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BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

SEPTEMBER 1-4, 2026 • SAPIENZA UNIVERSITY OF ROME, ITALY

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SAPIENZA UNIVERSITY OF ROME, ITALY

SEPTEMBER 1-4, 2026

IN MEMORIAM

This conference is dedicated to the memory of children killed in contemporary wars.

It recalls the more than 20,000 children who have died in the Gaza Strip since 7 October 2023 and the 38 children killed in Israel during the terrorist attacks of that same day.

It also remembers children whose lives have been taken or shattered by violence in Iran, Lebanon, Ukraine, Syria, Yemen, Sudan, the Sahel, Somalia, and Myanmar, as well as those who died while attempting to cross the Mediterranean in search of safety from war, drought, and poverty.

According to UNICEF, approximately 473 million children today — one in six worldwide — live in areas affected by armed conflict. For them, there was no democracy, and there will be no education.

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educational systems. The intersection of historical and more recent forms of multilingualism makes Alto Adige/Südtirol a particularly revealing site, as it highlights structural conditions that can crystallize inequalities. Forms of such inequalities are evident in the persistent epistemic imbalance between dominant and non-dominant languages, whereby perceived economic value and cultural desirability contribute to positioning some speakers and groups in more vulnerable positions within the educational system (Guarda, 2025; Wand, 2023). Against this backdrop and following Causevic et al. (2020)'s invitation to show how epistemologies in conditions of vulnerability can be actively and critically (re)centered, this contribution presents insights from two research projects: an ethnographic study with families experiencing the transition from kindergarten to primary school, and a participatory action research project with primary school teachers. Both projects aim to reposition linguistically minoritized and migrantized students and families as competent knowers and speakers. Building on relational pedagogy (Gravett et al., 2021; Huzar, 2025), translanguaging (García & Li Wei, 2014), and transknowledging (Ennser-Kananen et al., 2024), the presentation explores possibilities for (re)constructing educational and research relationships in ways that foster connection and reciprocity, and where multiple languages and knowledges can co-exist without being appropriated or hierarchized. In particular, it will exemplify the potential of an approach that, starting from the assumption of intellectual equality among all subjects (Huzar, 2025), recognizes linguistic and epistemological diversity as a resource and fosters transformative practices capable of challenging linguistic hierarchies that generate vulnerability, promoting connections based on increased solidarity and understanding (Badwan, 2022).

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Decolonial Pedagogy

Migrant Women

Adult Education

Skill development and language courses for migrants are often portrayed as neutral and empowering approaches that facilitate participation, employability, and social integration. In Italy, programs offering Initial Vocational Education and Training (IVET) and Italian as a second language (L2), often provided by CPIAs (in Italian, Centri Provinciali per l'Istruzione degli Adulti), are viewed as essential tools for fostering inclusion and civic recognition (Gabrielli et al., 2020). However, when analyzed through decolonial and critical pedagogical perspectives (Smith, 2012; Santos, 2014), language and vocational training emerge as ambivalent dispositifs that not only develop practical and linguistic competencies but also establish regimes of legitimacy, recognition, and conditional belonging. This paper conceptualizes vocational education and language training as pedagogical spaces shaped by normative and epistemic orders governing access to recognition and social intelligibility. The study is based on a qualitative analysis of 33 semi-structured interviews conducted in person

with adult migrant workers living in Italy as part of the SKILLS4JUSTICE Horizon Europe project. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2014), employing a hybrid deductive–inductive approach (Swain, 2018). Within this broader dataset, the paper foregrounds six narratives of migrant women, approached as situated epistemic positions (Haraway, 1988). These narratives reflect diverse life trajectories. A young Tunisian woman, recently a mother, migrates from an economically unstable background and views language learning and employment as pathways to stability, yet finds herself confined to domestic labor. An Albanian widow with two children, after years of financial dependence within her marriage, migrates seeking autonomy but is limited to cleaning work. A young Cameroonian woman leaves her homeland with her girlfriend due to social and personal constraints, seeking to live and love freely while pursuing recognition and professional fulfillment. Additionally, three older women from Eastern Europe (Moldova and Ukraine) migrate to support transnational families and enter long-term care work. Despite their varied backgrounds, these women's paths predominantly converge in feminized and socially undervalued sectors of employment. This convergence should not be read as a direct outcome of IVET and L2 education, but as a pattern shaped by broader institutional and normative frameworks within which skill formation and language training may participate in aligning migrants' trajectories with socially devalued labor niches. Findings indicate that educational and training pathways are experienced as both necessities and regulatory thresholds. Institutional norms privilege standardized linguistic performances while marginalizing plurilingual repertoires and embodied communicative practices, thereby reinforcing dominant constructions of legitimacy (Haraway, 1988). Participants' narratives reveal experiences of linguistic inadequacy, self-discipline, and conditional recognition. These dynamics align with Benasayag and Schmit's (2003) analysis of the internalization of normative expectations. Rather than representing individual failures, these stories illustrate patterned processes of gendered incorporation (Itzigsohn & Giorguli-Saucedo, 2005), where legal precarity and survival imperatives constrain educational participation and occupational mobility. By emphasizing the situated voices of migrant women, this paper contributes to decolonial debates on education, migration, and epistemic justice, highlighting how language education functions as a political and pedagogical site where recognition (Dusi, 2020), legitimacy, and exclusion are continuously structured and negotiated.

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colonial images

textbooks images

Italian colonial history

This paper analyses changes in time of educational tools meant to make young Italian students aware of their in-group colonial history, proposing that this kind of study can give relevant insights on how broader socio-psychological processes are gradually facing this difficult past. Immediately after the swift collapse of the so-called Italian colonial “Empire”, a social denial (Cohen, 2001) silenced for decades the severe crimes committed during the colonial invasions. Moreover, an enduring social myth, depicting Italians as good fellows, incapable of cruelty (“Italiani brava gente”, Del Boca, 2005), sometimes also surfacing today, heavily biased the Italian societal discourse about the colonial past. Finally, even when history scholars proved beyond doubt the occurrence of these past crimes (Labanca, 2002), a self-censorship (Bar-Tal,