved in specific bilingual programmes or posted in schools which plan to implement a bilingual programme, to follow the courses as groups so that the course being followed can incorporate certain features that satisfy the needs of the group. Group visits of this nature should have precedence for the funds available in the various community programmes.

4.3. In relation to new technologies and autonomous learning

The major innovations that would seem to offer the greatest potential for autonomous learning is that of Internet and multimedia computers.

- Internet

Internet should be available for consultation by the individual teacher or groups of teachers for a variety of functions.

a) Bibliographic search made more directly informative through the provision of information cards that summarise the contents of the publications.

b) information concerning:

- i) schools in Italy that implement a bilingual education programme;
- ii) schools in other EU countries that implement bilingual education;
- iii) action-research projects in Italy and in the EU, concluded or underway, in bilingual education;
- iv) results of research projects;
- v) experts, national and international, working in the field;
- vi) courses (initial and INSET) on offer nationally and in the EU on the issues surrounding bilingual education;
- vii) community programmes;
- viii) requests for and offers of teacher exchanges in bilingual education;
- ix) (video) recordings of lectures, talks, etc., given by experts on various occasion (conferences, etc.) on issues of bilingual education.

c) Creation of:

- i) Internet teaching associations of school disciplines in bilingual education;
- ii) Bilingual Education Journal on Internet.

d) Allow possibility to:

- i) download teaching materials of specific disciplines to be taught through a foreign/second language;
- ii) download curricula for teacher training programmes - initial and INSET;
- iii) Dialogue through a special discussion Internet Bilingual Education Forum

with a) experts ; b) other teachers/schools.

- **Multimedia**

Through the use of multimedia interactive software teachers (schools) can deepen their knowledge of the whole range of issues relating to bilingual education. Involvement can take place through:

- **Simulations.** Through specifically prepared software programmes all the steps and procedures to be gone through and to be taken account of in the implementation of an experimental bilingual education programme could be presented in the form of a simulation. The programmes would be interactive (and not merely informative) requiring the teacher to take decisions and plan.

- **Video recordings.** Video recordings of sequences of activities/teaching strategies taking place in classes where various models of bilingual education are implemented can be made available on multimedia disc. These sequences and examples should be accompanied by information and questions, before and after viewing, to involve the teacher(s) interactively.

Multimedia discs of this sort can be used in INSET programmes and also by single schools or by a single teacher.

4.4. In relation to methodology

The experimental projects underway, many of which are concentrating on the way teaching strategies and learning outcomes interrelate in the classroom, already provide us with some indications of some of the methodological concerns that need to be the object of focus in bilingual teacher education courses.

These are:

i) The problem of sequencing and grading teaching/learning material and tasks. The literature provides us with two useful concepts to take into consideration for principled decisions concerning choice of materials and tasks in bilingual education programmes. These are *cognitively undemanding and context embedded language tasks* as opposed to *cognitively demanding and context free language tasks* (cf. Lebrun & Baetens Beardsmore, 1993:110).

Related to this is also the work on task complexity (Crookes, 1986; Candlin & Murphy, 1987) and text complexity (Brown & Yule, 1983). These questions have of late been the focus of attention in foreign language teacher courses. However, the issue is also of pertinence for bilingual education programmes precisely because, when dealing with other, non-linguistic disciplines, choice of text and task is to some extent dictated by the texts and tasks normally associated with (the learning of) that discipline.

ii) The use of the language

Particular attention needs to be afforded to the way the vehicular language is used - in particular when the model adopted is one teacher - two languages or when two teachers, one for each language, are co-present. Four aspects need to be considered:

- code switching that "involves shifting from the use of one language to another within the same communication context, for example within a lesson" (Marsh, Oksman-Rinkinen & Takala 1996:7) and code mixing that "involves incorporating from one language to another within the same utterance ..." (ibid.).
- macro-alternation of the two languages when a change in the use of one of the two languages is related to a change in activity, a situation or according to the organisation of the curriculum; micro-alternation when the change in code is a sort of interruption, a qualifying statement akin to the function (called instrumental) that Ladin has in the Ladin schools in Alto-Adige.

iii) Objectives

Attention needs to focus on the problem of objectives. The fact that one is teaching economics through a foreign language and the primary focus is the non language discipline does not mean that objectives for the foreign language dimension of that teaching be ignored. Objectives need to be fixed in terms of the language skills that one wishes to develop - receptive and/or productive; written and/or oral, the pragmatic and text competence, etc. The difficulty for the bilingual teacher lies in defining the objectives in relation to the subject she is teaching.

iv) Interaction

A particular dimension of language teaching which seems to influence the extent to which the pupils achieve success in acquiring the foreign language is:

- a) the way the teacher not only interacts with the pupils but also with a colleague when co-present;
 - b) the possibilities the pupils have for interacting among themselves.
- Training courses therefore need to investigate the best ways for stimulating interaction (project work; one-way versus two way tasks, required information exchange in activities, question types) in relation to the particular discipline being taught through the vehicular language.

v) A fifth dimension, not necessarily directly related to the problems of bilingual education but which can nevertheless be used profitably by pupils in the bilingual education programmes, is the exploitation of Internet as a teaching tool. This is a completely new area of investigation, the possibilities of which can intuitively be guessed but about which not much has been done.

4. 5. In relation to the mobility of language teacher trainees and trainers

Mobility, meaning by this the possibility of being able to visit and work in other countries of the European Union, must be considered an essential ingredient of the professional training of the bilingual teacher. It is unacceptable to consider visits to other countries as in some way special, or superfluous, to be blocked as soon as finances are low or for administrative reasons (e.g., the school system is not flexible enough to accommodate the teacher's absence, etc.).

Mobility for the trainee teacher (and also for the qualified practising teacher) provides:

- intensive contact with the language to teach through (if the teacher is a non-native speaker of that language);

and must, given the specificity of this particular type of teacher, provide:

- contact with bilingual education programmes in other countries, especially in those where there is a longer established tradition of bilingual education. Indeed, the best way for an effective dissemination of information in bilingual education to take place, especially as far as regards classroom practice, is for the trainee teachers to actually enter the classrooms and see for themselves what is done.

This last point can also be said of trainers as it is vital that they keep in contact with the realities of the class.

Italy does not have the experience in bilingual education that other countries of the EU have. A consequence of this is the lack of experts specifically trained to train the teachers for teaching in such programmes. The creation of a European Consortium of Bilingual Teacher Trainers will provide a platform for the pooling of ideas and a structure for the organisation of courses for trainers that can be held in the various countries of the EU at different times.

Mobility therefore must be considered an essential feature of the trainers professional life as only in this way can he keep in contact and up-date his knowledge.

4.6. In relation to accreditation and ECTS

Teacher trainee mobility carries with it the obligation to follow some form of structured training in a EU country. A consequence of this is how to evaluate the training received once the trainee returns.

As a means of facilitating the operation of recognising courses/modules offered by other universities in the EU, the EU could elaborate a common bilingual education curriculum, an indication of the type of exam formats to adopt (written, oral, research paper), and an indication of the teaching time that to dedicate to each element of the curriculum. A system of points would be elaborated for the contents, time, exam format etc. On the basis of these indications, the 'value' of the various modules offered on the courses could be ascertained.

Alternatively, universities that organise themselves into a consortium could come to their own internal agreement as to what value to assign to the various components of their courses.

4.7. In relation to educational policy

In order for there to be the political will to introduce bilingual education as an integral part of the education system there needs to be a call for it and there needs to be ears open to hear and listen to the call. This implies tackling the question on two fronts - the general public and those responsible for school policy. A premise therefore for a change in educational policy which the introduction of bilingual education as an integral part of the system will require is a dissemination of information campaign on the issue through the media, in schools, etc.

The following are just some of the aspects that those responsible for educational policy will have to consider in the prospect of elaborating a policy concerning bilingual education in Italian schools:

i) The teacher

We have already briefly seen the question of the teacher (cf. 4.1. above). A further question however that needs to be examined is, if non-Italian nationals are to be allowed to teach in the bilingual programmes, how (if at all) they are to be inserted in the national system of lists, fixed posting (*di ruolo*) etc.

ii) Where and when to introduce bilingual education.

Where here refers not to the geographical dislocation of the schools but to the types of schools themselves. A move has already been made to introduce the vehicular use of a foreign language as an experimental programme in some upper secondary schools. There should be no reason why the experiment could not be extended to the other upper school types (Liceo Scientifico, the professional schools, the technical schools, etc.) that constitute the system of further education in Italy.

The only examples of bilingual education in the **compulsory** sector of education (compulsory schooling is currently from 6 to 14 years of age) are those taking place in the bilingual Special Statute areas as well as in some of the private European schools. The former are examples of **second** language bilingual education, the latter are essentially examples of **foreign** language bilingual education. Results from investigations of pupil competence in both the second and the foreign languages are however favourable. Furthermore, theoretical research on second language acquisition seem to point in the direction of an early start to language learning hypothesising the existence of a crucial time limit beyond which language learning/acquisition becomes difficult. Research also indicates that language used as a meaningful and accurate tool for interaction and expression is more easily assimilated than language learnt mainly through attention to its formal characteristics.

Essentially, there are substantial arguments to sustain the introduction of bilingual education from an early age, even from nursery school.

With a view to adhering to the fourth general objective "Proficiency in three community languages" of the *White Paper*, educational policy should allow for the possibility that all secondary pupils learn some of the curriculum through a foreign language (preferably the first one learnt in order of time) but also allow for a form of contact with a vehicular use of language even at nursery school level through the use of games-like activities. Foreign language activities that focus on content should also appear in the foreign language learning experiences of pupils in primary school without this necessarily constituting a content-based teaching.

iii) Models to adopt

If an interest is declared towards bilingual education as a form of teaching an investigation will need to be carried out as to which model best applies in the circumstances. Some experiments (e.g., *Parladino*) incorporate an investigation into this aspect as part of the research project.

Related to the model to adopt is the question of maintaining or not maintaining the teaching of the foreign language as a subject alongside its use as a vehicular language. Experience in the European schools (Baetens Beardsmore, 1993:123) suggests that, where curricular teaching of the language is maintained, there is greater formal accuracy in the oral and written production of the pupils. Parallel to this argument is

whether the discipline itself, the object of vehicular teaching, be maintained as a separate subject in the curriculum as well, the justification for this point being that if a discipline is taught entirely in the foreign language the pupils are deprived of the linguistic knowledge in the mother tongue for dealing with that discipline. Again, the European schools experience offers a solution to this problem through the gradual introduction of the vehicular use of a foreign language with a non-linguistic discipline such that the discipline concerned, in the course of the pupil's studies, will be dealt with both in the mother tongue and in the foreign language.

iv) Implications for the exam system

The introduction of the vehicular use of a foreign/second language is a very effective way of improving competence in that language. However, if to do this the territory of another school discipline is used then the question of teaching objectives, and of focus, becomes relevant, and, as a consequence, so do testing and the exams. If history is taught through English should it be tested through Italian? If it is to be tested through English does this constitute a new type of exam - history in a foreign language? The question can be viewed in another manner. If English has been taught through geography, should part of the English exam focus on geography (here meaning not only the contents but also the language forms - text types, genres, etc. - that typically characterise the uses geography makes of language)?

Solutions found in other countries with a longer tradition of bilingual education could inform the decisions that educationalists will need to take.

4.8. In relation to joint programmes related to community programmes

Joint programmes could be carried out in the following areas:

- research;
- class exchanges
- teacher exchanges
- teaching materials

Research

Research into several areas, particularly those concerning classroom strategies and activities in bilingual education, need to be carried out. An indication of those areas of the field requiring urgent attention could be provided by means of a European Bilingual Education Research Agenda. Joint projects between interested universities of the EU could be carried out under Socrates and financed by the EU if their research projects fall within those indicated by the Agenda.

Class exchanges

The possibility for class exchanges already exists under Comenius. A possibility of encouraging these further would be to create twinning between schools. Contact over time between the schools and the consequent build up of knowledge about each other will serve to render the procedures for the exchanges easier and less onerous than they are felt to be at the moment.

Teacher exchanges

Twinning between schools should also make it easier for teachers to exchange posts . Requests made to Comenius for exchanges of teachers operating in bilingual school should have precedence over others.

Teaching materials

The teaching of mathematics through English as a foreign language could be of interest to many schools in the EU adopting a bilingual education programme. A joint programme therefore for the production and publication of new texts - Geography in English as a foreign language; Art in German as a second language , Chemistry in French as a foreign language - should be devised and financed by Socrates and made available on Internet for downloading by schools.

5. New Measures for (Language) Teacher Training Programmes in relation to Bilingual Education

If the European Union is to maintain its identity of linguistic and cultural diversity, maintain in other words its multilingualism and multiculturalism that together represent its unique wealth, then concrete efforts cannot be delayed in enacting the recommendations of the European Commission.

In this respect a fundamental requirement of all European citizens is knowledge of at least three (including the mother tongue) of the Union's languages. It is up to those responsible for the educational systems of the single nations of the Union to find the most suitable means of facilitating this task.

Bilingual education is a solution that needs to be contemplated. Through bilingual education the pupil has more contact hours with the language, is **exposed** to a meaningful use of language and is required also to **make** a meaningful **use** of the language. In other words, he is confronted with the way language is actually used in normal communication and expression. It has a formative value for the cultural and cognitive development it stimulates.

The introduction of bilingual education requires, for its success, an overall positive consensus of opinion on the part of the school operators as of the families of the students. In addition, schools and teachers must not be left to work in a void deprived of the support that can help them implement the programmes .

It is necessary therefore that in view of the new needs, measures be taken on a national, European and joint national scale, in order for the patrimony that already exists concerning bilingual education be made available to all and that this patrimony increase through the contribution of all.

Measures on a national scale

A. Provision of a **National Bilingual Information Agency** for the dissemination of information on bilingual projects underway, schools that implement bilingual education, national experts in the field, national initial and INSET courses. Obligation for all schools that implement any form of vehicular teaching to inform the Agency. The information will constitute a central data bank to which anyone can have access. Provision of a site on Internet for the Agency.

B. Provide **at least** one computer connected with Internet in every school in the country with an expert in the local education authorities charged with informing (and continually up-dating) all teachers on how to use Internet.

C. Introduce a compulsory foreign language component into **all** degree courses with the condition that the language component be not detached from the main subject of study. Encourage where possible the teaching of degree subjects in a community language

D. Introduce a compulsory foreign language component into **all** initial teacher training programmes.

Measures on a European scale

A. Create a European Agency on Bilingual Education, directly related to the single national Agencies, and charged with co-ordinating activities of research on a European scale, organising exchanges, and disseminating information to the national agencies about courses in the various EU countries.

The Agency will have a site on Internet.

B. The elaboration of a curriculum for bilingual teacher education training courses.

C. The formation of an international team for the production of materials for use in bilingual schools

D. Creation of multimedia materials for autonomous teacher learning or for use in INSET courses.

E. Elaboration of a European system of school exams akin to the Baccalaureate designed to meet the needs of evaluation of disciplines studied through a second or foreign language.

Measures on an Inter-national scale

A. Create an agenda of research areas to be investigated in the field of bilingual research and organise joint research projects

B. Find ways of facilitating school networking, class exchanges and teacher exchanges.

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