

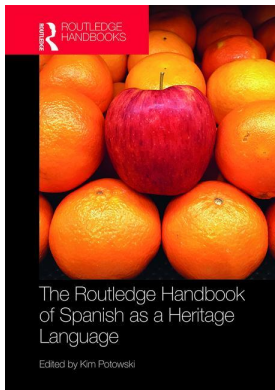
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SPANISH AS A HERITAGE LANGUAGE IN ITALY

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Introduction

Italy underwent radical social change in the 1980s and 1990s, becoming one of the most popular destinations of migratory routes in Europe. Since then, the Italian linguistic landscape has been enriched with new languages and cultures that have contributed to the creation of a multilingual mosaic. Due to the presence of large Latino communities in some areas of the country, Spanish has become one of the most important languages. The effects of transnationalism and the emergence of young generations of Latinos in Italy have led to new dynamics of language transmission and to high levels of mobility and innovation in language repertoires, fostered by the typological proximity between the minority language (Spanish) and the dominant language (Italian).

This chapter aims to highlight the important role Latinos in Italy play in performing new multiple identities and in innovating linguistic practices within the globalized and transnational Spanish speaking world. The subject of the chapter is *Spanish in-motion*, a dynamic language able not only to adapt to local contexts, but also to reshape and influence them. In the second part of this chapter, we offer an overview of Spanish as a heritage/minority language in educational settings, analyzing it in relation to Italian language policies. Despite a growing awareness of plurilingual schooling, no educational policy currently exists that fosters the maintenance and development of SHL (with the exception of some good practices carried out by some educators and isolated research projects). We end by discussing the future of Spanish in Italy.

Latinos in Italy

With a Latino population of around 400,000, Spanish is one of the most important minority languages in Italy. Milan and the Lombardy region are the main epicenters of Hispanic immigration (150,000 people), followed by Rome (55,000) and Liguria (36,000). Peruvians (around 110,000) and Ecuadorians (90,000) make up more than half of the Hispanic population, with considerably lower numbers of Dominicans, Cubans, Colombians, Bolivians and Salvadorans (Istat 2014).

Hispanic immigration to Italy has certain features that make it distinct from other immigrant groups in Italy and from other Latino communities in different countries. These features, including a high level of innovation of linguistic practices, have significantly influenced the development of certain sociolinguistic phenomena. Some sociological research (Ambrosini and Queirolo Palmas 2005; Boccagni 2009; Caselli 2009) has identified a profile of Hispanic American immigration in which the principal characteristic is a majority female presence (62%). Other important aspects that typify Latino communities in Italy are a good level of integration in the job market and in the host society, as well as a considerable increase in family reunifications and new births.

Women usually are the ones who initiate the migratory chain because they have more opportunities to find work in certain sectors where ethnic groups tend to specialize, such as health care and home care. Some 73.8% of Latinos are employed in such services. Most of these women have high levels of education (Lagomarsino 2006) and in their country of origin worked in clerical jobs, mainly in the public service sector. First-wave emigrants were in fact principally from the middle-classes and had sufficient economic resources to move to another continent. After getting settled in the host country, a process of family reunification took place, which has led to a sizeable presence of young Hispanophones in Italian schools.

With regards to the integration of Latinos in Italian social life, linguistic and religious factors, together with historic and cultural ties between Italy and Latin America, have helped to lessen negative preconceptions and to integrate Hispanics into Italian society more successfully than other communities. As a matter of fact, due to the linguistic affinity between Spanish and Italian among other cultural factors, Italy is, after Spain, the second European country of choice for Latinos. Although only recently established, the Hispanic community has shown a marked capacity to organize into associations, be they religious, cultural, political or for specific needs such as legal assistance. In a short time, Latinos have established various communication and in-group information solutions that range from radio programs and periodicals to Internet sites, in both Spanish and Italian (Mapelli 2014; Mariottini 2014).

In the early 2000s, the onset of a financial crisis in Europe and an improvement of economic prospects in some Latin American countries caused a decline in the numbers of immigrants from the American continent. However, figures show that the presence of Hispanics continues to rise. The predominantly female nature of Latin American immigration, in fact, led to an 8.2% increase in the number of Latinos, mostly due to family reunification and births. Although born in Italy, second-generations Latinos are not considered Italian citizens in their own right. According to the legal principle of *ius sanguinis* (right of blood), children born to foreign citizens in Italy acquire only the citizenship of their parents and not the country of birth. This situation is a legislative remnant of the era of Italian emigration abroad, which allowed emigrants to maintain links with their mother country. However, it does not reflect the social context in Italy today. The ever-increasing number of new citizens and the difficult relationship between sociocultural and legal identity has fueled considerable public debate that may lead to a change in the law in the near future. Hispanic immigration has reached significant levels only during the last 10 to 15 years and this makes the path towards citizenship all the more difficult.

The relatively recent presence of Hispanics in Italy also makes it difficult to analyze the relationship between migration and language, which, if structured intergenerationally, would require several decades. However, in a relatively short period of time there have been significant changes both in migration dynamics and in linguistic practices. Since the first wave of immigration, made up almost exclusively of women, we see today a more complex situation due to family reunifications, which also affects transnational ties. While a truly longitudinal

study cannot yet be achieved, we can nevertheless observe the current changes underway in the use of language and in the creation of discourse practices which, as we will see, clearly reveal Latinos' dual belonging.

Spanish in Italy

The Spanish language that has arrived in Italy is part of recent transcultural flows and increasing mobility of people that has, in parallel, produced a movement of 'deterritorialized' linguistic and sociolinguistic resources (Blommaert 2010), and this has led to *new speakers* of minority languages and new ways of communication (O'Rourke, Pujolar, & Ramallo 2015). As a product of globalization and local practices, Spanish as a heritage language (SHL) in Italy can be counted among the different patterns of *glocal Spanishes* that have emerged around the world as an effect of immigration from Latin America and that can only be interpreted on the basis of social, political, cultural and individual paradigms operating at an endemic level. Conceived as mobile and dynamic repertoires in which transnational Hispanic speakers engage, the new forms of Spanish spoken in Italy can be defined as *Spanish in-motion* (Bonomi forthcoming), the set of hybrid and multiple language practices performed by Latinos in Italy.

Spanish in Italy displays an ambivalent presence: the status of SHL through Latin American diaspora clearly contrasts with the increase in students of Spanish as a foreign language (Calvi 2010). A strengthening of the socio-economic position of many Hispanophone countries and the marked internationalization of Spanish as a global form of communication (Mar-Molinero 2003) have created a demand for the language, making it the second most requested foreign language studied in schools and universities after English. Despite the position of Spanish as a prestigious foreign language, the potential resource represented by SHL receives little attention in Italy. The symbolic, economic, cultural and social potential of Spanish in Italy, as conceived by Bourdieu (1991), in fact, is that which is found in academic circles, a normative model of which, due to the geographic vicinity of Spain, often coincides with European Spanish. The tendency to represent Spanish as a renewed form of the language of Cervantes, in line with what Del Valle (2006) defined as a linguistic ideology based on the concept of *hispanofonía*, conceals in reality a difficult perceptual, as well as economic, relationship among the variants of the Hispanic world established in Italy. The Spanish that enters classrooms and educational institutions in Italy with the status of a heritage language is often undervalued and deprived of its importance, being instead replaced with Peninsular Spanish forms. Thus, SHL is stigmatized by Italian society and often by its own speakers.

Perhaps more pernicious, however, is the nation's monolingual ideology that seeks to assimilate migrants through the exclusive acquisition of Italian. This means that minority and heritage languages are banished by educational and public settings and relegated to domestic domains. This was described by a second-generation Salvadorian girl as "Italiano fuera y español adentro (Italian outside and Spanish inside)". As a result of this social division between the two codes, the transmission of SHL remains the exclusive prerogative of the family, thus creating a diglossic situation that may contribute to negative self-perceptions, the stigmatization of the language of origin, and a preference for the symbolically and socially stronger code, i.e. Italian. In fact, it is not unusual for some families to opt for Italian as the language of domestic interaction in an attempt to assist their children's integration at school and in the workplace. Migrant host countries, through assimilationist language policies, have considerable responsibility for encouraging such decisions. The fact that the transmission of SHL is relegated to the home also has significant repercussions on the self-esteem of bilingual children and on their competence in their parents' language. This language is acquired mostly orally and is limited to a series of communicative

activities in formal contexts such as at school or work. As various authors have clearly shown (cf. Potowski 2005; Roca & Colombi 2003), the transmission of SHL in educational settings instead enables the expansion of learners' bilingual range (Valdés 1997), providing the tools to develop linguistic abilities and communicative strategies useful in most interactions. A beneficial process that in Italy has still to be introduced.

The absence of (almost exclusively Latin American) SHL in educational settings and its status as an immigrant language has important consequences for the identity construction of its speakers, as stated by this other second-generation Salvadorian university student studying Spanish as a foreign language:

(1) Yo estudio aquí el español pero es un español diferente de mi español que es una mezcla de italiano, latinoamericano y español. Y entonces es como si yo estudiara una tercera lengua. No es mi lengua. Claro, sí, yo la entiendo, tengo algunos *ventajas* porque entiendo bastante. Sé algunas cosas que un estudiante italiano no sabe. Pero no es la misma cosa para mí el español que estudio a la universidad y el español que hablo a mi hogar. Son como dos cosas diferentes. [I study Spanish here but it's a different Spanish from my Spanish that is a mix of Italian, Latin American and Spanish. So, it's as if I studied a third language. It's not my language. Of course I understand it. I have some advantages because I understand quite a lot. I know some things that an Italian student doesn't know. The Spanish that I study at school it's different from the Spanish I speak at home though. They're two different things.]

According to the personal experience of this heritage speaker, the Spanish taught at school is perceived to be so different that it is considered to be another language (*no es mi lengua*), a third language (*es como si yo estudiara una tercera lengua*). It has nothing to share with what is felt as her Spanish that is stereotyped as a mix of Italian, Spanish and Latin American. This example highlights the emergence in Italy of the challenges posed by the global spread of Spanish around the world. The visible and institutional top-down process of linguistic diffusion run by academic elites through the imposition of 'standard' norms alternates with a grassroots and bottom-up process of language spread as an effect of transnational phenomena (Mar-Molinero 2008). Although more hidden and marginalized, this latter process is the normal tendency in a world where the increasing movement of people and languages have subverted national and linguistic boundaries. The multiple language practices performed by Latinos in Italy embody this reality. *Spanish in-motion* practices, the focus of our investigation, in conclusion belong to, what García (2011: 681) termed "local Spanishes, bilingual Spanishes, as performed by people in the twenty-first century, that are responsible for the globalized performance of what we call this global 'Spanish' today".

“No es que hablo español, hablo mi español”: Latinos' linguistic practices in Italy

The presence of a transnational Latino community in Italy has led to multifaceted and innovative forms of speaking Spanish that so far we have defined as *Spanish in-motion*. In this section we will focus on the features that make up Latinos' linguistic practices, analyzing how they came about and their role in performing the identity of Hispanic population in Italy.

To date, there have been few studies on the presence of Spanish as a heritage language in Italy. Early sociolinguistic research into the first phase of Hispanic American immigration

concentrated mostly on Latinos' acquisition of Italian. These acquisition processes, as Vietti (2005) observed, have favored the creation of interlanguages typified by mixture and hybridization. Further, in a comparative study of maintenance and linguistic shift processes in various immigrant communities in Italy, Chini (2004) found that the Hispanic group was more likely to adopt innovative linguistic habits. Latino families (mothers in particular) were the most prepared to accept the use of Italian alongside Spanish in the home, thus promoting bilingual practices marked by a mixed use of the two languages.

These acquisition studies were followed by work focusing on the role of SHL in educational settings (Carpani, Sanfelici, & Ariolfo 2011; Oliviero, Potowski, & Sanfelici 2013) and investigations into the new forms of local Spanish used in Latino communities in Italy (Bonomi 2010, 2016, forthcoming; Calvi 2011, 2014). These latter studies have highlighted the creation of complex and interrelated linguistic practices among Hispanic bilingual speakers, that are encouraged on the one hand by transnational experience, and on the other, by the closeness of the two codes that make up their linguistic repertoire.

It is well known that migration accelerates change in linguistic repertoires. The perceptual system begins changing in the first phase of migration (Caravedo 2014). Migrants have to compare new identities with sociolinguistic and grammatical models. In this case, the mental grammar of first-generation Hispanic migrants comes into contact with Italian. A process of mutual influence of the structural features making up the two grammars creates a distinct repertoire, including elements belonging to both linguistic systems. This phenomenon, common to most speakers experiencing diaspora and transnationalism, is intensified by the genetic ties that exist between Spanish and Italian. This produces high levels of mobility and restructuring processes of their linguistic repertoires for these first-generation immigrants. The following quotes are examples of *Spanish in-motion* practices, as exemplified in (2) and (3) below:

(2) En el *magazzino*¹ tenemos que hablar el italiano, porque malo que bueno nos entendemos ¿no? Pero en casa hablamos el español, *anche* trato de hablar . . . no sé si me pega un poco más ya el italiano que el español ¿no? Siempre me está saliendo *qualche* palabra en italiano, *anche in casa*, pero no es que lo hable correcto. [At the storehouse we have to speak Italian and somehow we understand each other, but at home we speak Spanish. I also try to speak . . . may be I'm using more and more Italian. Usually some Italian word comes out, also at home, but I don't speak it fluently].

(3) Hay unas palabras, que yo pienso que *tra l'italiano* y el español se *somilian*. Las palabras, a veces hay cosas que todavía no sé si es italiano o es español. [There are some words that I think are similar in Italian and Spanish. Words, sometimes there are things that I don't know if it's Italian or Spanish].

The first example summarizes the bilingual uses in which Hispanic speakers engage in everyday life: as a professional setting, the *magazzino* (storehouse) is the domain of the new language. Italian is conceived as a *lingua franca* that has to be spoken (*tenemos que hablar*) in order to communicate with coworkers that are not Spanish speakers. On the other hand, Spanish is the code employed in private life and in the domestic domain. Nevertheless, it is a form of Spanish *con qualche palabra en italiano* ("with some [Italian] word in Italian"). This is a representative case of *Spanish in-motion*, a linguistic practice that differs from the idea of the language as an abstract system, as a pre-given entity and instead accounts for language as local activities, resources and practices (Pennycook 2010). As a matter of fact, the speaker in the example (2) declares that in her daily bilingual interaction she is not aware what is in Spanish or in Italian. Clearly, this

is a borderless and intricate linguistic performance that contrasts with the monolingual view of languages as abstract categories, independent and detached from one another (Blommaert 2010; Heller 2007; Makoni and Pennycook 2007). This is a form of bilingualism that reflects a heteroglossic vision. In this approach, Spanish is not viewed as a discrete language system that exists as compartmentalized from the context and from other languages, but as the label given to one form of the elaborate linguistic repertoire of multilingual Hispanic speakers (García and Otheguy 2014).

In line with this approach, a further conceptual tool to define *Spanish in-motion* practices is the notion of ‘translanguaging’, or the creation of multiple discursive performances adopted by speakers for functional, strategic and identity-related purposes to create shared meanings in bilingual or multilingual settings (García and Li wei 2014). Translanguaging practices represent the way that many Latinos communicate in Italy. Interactions are built around a complex repertoire made up of all the available linguistic features, attributable to the grammatical systems present in the languages the speakers have contact with every day, i.e. Spanish and Italian. The repertoire is a continuum in which the typological vicinity of these grammars reduces further distances and makes it even more difficult to establish a clear-cut linguistic demarcation. The speakers themselves are aware of this and recognize the dynamic and transforming condition of their language use, as revealed in examples (4) and (5):

(4) Hablamos mezclando *italo-spagnolo* (risas). Por ejemplo ahorita cuando quiero decir algunas palabras por ejemplo, cuando quiero hablar español, alguna vez me salen las palabras italianas y cuando quiero hablar italiano se me salen las palabras españolas. Y así mezclo y después me confundo. [We speak, mixing Italian and Spanish (speaker laughs). Now, for example, when I want to use some words, when I want to speak in Spanish, sometimes words in Italian come out and when I want to speak in Italian, words in Spanish come out, so I mix them and get confused].

(5) Cuando era más pequeña, sí, me habituaba más a hablar en español, luego, *a volte sì, c’è un miscuglio di spagnolo e italiano*, “itañolo”. [When I was very little, I was more used to speaking Spanish, then sometimes there’s a mix of Spanish and Italian, ‘itañolo’].

These two young Latina speakers define their innovative bilingual practices referring to them as *italo-spagnolo* or *itañolo*, stressing on the forms of language hybridization they usually engage in. These multiple discursive practices let speakers move across their bilingual world and perform their dualistic identity. In this sense, translanguaging acts convey the transnational identity of Latino speakers and their condition of in-betweenness in the complex social and linguistic space (Bhabha 1994). Language is in effect the key element in defining identity (Le Page and Tabouret-Keller 1985). It is even more so in transnational contexts where speakers are used to living among various languages, cultures and worlds and connecting the differing dimensions of the personal history into one, multifaceted experience. Given their participation in processes of dislocation and relocalization, transnational communities are particularly exposed to a variety of identity articulations, negotiations and strategic positioning in the social space (De Fina and Perrino 2013). *Spanish in-motion* interactions reflect their in-betweenness as well-expressed by (6) and (7):

(6) Será porque poco a poco estoy dejando, olvidando de las tradiciones, las cosas que hay allá, *magari anche* la comida que allá es diferente. Olvidando estas cosas parece que estoy perdiendo también eso, de sentirme ecuatoriana. Pero no me siento tampoco

italiana. [It's probably because I'm slowly forgetting traditions, the things in Ecuador, perhaps even the food, which is different there. Forgetting these things, it's as if I'm losing the fact that I'm Ecuadorian. But I don't feel Italian either].

(7) *Cioè, in pratica* mis costumbres las sigo usando y *a la fin* no es que son tan diferentes. Sigo viviendo como se vivía allí, pero nunca me he metido a pensar si soy más italiana o más ecuatoriana, nunca me he hecho este problema. [Well, you know, I still keep my customs. I keep living as I used to when I was there but I've never thought whether I'm more Italian or more Ecuadorian. I've never had this kind of problem].

The personal histories of these Ecuadorian girls illustrate their capacity to navigate across different worlds and how their identities shift and transform in relation to their own and others' identities, i.e. Italian vs. Ecuadorian. In both cases in-betweenness is openly reported when they declare they don't feel part of one world or the other. This dualistic identity is created through their language that reflects the ways Spanish is characterized in Italy with dynamic and interrelated linguistic practices. In this linguistic space, speakers negotiate and transmit multiple identities that cross different spaces and produce new forms of communication. These language practices are far from the academic circles and from the concept of language as an abstract system detached from its environment. The new global forms of Spanish performed in Italy, rather than just *español*, as effectively put by this speaker in (8), can be indeed interpreted as *mi español*.

(8) Bueno, como *dico*, digo siempre yo, no es que hablo español, hablo *mi* español, que es una mezcla de influencias italianas y latinoamericanas. [Well, as I always say, it's not that I speak Spanish, I speak my Spanish, which is a mixture of Italian and Latin American influences].

Mi español is what so far we have defined as *Spanish in-motion*, i.e. innovative forms of Spanish that combine and delineate new identities and language practices of Latino communities in Italy.

Spanish at school

This section analyzes the presence of Spanish in Italian schools. Although Latinos have settled around the nation, significant concentrations are found in the north and in Rome. We will see why one northern city in particular, Genoa, has become a favored destination for Latinos, above all from Ecuador. Innovative teaching practices have been developed in Genoa that unfortunately have not received the attention they deserve from the Ministry of Education, unsurprising in a country that regularly fails to provide timely guidelines regarding immigrant integration and to address the issues of language of origin and plurilingualism.

In the country as a whole, students without Italian citizenship make up 9.2% (MIUR 2015–2016) of the total student population, though the number of non-Italians born in Italy is rising sharply. As pointed out earlier, students are considered non-Italian on the basis of citizenship, despite having been born in Italy and despite regularly attending schools of all types and grades. Figures relating to the performance of foreign students and their choice of high school are not encouraging. On the one hand, they achieve lower results than Italian students and, on the other, after middle school (*scuola secondaria di primo grado*) there is a marked tendency to choose technical vocational schools rather than those leading to higher education.

Nationally, while the percentage of Latinos in the classroom is small in comparison to various other foreign nationalities, as alluded to before, the concentration is rather high in the northern cities of Milan, Turin and Genoa as well as in the capital. Romanian, Albanian and Moroccan students are the three main minority groups in Italian schools. The first Hispanophone country – Peru – is in 11th position, accounting for 2.197%, whilst Ecuador is in 13th place at 2.024% (MIUR 2015–2016).

The Ministry of Education has not yet adopted specific ad hoc solutions for Hispanophone students, who are therefore subject to the national curriculum applied to all foreign students. In the cities with a high Latino presence, some innovative approaches are in fact being adopted. Despite these, a network designed for the exchange of experiences and the collection of findings has yet to be created. In the case of newly arrived foreign students, an ‘integrated’ approach is adapted, where the foreign student joins regular classes immediately and receives parallel L2 instruction, when possible.

Throughout the 1980s, comparatively low levels of immigration led to concerns in Europe as well as in Italy that priority be given to the adjustment and insertion of foreign students in the host country’s education system in terms of guaranteeing access to and permanence in schools (Besozzi 2006). Proof of the recent nature of immigration is provided by the first reference to foreign students in Italian legislation in 1989. The Ministry of Education Circular no. 310 ‘Insertion of foreign students in compulsory education. Promotion and coordination of initiatives for the right to study’ recommended that where several immigrants from the same country have similar educational and cultural levels, these students should join the same class (as this was considered didactically more effective). The number of foreign students per class, however, should be limited to four or five. The question of foreign student numbers at that time was clearly a key issue at Ministry level, even though only one year later (Ministry of Education Circular no. 205 of 1990 ‘Compulsory Education and Foreign Students. Multicultural Education’) underlined the problems of ‘linguistic integration’. Circular 205 stated that on the basis of current experience foreign students in small groups would benefit from periods of L2 language laboratory activities as an alternative to regular classes. The document also stressed the importance of interaction between foreign and Italian students and the reciprocal benefits this would produce.

Other measures in subsequent years focused on the intercultural dimension of the subjects taught within curricula and the importance of linguistic and cultural differences (1994 and 1998). In 2000 the first funds were made available for those provinces where schools had foreign student levels higher than 10%. These funds were designated towards improving the literacy of foreign students. The learning of Italian together with rapid acculturation appeared to be the only feasible solution. A significant change in linguistic policy offered, it seemed, some possibility of a change of direction. In 2004, the so-called ‘Moratti Reform’ introduced English in primary schools and a compulsory second foreign language (the choice to be made from Spanish, French or German) in middle school (*scuola secondaria di I grado*). Then in 2012, a new Ministerial directive appeared that made explicit reference to Special Educational Needs. The Ministry reports that the area of educational disadvantage goes far beyond what can be measured in terms of educational deficit. In every class, there are students with distinct needs that stem from a variety of reasons such as social and cultural disadvantage, specific learning and/or specific developmental disorders, and difficulties caused by a lack of knowledge of Italian language and culture as a result of belonging to different cultural groups. These Special Educational Needs identified by the Ministry include three sub-categories: (1) disability, (2) specific developmental disorders, and (3) socio-economic, linguistic and cultural disadvantage. The fact that mention is made of

these special linguistic disadvantages, indicates that at the practical level we are still a long way from the much-vaunted plurilingualism.

The Moratti Reform led to the creation of Spanish as a second foreign language classes around the city of Genoa, raising hopes for a significant first move towards the recovery and maintenance of the Spanish language. In Genoa, students originating from Ecuador make up the largest group of foreign students (3,807 out of 9,113) (MIUR 2015). With the addition of students from Peru (545), Spanish becomes the most widely spoken second language and, after Italian, the one most present in schools. There is a historical link between Genoa and Guayaquil. A community of Genoese merchants settled in Guayaquil between the 19th and 20th centuries and their descendants can be found throughout Ecuador to this day (Lagomarsino 2006). Migrant flows to Genoa principally from Ecuador and to a lesser extent Peru began in the early 1990s, caused by the dramatic economic crisis that hit Andean South America. Simultaneously, Genoa's large elderly population created demand for women home-care workers, a fact that explains the predominantly female influx of first-wave migrants. The phenomenon of transnational families mentioned in the previous sections of this chapter was followed by a process of family reunification in the early 2000s that led to a major increase in the number of immigrants (now including the women's husbands and children) mostly from Ecuador, and created a tight ethnic network made up of relatives and friends that strengthened a sense of belonging and a shared transnational identity.

Going back to the Moratti Reform, however, in Genoa not all schools were able to add Spanish to the subjects they already offered. Where it was offered, the joint presence of Spanish as a home language and as a foreign language studied at school failed to produce the desired results. For example, results of Latino students' written tests were below the class average, producing an inevitable negative impact on self-esteem (Carpani, Sanfelici and Ariolfo, 2011). Their poor results can be attributed to a theory of cultural deficit: poor results were simply expected from these Latino students by their teachers and schools. Carpani (2008) and Ariolfo (2014) claimed that the causes lie in inadequate teaching tools, over-standardized testing techniques, and inflexible educational actions that did not take into account the co-existence of Spanish as a home and foreign language in the same classroom. This situation is unfortunately common in other countries such as the United States, where heritage Spanish speakers sometimes score poorly on standardized tests of formal Spanish.

In areas of the city with a high density of Latin Americans, a marked differentiation was underway between Spanish as a foreign language – the Peninsular Spanish that enjoys prestige both among Italians and Latino immigrants, and the Latin American variant spoken within the family. The latter was perceived by both host society and Latinos as an immigrant language with less value. Carpani (2010) and Ariolfo (2010, 2012) highlighted a dispirited self-assessment of the Spanish spoken by students. Very few adolescents claimed to be proud of their Spanish, declaring instead it to be *chueco*, *mezclado*, *con palabras que salen del italiano*, *vulgar*, and in general *un español mal hablado*. The Spanish taught in school was *lengua ajena y hostil*. This phenomenon identified by Ariolfo (2012: 19) as *doble diglosia* can lead to the abandonment, even within the family, of the language in subsequent generations. The failure to recognize the value of Spanish has had effects in the classroom as well. Despite the stabilization of immigration and positive references to the “Language of Origin” by the European Commission, the Italian Ministry of Education has so far failed to take practical steps that encourage the maintenance of immigrants' languages of origin. From the start, the organization of students ‘fitting in’ along with other cultural mediation projects and language support programs was left to the goodwill and dedication of schools and teachers. Unfortunately, the transition from a selective, exclusive model of education based on exclusion and expulsion to a more democratic and plurilingual model

grounded on cultural diversity has yet to be established in Italy. The development of competence in Italian and the loss of Spanish appears to many to be the only solution in the face of the scholastic failures of non-Italian students.

In Genoa, within the perspective of heteroglossia, with languages not seen as separable and taking into account multilingual students' complex discursive practices, defined by García (2009, 2014) as *translanguaging*, there are several projects aimed at developing plurilingualism and the maintenance of Spanish, promoted by the University of Genoa's research group "Linguistic Hybridization and Immigrant Languages". For example, in 2008, the Domenico Ferrero primary school added two hours of Spanish to the curriculum of performance-assessed subjects. They also sought to raise children's individual awareness of Spanish to observe the learning strategies adopted by the various linguistic groups in the class and at the same time tackle the problem of linguistic erosion amongst Hispanophone children (Carpani 2013). From 2006–2013, Don Milani Middle School established the extra-curricular *Español Lengua de Herencia* project, providing two hours per week of instruction in Spanish for Hispanophone students. The course objectives included the maintenance of Spanish, the expansion of bilingual abilities and the transfer of abilities to reading and writing (Valdés 1997). In line with Potowski and Carreira (2004) and Potowski (2005), the middle school courses were designed along the lines of a language arts subject rather than Spanish as a Foreign Language course.

With this experience in mind, during the 2013–2014 school year, the *Lingua Italiana, Lingua d'Origine Project* (LI.LO.) was realized for the first time in Sampierdarena Middle School. The course objective is to build a bilingual program to improve linguistic and study skills in both languages (Mezzadri 2011). Focus on Italian is an integral part of the course due to the fact that results of Italian language tests were lower for Hispanophone students (even though they were born and educated in Italy) than for Italian students.² Once a week, a group of first-year middle-school second-generation Hispanophones attended extra classes in history and geography taught in both Italian and Spanish. The encouraging results (Firpo and Sanfelici 2016) – significantly positive increases in comprehension and use of language in both languages – led to a similar project in Milan's Casa del Sole Middle School.

In multicultural and plurilingual schools there must be an awareness of linguistic and pedagogic issues (Favaro 2011), particularly the linguistic needs of second language learners (as described in the Ministry of Education's "L2 National Plan 2008"). Improvements in the teaching of Italian as a second language are necessary for new arrivals to Italy and those who have attended Italian schools for fewer than two years. Parallel to the development of Italian, the development of oral and written skills in the language of origin (e.g. Spanish) is also required. A main problem is that national educators have not yet accepted research results that study through the language of origin improves rather than hinders the learning of a second language (see Lindholm-Leary, this volume). Immigrant parents, too, need reassurances regarding the use of their native language with their children. Many migrant families are strongly encouraged to use Italian at home, even though research indicates that this will *not* lead to stronger levels of Italian among their children. Often parents speak to their children in the language of origin and they answer them in Italian, engaging what Saviile-Troike (1987) defined as a *dilingual conversation*. There is a need to more effectively coordinate relations between educational policy and teachers in the classroom, particularly in the face of sharp differences between educational regulations and classroom practice. Schools and their local communities should communicate and collaborate with each other to recognize the fundamentally interrelated role they have in addressing the vicious circle of social-cultural exclusion and scholastic failure of these immigrant children.

In summary, SHL courses should become part of school curricula in those urban areas with a high Latino presence. Teachers of Spanish in Italy today face a dual challenge. First, working with new students who have different educational needs implies a new approach to teaching, error correction and assessment. Second, this approach inevitably must go hand-in-hand with greater openness and less resistance to the Hispano-American variant. Teacher training programmes for new teachers of Spanish will play a crucial role.

Conclusions

Spanish is one of the most important minority languages in Italy due to the presence of large Latino communities, whose members have created in-between linguistic practices and translingual spaces. These new forms of Spanish spoken in Italy by transnational Hispanic speakers can be defined as *Spanish in-motion*. *Spanish in-motion* is the set of innovative language practices performed by Latinos in Italy that combine new identities and new patterns of use as a result of global circumstances and local habits.

The transmission of SHL remains the exclusive prerogative of the family. In fact, despite a growing awareness of plurilingual schooling, no educational policy currently exists that supports SHL in the learning process of bilingual children, except some innovative but isolated teaching practices. The future of Spanish in Italy will depend not only on the size of Hispanophone immigration but also on the attention to the role of heritage languages in institutional settings. A heteroglossic vision and an intercultural pedagogy are required in order to change the current monolingual ideology that currently prevails despite the fact that the majority of the world's population is bi/multilingual.

Notes

- 1 Even though we draw on a translanguaging perspective that recognizes bilingual practices as a disaggregated continuum in which the features do not belong inherently to one or the other language, we will index the items that a sociocultural approach would label as “Italian” – or influenced by this language – in italic in order to stress the phonological, lexical and orthographical elements that a Spanish speaker not familiar with the Italian system would recognize as unintelligible.
- 2 Similar results are observable in the Latino education gap in the United States, resulting in part from issues totally unrelated to language, including school underfunding.

Further reading

- Martín Rojo, L. (2010). *Constructing inequality in multilingual classrooms*. Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton. An extensive discussion of the management of linguistic diversity in multicultural classrooms.
- Montrul, S. (2012). *El bilingüismo en el mundo hispanohablante*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell. It provides an overview of key aspects of bilingualism across the Spanish-speaking world.

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