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Language learning and inclusion in Italy

Abstract

The study of inclusion models has regained attention in light of recent migratory phenomena. In this context, research in the area of second language (L2) teaching methodologies occupies a central role because it examines the most effective teaching approaches to promote the learning of a language that will be instrumental in the inclusion of the migrant² in a new socio-cultural context. This work proposes some reflections on the bonds between language and cultural identity, with particular focus on the problematics related to culture shock. The premise is that language plays a key role as an instrument in inclusion because it allows the individual to understand a new reality and to make him or herself understood by others through a narrative process (storytelling). To promote the true inclusion of migrants into the fabric of the society of the adopted country, it is important to pursue a dual objective: to provide migrants with the instruments necessary for inclusion into the host society and, at the same time, educate the members of the host society as regards intercultural relationships. The purpose of this work is to furnish some research-based guidelines suitable to effective L2 teaching and present an example of an experience in the process of inclusion mediated through Italy's works of art in museums.

Keywords: L2 teaching methodology, L2 culture, inclusion, identity, art.

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1 Transnational learners: investment and second language learning

Migrants, including refugees and asylum seekers, acquire the language of the host country mainly in mixed contexts, namely formal and informal learning environments (Favaro 2014:

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²For a definition of migrant see the European Migration Network (EMN) Glossary: "In the *global context*, a person who is outside the territory of the State of which they are nationals or citizens and who has resided in a foreign country for more than one year irrespective of the causes, voluntary or involuntary, and the means, regular or irregular, used to migrate". https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/european_migration_network/glossary_en (accessed April 7, 2018).

151). To foster inclusion, second language teaching/learning must cater to learners' sociolinguistic needs and transnational negotiations of identity. Within a post-structuralist framework, identity is envisaged as consistently going through renegotiation processes due to dialogical interactions with new symbolic, social, and geographical spaces (Norton 2013: 4). In a post-structuralist perspective, at the macro level, Norton views migrants' complex identities as multiple and consistently changing due to contacts with new contexts of both time and space; at the micro level, Norton envisions migrants' multifaceted identities as the product of the way in which migrants interpret their relationships with the transnational dimensions experienced— that is the socio-cultural parameters they have come into contact with while moving across national borders –and conceive their opportunities and their expectations in the host country (Norton 2013: 3-4). In this light, Norton adopts Weedon's view of language conceived as the symbolic medium through which identity is created:

Weedon has foregrounded the central role of language in her analysis of the relationship between the individual and the social, arguing that language not only defines institutional practices but also serves to construct our sense of ourselves – our subjectivity: 'Language is the place where actual and possible forms of social organisation and their likely social and political consequences are defined and contested. Yet it is also the place where our sense of ourselves, our subjectivity, is constructed' (1997, p. 21) (Norton 2013: 3–4)

The connection between how migrants develop both the language of the host country and their identity in transnational migratory contexts represents a key paradigm of second language learning since "it is through engaging in linguistic practices with various people that a range of identities are subsequently enacted by the learner" (Norton and De Costa 2018: 93). In order for migrants to engage in second language learning, envisaged as a powerful means for social inclusion, it is of paramount importance that they have a high level of investment, as Norton suggests:

The notion of investment [...] conceives of the language learner as having a complex social history and multiple desires. The notion presupposes that when language learners speak, they are not only exchanging information with target language speakers, but they are constantly organizing and reorganizing a sense of who they are and how they relate to the social world. Thus an investment in the

target language is also an investment in a learner's own identity, an identity which is constantly changing across time and space (Norton 2013: 79-80)

The investment dimension introduced by Norton(1995; 2000; 2013), which Cummins(2006: 59) defines as a “significant explanatory construct” in relation to language acquisition in migration contexts, underpins and affects migrants’ degree of engagement in classroom activities providing access to material and symbolic resources in the host country:

The construct of investment offers a way to understand learners’ variable desires to engage in social interaction and community practices. Inspired by the work of Bourdieu (1977, 1984, 1991), it signals the socially and historically constructed relationship of learners to the target language and their often ambivalent desire to learn and practice it. If learners ‘invest’ in the target language, they do so with the understanding that they will acquire a wider range of symbolic resources (language, education, friendship) and material resources (capital goods, real estate, money), which will in turn increase the value of their cultural capital and social power (Norton 2013: 6)

Instructors teaching the language of the host country to migrants thus need to plan their teaching activities bearing in mind the following questions: “In addition to asking [...] ‘To what extent is the learner motivated to learn the target language?’, the teacher or researcher asks, ‘What is the learner’s investment in the language practices of this classroom or community?’ ” (Norton 2013: 6).

In formal learning environments, migrants’ degree of investment in language learning is also affected by both the power relationships enacted in class and their perceptions of the extent to which they feel that they have the right to talk and that the other interactants are willing to listen to them: “how learners are able to invest in a target language is contingent on the dynamic negotiation of power in different fields and how they are granted or refused the right to speak” (Darvin and Norton 2017: 3). Thus, a dimension affecting migrants’ degree of investment in second language learning is:

how learners position themselves and others. The desire to be part of an imagined community or to take on an imagined identity enables the learner to gain from or to resist these positions. Recognizing that they have the agency to assert their own

identities, learners are able to negotiate symbolic capital, reframe relations of power, and challenge normative ways of thinking, in order to claim the right to speak (Darvin and Norton 2015: 46-47)

As a result, in formal learning environments, migrants' agentivity is built through discursive practices (Miller 2014).

A revised version of Norton's concept of investment, developed by Darvin and Norton, gives greater emphasis to fluid transnational processes, fostered through digital media, and positions investment at the crossroad of identity, capital and ideology (Darvin and Norton 2015: 40-46):

the model demonstrates how power circulates in society, at both micro and macro levels, constructing modes of inclusion and exclusion through and beyond language. Through this critical lens, researchers can examine more systematically how microstructures of power in communicative events are indexical of larger ideological practices and diverse forms of capital that impact learner and teacher identity (Norton and De Costa 2018: 92)

Darvin and Norton's revised concept of investment requires second language instructors to ask the following questions when planning classroom instruction:

1. How invested are learners in their present and imagined *identities*? In what ways are they positioned by others, and how do they, in turn, position interlocutors in ways that grant or refuse power? How can learners gain from or resist these *positions*?
2. What do learners perceive as *benefits of investment*, and how can the capital they possess serve as *affordances for learning*? (Darvin and Norton 2015: 47)

Within this methodological framework, instructors need to teach the second language as embodying socio-pragmatic identity-driven practices: "The teachers conceive of language not only as a linguistic system but also as a social practice in which experiences are organized and identities negotiated. There is recognition that if learners are not invested in the language practices of the classroom, learning outcomes are limited and educational inequities perpetuated" (Norton 2013: 17). To foster migrants' investment in language learning,

instructors thus need to implement “pedagogical practices [that] have the potential to be transformative in offering language learners more powerful positions than those they may occupy either inside or outside the classroom” (Norton 2014: 65).

2Narrative theory³

The language we learn when we are children is not only a means to express our needs and intentions or simply a way to communicate with others. Through language we transpose and interpret life experiences and create our own personal identity. The process of knowledge construction is guided by two kinds of thinking modes. On the one hand, there is logical thinking, which organizes units of memory (Rumelhart and Norman 1978); on the other, there is narrative thinking, conceived as a cognitive mode that structures and interprets experience, transforming it into narrative to be told and shared with other community members (Bruner 1986). In this manner, collective forms of meaning are created (Byatt 2000), and represent the foundations of the culture of a group. According to Bruner (1986), therefore, there are two modes of thought humans use to conceptualise reality: “One mode, the paradigmatic or logic-scientific one, attempts to fulfil the ideal of a formal, mathematical system of description and explanation. It employs categorisation or conceptualisation and the operations by which categories are established, instantiated, idealised, and related to one another to form a system” (Bruner 1986:12). The other mode, called “narrative mode”, concerns the meaning ascribed to experiences through stories: “It deals in human or humanlike intention and action and the vicissitudes and consequences that mark their course” (Bruner 1986: 13). In this respect, Bruner holds that in the life of each individual, narrative reorganises experience through a categorising process (Bruner 1986). Through this strategy, people are able to organise their own life experiences and embed them in their minds. This organisation creates a more logical and stable vision of reality, allowing individuals to understand and imagine the behaviour of others and to control their own behaviour appropriately. Our behaviour is therefore guided by the meaning we attribute to reality, and we are constantly negotiating with the other members of our culture through language.

According to Jonassen and Hernandez-Serrano (2002: 1), stories are: “the most natural and powerful system to accumulate and describe experiential knowledge”, perhaps because the narrative modifies the structure of the brain in a similar way to personal experiences, as

³ Some of the contents of this paper have already been presented in the Italian version that will be published shortly.

the theory of embodied language has demonstrated⁴. The theory of embodied language, also known as “incarnated language”, is based on neurophysiological and behavioural research carried out using the techniques of electroencephalography (EEG) and magnetoencephalography (MEG). Buccino (2013) suggests that:

Il nucleo della teoria del linguaggio incarnato assume che gli esseri umani utilizzino le stesse strutture neurali con cui esperiscono la realtà (sia dal punto di vista motorio che dal punto di vista sensoriale) anche per comprendere il materiale linguistico, verbi, nomi o frasi che descrivono quelle stesse esperienze⁵. (Buccino and Mezzadri 2013:5)

Studies have revealed that while reading or listening to verbs that express a motor content, an activation of the same areas of the brain involved in the actual execution of these actions can be observed (Pulvermüller et al. 2001). Further experiments have included nouns that designate graspable objects and other elements of grammar, adjectives for example, that are also capable of evoking responses in the sensory-motor system based on their meaning (Gough et al. 2012; 2013). The mirror neuron system is responsible for these simulation mechanisms. Specific neurons are activated when we carry out an action involving a certain object, when we observe others carry out this action, or simply when the object is named.

The concept of simulation is of key importance in the context of embodied cognition. According to Jeannerod (2006), simulation results from the recruitment of the same neural networks that are activated in perceptive, emotional and motor processes. The reactivation of our previous experiences seems to have a predictive function because it helps prepare us to interact with a certain item and adapt our behaviour to a given situation. This process is particularly active when observing other human beings or when, in any case, subjects perform actions that we ourselves are able to perform. More interesting still from our perspective is that these studies have shown how individuals tend to imitate subjects with whom they share empathy more readily⁶.

A process equivalent to simulation is activated when producing language. As suggested in a recent study on linguistics, the word becomes a “discrete instructor of

⁴This topic has been dealt with in Sisti (2016).

⁵“The focal point of incarnated language theory states that human beings recruit the same neural sensory-motor structures used to carry out actions when they understand linguistic items such as verbs, nouns, or sentences that describe those actions.” (Author’s translation).

⁶This is the “chameleon effect” in Chartrand and Bargh (1999).

imagination” (Dor 2015). It recalls a series of personal experiences communicated by the speaker and, at the same time, has the power to evoke an analogous set of experiences in the listener. Therefore, while narration is a powerful instrument in the interpretation of reality, perceived and formalized through words, it is also true that the language used is not neutral as far as simulation mechanisms are concerned. Words evoke meanings that are closely related to the experiential context and therefore to cultural models related to the life experiences of the speaker.

Furthermore, the language learning process seems to have an impact on how the linguistic code learned is used by all language learners. Recent studies report (Feroni 2015), in fact, that when using a foreign language, our emotional involvement is reduced. This phenomenon can be explained if we consider that our mother tongue is normally acquired in emotionally *nurturing contexts* (imagine the love between child and adult caregiver). Conversely, a foreign language (that acquired by a migrant in a foreign country, for example), is often learned in a less agreeable, or perhaps even hostile environment. In the final analysis, it seems that languages learned in contexts that involve lower degrees of socialization also lead to lower degrees of language incarnation. From a strictly neurological point of view, the difference lies in the fact that when we experience the process of learning a foreign language, even though the same mechanisms are activated, they are activated to a lesser degree. These observations are particularly evident when analysing an intercultural environment in which these differences can cause misunderstanding and foster prejudice as a result of communication through a foreign language.

3 Language and culture

Migrants need a good command of the language spoken in a host country to establish an empathetic dialogue within the new environment. But what happens when a speaker has to interact in a cultural environment that often differs greatly from his or her own using a linguistic code that has been acquired in formal or informal contexts? A language can lose its role as an instrument of socialization and instead become a barrier because, in the new social context, a word may not evoke the same concrete experience: “The word ‘flower’ points at a cluster of flower-related real and concrete experiences that the speakers have made of that specific object called flower” (Buccino et al. 2017:4). Furthermore, in the process of learning the foreign language, one which is colder than the process of learning the mother tongue from an emotional perspective, migrants might experience a lesser sense of belonging and have greater difficulty in establishing empathic relationships. The risk is that of triggering a process

of alienation which can lead to “culture shock”. This phenomenon has been extensively studied by, among others, Oberg (1960), who outlined the various possible phases of adjustment to a new cultural context as follows:

1. Honeymoon
2. Culture shock
3. Adjustment
4. Integration

[Please insert Figure 1 here]

Figure 1. Culture shock (Oberg, 1960)⁷

The initial phase of euphoria or relief, which can precede or immediately follow the arrival of a migrant, can turn into crisis. This may often lead to an increase in the affective filter (Krashen 1987), which can result in anxiety, apathy and physical and emotional isolation. In extreme cases, it may lead to escape (returning home) or to a situation of open conflict with the new cultural environment. Inclusion and overcoming the crisis, according to this model, must be achieved through a phase of progressive adjustment and flexibility to obtain acceptance of diversity and cultural growth. The Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI), proposed by Hammer (2012), reconfirms the various steps that from initial ethnocentrism lead to an evolution in behaviour in dealing with cultural diversity.

[Please insert Figure 2 here]

Figure 2. Intercultural Development Continuum (Hammer 2012)⁸

This kind of evolution involves developing a climate of mutual empathy in which migrants can identify potential obstacles in communication and create remedial strategies to overcome episodes of linguistic-cultural conflict or misunderstanding. This approach, according to the

⁷ <https://fromformosa.wordpress.com/what-to-expect-a-mini-survival-guide-to-taiwan/> (accessed March 29, 2018).

⁸ Adapted from: <https://idiinventory.com/products/the-intercultural-development-continuum-idi/> (accessed March 29, 2018).

Nanni Curci (Nanni and Curci 2005) model, involves six phases that can be summarized as follows:

1. Becoming aware of diversity
2. Knowing oneself
3. Stepping back from one's own identity
4. Enabling guided imagery
5. Enabling the empathic experience
6. Stepping back into one's own identity.

Firstly, the process involves an awareness of the fact that the *other* is different, and it is precisely this difference that makes him or her worth knowing. Secondly, it involves self-awareness, that is the awareness of one's own identity and the characteristics of the other which are in contrast. Only at this point is it possible to extend the boundaries of *self* for a time, so as to include a reality that can be conceived as a multiple entity. The normal distinction between what is subjective and objective is erased, allowing the imagination of self to participate in the other's experience, allowing us to think and behave as the other would, putting ourselves in the other's shoes. The cycle closes with a return to self, re-establishing the initial distinction, allowing us to regain our own vision of the world that will, in any case, have been significantly enriched by the experience shared.

Thus, adjustment and inclusion pass through the various phases that allow the participants to enrich their range of conceptual filters⁹ (Gudykunst and Kim 2002). This involves the codification and de-codification of messages transmitted through verbal and body language from new points of view, the perception of diversity not as a threat, but as an asset. Language thus becomes an essential tool in the process of inclusion, a means to share experiences as well as a set of mental categories that allow us to interpret reality subjectively.

Language can thus represent an essential tool in achieving inclusion, but also an instrument to expose or conceal one's ethnocentricity, as the interpretation of sentences commonly said about migrants provided below seems to suggest:

1. Apparent denial: I have nothing against immigrants, but...
2. Apparent concession: Of course some Muslims are tolerant but generally...

⁹“Conceptual filters” may be defined as those mechanisms that limit the range of alternatives we choose from to codify and de-codify messages received from the outside world.

3. Apparent empathy: Of course asylum seekers endure hardship, but...
 4. Apparent ignorance: Now, I don't know all the facts, but...
 5. Reversal: We are the real victims in all this...
 6. Transfer: Of course I have nothing against them, but my customers...
- (Van Dijk 2011: 245)

Hostility toward immigrants can be denied through a premise (1), by generalizing and avoiding responsibility (6), or by avoiding judgment of a group of subjects (2). Apparent empathy (3) or pretending not to know the facts so as to avoid criticism (4), or even a total inversion of roles by blaming *foreigners* for the problems and conflicts that arise (5) are other ways ethnocentrism may be manifested. On the contrary, one can choose an intercultural perspective, an attitude that “prende atto della ricchezza insita nella varietà, che non si propone l’omogeneizzazione e mira solo a permettere l’integrazione più piena e fluida possibile tra le diverse culture” (Balboni and Caon 2015: 26)¹⁰.

4 The situation in Italy

Before focusing on adult migrants in Italy, we think it is important to provide a brief overview of language policy related to foreign students in Italian schools. Since the publication of the ministerial circular *Glialunnistranieri e l’educazioneinterculturale*¹¹, Italy has adopted the intercultural perspective described by Balboni and Caon (2015) and has activated a national observatory at the Ministry of Public Education to promote the inclusion of foreign students and intercultural education. With the *Linee guida per l’accoglienza e l’integrazione degli alunni stranieri*¹², and various related documents published by the Ministry of Education afterward, Italian schools have established that “la diversità come paradigma dell’identità stessa della scuola, occasione privilegiata di apertura a tutte le differenze”¹³. It is a vision that does not simply establish compensatory or special measures to favour inclusion, but intends to promote a real dialogue and comparison among cultures. In this progressive vision, verbal

¹⁰ Provided translation: “takes account of the wealth to be found in variety, that does not propose homogenisation and strives to permit the fullest, most fluid integration among different cultures.”

¹¹ Provided translation: “*Foreign Students and Intercultural Education*”. C.M. n. 301 del 8/9/1989 in http://www.edscuola.it/archivio/norme/circolari/cm301_89.html (accessed April 7, 2018).

¹² Provided translation: “*Guidelines for the Welcoming and Integration of Foreign Students*”. C.M. n.24 del 1/3/2006 in https://archivio.pubblica.istruzione.it/normativa/2006/allegati/cm24_06all.pdf (accessed May 8, 2018).

¹³ “Diversity is a paradigm of what defines a school, a privileged opportunity for openness toward all differences” (Author’s translation). “La via italiana per la scuola interculturale e l’integrazione degli alunni stranieri” p. 4 in http://hubmiur.pubblica.istruzione.it/alfresco/d/d/workspace/SpacesStore/cecf0709-e9dc-4387-a922-eb5e63c5bab5/documento_di_indirizzo.pdf (accessed April 15, 2018).

language occupies a decisive role since, for the migrant, understanding and being understood are basic needs. Language studies, accompanied by cultural studies, become indispensable instruments in social inclusion.

But what learning pathways and teaching models are most effective when teaching migrants a foreign language? Numerous studies on this topic have been published¹⁴, and here we will limit ourselves to defining some guidelines that might inspire teaching techniques and furnish examples of teaching actions experimented in Italy.

In the framework of a communicative approach (Sisti 2013a: 49), the aim of which is to reproduce authentic social interaction even within the structured context of a classroom, instructors should carefully consider migrants' needs, motivations and degree of investment. In the final analysis the main aim is to promote not only the understanding of a new linguistic code but also an effective use of the language, which allows the learner to comprehend and produce oral and written linguistic acts that are appropriate in the new social and psychological context. This communicative competence will develop more easily in an encouraging and supportive atmosphere, in an emotionally *nurturing* environment that favours activities based on common experiences of individual students that can be shared in the classroom. The technique of storytelling and the application of the already mentioned "narrative thought", facilitating the processes of organising ones' own life experiences and of understanding the behaviour of others, fosters empathy and lowers the affective filter, thus favouring a higher degree of socialisation and language incarnation. Furthermore, the use of the senses and movement are indispensable in facilitating the comprehension and memorisation of new terms in L2, even when adult learners are involved. Ample time should be dedicated to the dramatization of dialogues that simulate real life situations and to fun activities that make exercises enjoyable and interesting from a cognitive perspective and that are emotionally captivating (Sisti 2013b). Thus, what must be promoted is an enjoyable learning process that can mirror first language acquisition as much as possible. The inclusive function of language, once it is learned, will then manifest itself in full, allowing migrants and members of the host community to embrace diversity.

5 Case Study: art and social inclusion

¹⁴Grassi, Roberta. 2007. *Parlare all'allievo straniero. Strategie di adattamento linguistico nella classe plurilingue*. Perugia: Guerra Edizioni. Clementi, Mara & Sabina Langer (eds.). 2013. *Certifica il tuo italiano. La lingua per l'inclusione, il lavoro e la cittadinanza. L'Italiano per ... avviare un'impresa*. Milano: Fondazione ISMU.

Learning pathways connected to the cultural heritage of the host country may be suitable to foster the introduction and analysis of the value systems underpinning the socio-pragmatic, culture-specific practices of the adoptive country. In particular, the social inclusion of migrants, including refugees and asylum seekers, can be fostered through the dialogical interactions of the works of art of both the host country and migrants' countries of origin. In this perspective, art, representing high culture, is envisioned as instrumental in fostering migrants' inclusion into the host community.

To promote social inclusion, art-related learning pathways implemented within an intercultural framework entail the adoption, as Bodo and Mascheroni (2012: 10) suggest, of a dialogical view of art, which conceives artistic artifacts as consistently reconstructed meaning-wise through contacts with new social spaces. The dialogical interaction between the works of art and the public redesigns the socio-spacial-interactive dimensions of museums envisaged as meeting and relational spaces where visitors participate actively in meaning construction to various degrees (Bodo and Mascheroni 2012: 11).

To foster intercultural dialogical processes, museums have progressively developed cultural heritage-driven learning pathways enhancing transformative practices through dialogical interactions between the local people and migrants, redefining value systems and social practices by means of cultural decentering and enhancing migrants' complex transnational identities (Bodo and Mascheroni 2012: 16). To design effective art-driven learning pathways fostering migrants' content and language learning in Italy, various projects, illustrated in this section of the study, have been developed; as part of the process, a new professional profile has emerged, namely the museum cultural mediator, that is a migrant who has already worked as a cultural mediator in schools and who is further trained to become a mediator of cultural heritage (Catarama 2009).

A museum cultural mediator plays a pivotal role in the implementation of a narrative and dialogical approach to works of art, catering to both Italian and migrant visitors. In an intercultural perspective and within Norton's post-structuralist investment dimension framework (1995; 2000; 2013), museum cultural mediators reinterpret the story of selected works of art, such as objects created in their country of origin, on the grounds of their transnational experience and knowledge, with the support of specialized art historians; as a result, the stories and symbolic value of the works of art are reinterpreted from multiple perspectives (Gornati 2012: 51). In particular, museum cultural mediators select a personal object as well as one or more art works from the museum where they work; for each selected object, museum cultural mediators identify a characteristic enabling them to convey

autobiographical experiences delivered through a narrative approach (Bodo and Mascheroni 2012: 24). With the support of art historians' expertise, museum cultural mediators thus create cultural heritage-art-driven pathways using the various sets of objects selected; mediators also identify key intercultural aspects which may be especially meaningful to help migrants to engage actively in inclusion processes in the target community (Bodo and Mascheroni 2012: 24). Through a narrative and dialogical approach, museum cultural mediators encourage migrant visitors' engagement in the reinterpretation of the works of art featured in the art pathways; migrants reinterpret the meaning of artworks on the grounds of their own transnational experiences and cultures. A negotiated transcultural reinterpretation of the targeted art works is thereby fostered.

In particular, museum cultural mediators' reinterpreted stories intertwine with migrants' interpretations of the same works of art generated from their own complex experiences and multiple perspectives; new negotiated meanings of the targeted works of art thus emerge, combining various transnational multifaceted interpretations. A co-constructed reinterpretation of cultural heritage artefacts, enhanced through museum cultural mediators' narrative and dialogical approach to art-driven pathways, is likely to foster the redefinition of migrants' complex identity in an intercultural and post-structuralist investment dimension perspective effectively. In these art-driven learning environments, migrants' degree of investment is likely to be high thanks to the symmetrical power relations established with museum cultural mediators; as a result, the acquisition of the symbolic resources at stake is enhanced. In this context, it is also noteworthy that reinterpreting the story of selected works of art on the grounds of their migratory experience and multifaceted culture, museum cultural mediators themselves go through a positive redefinition of their own identity. In particular, reinterpreting the stories of the various works of art, museum cultural mediators become increasingly aware of the high symbolic value of their own home countries and migratory experiences; as a result, they are likely to experience a highly valuable self-enhancement process (Gornati 2012: 51).

By means of dialogical interaction with migrants' cultural backgrounds, cultural heritage-driven learning pathways, devised by museum cultural mediators with the support of art historians as previously mentioned, can foster migrants' intercultural awareness, focusing on the socio-historical-artistic values and the practices of the host country. Art thus becomes a means of intercultural, bi-directional and symmetrical narrative dialogues among cultures (Bodo 2009). In this light, museums work as safe, open and inclusive spaces where visitors of

various origins can act as active, engaged agents voicing multiple views (Bodo and Mascheroni 2012: 12).

For cultural heritage-driven learning pathways catering to migrants to be effective, customized second language scaffolding needs to be provided. Museum cultural mediators may thus be required, as part of co-participated projects developed by schools and museums, to devise language scaffolding by means of paper-based or digital materials. Paper-based or digital language activities may be created; the latter, implemented with free or customized digital tools, can be carried out by migrants on their mobile phones or on museum tablets. The activities can be created: (a) to introduce migrants to key vocabulary items that museum cultural mediators use during the museum visits; (b) to provide migrants with an outline of the visits; (c) to help migrants access simple introductions to the works of art before they listen to museum cultural mediators' explanations; (d) to enable migrants to easily identify the intercultural aspects the museum cultural mediators are going to pinpoint during the visit; (e) to provide migrants with questions and language chunks suitable to help them share their ideas and experiences while interacting with museum cultural mediators.

In a project targeted to both Italians and migrants, implemented in a museum in Northern Italy – the Museum of People and Cultures¹⁵, featuring art collections from Asia, Africa, Latin America, and Oceania – museum cultural mediators devised customized narrative pathways to interact effectively with various kinds of migrant visitors, namely adults with a migrant background, including adults taking Italian as a second language classes, and young migrants attending middle and high school. In particular, mediators created language-focused materials to scaffold second language learners' needs (Bodo and Mascheroni 2012: 24). As part of the project, with the support of specialized art historians, museum cultural mediators developed art-driven learning pathways targeted at triggering dialogical interactions between the artistic objects held in the museum and the personal, transnational, and emotionally significant objects they selected from those that they brought from their home countries or that reminded them of their homeland. In particular, museum cultural mediators picked a personal object, that is, an object of sentimental value linked to their countries of origin, to be matched with a work of art featured in the museum; the matching was targeted at creating an emotional connection between artworks and migrants' personal narratives of objects, devised on the grounds of their prior knowledge and transnational experience, which hold sentimental value for them. Through the narrative and

¹⁵ Available at: <http://www.patrimonioeintercultural.ismu.org/index.php?page=esperienze-show.php&id=80> (accessed March 30, 2018).

dialogical approach illustrated previously, museum cultural mediators fostered migrant visitors' sharing of their experiences and feelings from an intercultural perspective. Overall, the project aimed to foster the creation of shared and negotiated narratives through mutual involvement in the process of creating meaning. Similarly, using a narrative and dialogical approach, the Brera Picture Gallery developed an art-driven pathway:

- to open the museum to a currently under-represented audience (adults with a migrant background)
- to tap into the intercultural potential of collections
- to acknowledge museum mediators as key actors in the reinterpretation of the museum's heritage in an intercultural perspective
- to promote new ways of looking at the collections in a cross-cultural audience (whether regular or potential, "native" or "migrant" visitors).¹⁶

The project "Everybody at the museum" (Solima 2015), developed by the National Museums of Lucca together with a primary and a middle school of the same town, is another example of how art works can foster inclusion in a multicultural and multilingual society effectively. As part of the project, some art-driven workshops, targeted to Italian and foreign students, were implemented to enable particular students with a migrant background and their families to get to know the works of art held in the local museums and thus to become active agents of local cultural events (Solima 2015: 965). In the museum-based workshops, students could access information about various works of art held in the museum, including the geographical areas where the artworks were created, through a customized app. The app enabled students not only to retrieve information on a specific work of art, but also to access information about similar works of art produced in other parts of the world. Thanks to the project, students with migrant backgrounds delved into Italian artworks while concurrently Italian students got to know migrant students' countries of origin, presented as a source of valuable artefacts (Solima 2015: 969-970). Experiencing migrant cultures as able to produce works of art, Italian students and families perceived migrant cultures in a new perspective. The art-driven project thus managed to connect the Italian and the migrant communities, triggering an effective inclusion process more deeply.

It is worthy of note that migrants often entered museums for the first time thanks to the projects presented above. Furthermore, in the various art-driven projects illustrated, the

¹⁶Available at:<http://www.patrimonioeintercultural.ismu.org/index.php?page=esperienze-show.php&id=98>(accessed April 14, 2018).

development of complex, transnational identities was fostered within Norton's post-structuralist investment dimension framework (1995; 2000; 2013). Overall, the new hybrid spaces where popular culture, represented by the personal objects selected by museum cultural mediators as part of art-driven pathways, meets high culture, represented by the works of art held in museums, open up new possibilities for effective inclusion processes in multilingual and multicultural contexts.

6Conclusion

The social inclusion of migrants into host communities requires the implementation of various strategies while also catering to migrants' multifaceted identities. In this respect, art-focused pathways customized to enhance migrants' negotiation of their hybrid identities through interaction with artworks in the host countries has been implemented in various projects in Italy. Adopting a narrative approach in art-focused pathways to reinterpret their own personal transnational histories, migrants can reposition their complex identities in the new geographical, social, and symbolic spaces while showcasing their own memories and cultural values. Within Norton's post-structuralist investment dimension framework (1995; 2000; 2013), migrants thus invest in transformative practices, such as the negotiation of the value system of the host country, while feeling the appreciation of the host community for their own cultural history. In this perspective, migrants' contact with high culture in museums is instrumental in fostering an effective renegotiation of migrants' identity, which is pivotal for them to invest in inclusion processes in everyday contexts.

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Figure 1



Figure 2

