LINGUISTIC INTEGRATION IN ITALY: FRAMEWORK, POLICIES AND OUTCOMES

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This paper explores the role of the linguistic dimension within the process of the social integration of migrant populations in Italy. With increasing ethnic diversity as a result of recent decades of immigration in all Western European countries, the integration of ethnic minorities has become a major concern of national governments, policymakers, academics, and the individuals directly affected themselves. Indeed, the Council of Europe has been a pioneer in the field of language teaching and the project on the Linguistic Integration of Adult Migrants (LIAM) is part of its continuing work in this domain. Linguistic integration, indeed, is a complex process and can occur in different forms and levels being highly contextual and connected to migrants’ and host communities’ expectations.

Starting from an overview of the main Italian policies for linguistic integration, this study highlights the linguistic resources that migrants need in order to successfully develop a sense of belonging and engagement in the host community. This study aims to understand what shapes, affects or enables the linguistic integration of migrants in medium-sized towns and rural areas. It is vital to define what types of content should be taught on a priority basis in order to develop efficient language programmes to fulfil migrants’ needs and expectations.

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