Introduction of “Intercultural Education” (multiculturalism) in Italy: theories and practice

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I. A brief history of Intercultural Pedagogy and terminological questions

It was in the late ’70s that the interest in education in terms of the so-called Compensating Pedagogies took root in North-European countries. At first, the aim was to make the procedure of acceptance of immigrants within the school system easier. However, it is only later that the project and the aims actually became more clearly defined. The first problem to be confronted was the impossibility of drawing up one single program for all of Europe, because each situation and each country presents a separate and

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unique reality.

Nevertheless, a list of preliminary needs in educational programming was prepared. It included: 1) identification of institutions (schools and cultural associations) that may be considered as the best locations for the implementation of the programs; these are considered as laboratories where people coming from different countries meet together; 2) promoting an awareness that the problems affecting immigrants can not be resolved only by educational plans but must involve political decision making as well; 3) the promotion of an awareness that a policy of acceptance of students from other countries is not enough, and that “multiculturalism is a structural fact of the actual world and not a circumscribed and contingent event.” (Introduzione storica e delineazioni teoriche in ambito interculturale, by Graziella Favaro) 1)

One of the first steps taken in Italy was the definition of a terminological distinction between Compensating Pedagogies versus Intercultural Pedagogies, and between Multiculturalism versus Interculturalism. In brief, Compensating Pedagogies are focused on foreign students, on the procedures regarding their acceptance, their integration and their acquisition of the Second Language. Intercultural Pedagogies approach the problem from a different point of view; they move from the assumption that Intercultural Pedagogies are not only for foreigners but also for local people, and support projects which aim to change ways of thinking and ways of facing reality in a multicultural society. Intercultural Pedagogy cannot be confined within the walls of the schools but it must also be applied in the broader social arena.

1) http://www.google.it/search?q=Graziella+Favaro&btnG=Cerca&hl=it.
In recent years the programs of Intercultural Pedagogy have developed into two streams: on the one hand, the defense of cultural diversity and specificity, and on the other hand, acceptance and interaction, i.e., the inter-relation between foreigners and local people.

One of the basic ideas is that the main function of the pedagogy is to deal with cultural diversities first by introducing the knowledge of diversity, and this is done through communication; and second, by establishing a dialogue between holders of different cultures so that any form of racism in a multicultural society can be prevented.

Further debates on terminological differences focused on terms such as Multiculturalism, Pluralism and Intercultural Pedagogy. If in the past Multiculturalism and Interculturalism have been used as synonyms, nowadays the difference in their meaning is clearly stressed by many scholars. In their essays it is outlined that multiculturalism is used to indicate a society where several cultures are present. To state that a certain school is multicultural simply describes a static situation, it does not add any further notion of the need for a work plan to handle exchange, intervention, reciprocity, assimilation or distinction. It is therefore a neutral, descriptive term. When referring to a pedagogical project, then, the term “Multiculturalism” assumes that there is a co-existence of students, one group besides another, as parts of a mosaic the parts of which are not in communication with each other, and the maintenance of one culture beside the other and separated from the other.

On the contrary, the term Interculturalism indicates interaction within a multicultural society. It focuses attention on the notion of “inter” in its meaning of contact but also of confrontation between cultures which brings
about changes (here many experts stress the fact that the confrontation is necessary, and that it is a strategic means which has to be used to analyze problems and find solutions; problems should not be avoided or hidden). Alessandro Bosi\(^2\) makes it clear that the aim of procedures of socialization in intercultural programs is not the integration of diversity, in other words, it is not to make homogenous what is diverse.

An interesting example is provided by the “exotic food shops” widespread all over Italy. As David Bidussa points out, “Multiculturality is like the parking area of a department store in the week-end where different cars are parked next to each other but are not mixing.”\(^3\) There are two rules to follow in the parking. One is explicit, “no one has to go beyond the line”, and the other one is implicit, “one should stay within one’s own territory and not communicate with the neighbor”. The multiculturalism is therefore a situation where the inhabitants of a society try to live together without disturbing each other so much the better if they ignore each other. Then we have integration, which, again according to Bidussa, accepts the autonomy of each culture as long as it remains confined to a separate area and from time to time promotes cultural and other events out of a curiosity for the “other”, but with the attitude of “a visitor to an aquarium” where the glass separates the viewer from what is viewed and forbids the mixing. In this context, individuals are convinced that their cultures can develop “in parallel to the others”. This is because they have an a-historical image of themselves: a history without time. History teaches that everything is the product of a

\(^2\) http://www.pavonelisorserita.it/intercultura/nodi.htm

\(^3\) “La Multiculturalità è com un parcheggio di un centro commerciale nel weekend.”

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continuous contamination: fashion, food, music, language.

II. Brief history of Intercultural Education in Italy: Ministerial decrees and some criticism.

Unlike other European countries, Italy only started to be officially involved in inter-cultural programs late in the '80s, which provided a possibility to start working on a ground already paved by other European countries and therefore also to avoid mistakes made elsewhere. Nevertheless, already in the '60s, '70s and particularly from the '80s the interest in multiculturalism took root in various fields in religious, political and cultural associations, and so on.4)

The initial approach of Italians to Intercultural Pedagogy was based on a comparative analysis of children of Italian migrants abroad and children of immigrants to Italy. But soon this approach was abandoned. At that time, the presence of foreign students in Italian schools was sporadic and represented an isolated phenomenon. Since then the situation has dramatically changed. Nowadays the presence in schools of students coming from all over the world and of foreign residents in Italy is part of daily life. Their presence is widespread all over Italy and not confined to big cities only. As we will see later in this paper, the increase in the number of foreign students in Italian public schools confirms this tendency. To mention a few data, every year there are 30-40,000 new school enrollments by foreigners.

4) Per un'epistemologia della pedagogia interculturale, di Agnese Nero e Luciano Pasqualotto
and 15-20% of newborns are of a different nationality than Italian.

Initial sporadic and spontaneous interest and projects on interculturality have later been replaced by official initiatives based on government decrees. The term “interculturale” has been used officially for the first time in Act 205 of 26/07/1990; this law also gives instructions on the modalities regarding the acceptance and integration of foreign students, and states that interculturalism is part and parcel of pedagogy for all students and teachers and not only for foreigners. In the following years, the concept of Intercultural Education has appeared more and more frequently in ministerial decrees. In the Annals of Public Instruction of 1995 emphasis is given to education as a means to discover and know the identity of “others” and to make one’s own culture known in a mutual understanding and dialogue. Intercultural Pedagogy, therefore, is not considered as a separate discipline but as an element of all disciplines. Law 391 of 1999 further stresses various points: 1) the right and duty of minors to attend school and the modalities of instructing the parents; 2) the acquisition of Italian; 3) ways to facilitate the integration of foreigners through associations, communities and local boards. The Ministry of Education announced several projects regarding refresher courses and the training of teachers in Intercultural Pedagogy. In other words, Ministerial decrees identify education as the main agent of integration. Thus Intercultural Education cannot be considered as a special discipline to be added to other disciplines of the school syllabus. Rather, it is “an approach aimed at reviewing the formation of curricula, searching new communicative styles and ways to handle the education of diversity and the needs of learning”.

In http://www.pavonierisorseto.it/intercultura/nodi.htm, a summary of Ministerial
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Decrees since 1990 is given:

A) Interculturality is a structural and not a temporary or marginal fact in society. It is a positive resource for the growth both of the individual and of the society as a whole;
B) Interculturality must be articulated on the assumption that democracy exists where and only where differences exist;
C) Differences must not be erased (homogenized), they have to positively interact according to the logic of democracy and "constructive cohabitation": the objective is not the integration but the creation of a society that rests upon difference;
D) Intercultural relationships are relationships among different identities: it is necessary that such identities are recognized and really accorded their "difference";
E) This implies, both for "local people" and "immigrants", coming to terms with their own culture: they should recognize that those aspects which are commonly considered as universal are in fact the result of a specific historical experience;
F) Interculturality does not deny conflict it rather recognizes it, deals with it, offers it as a subject for discussion: it teaches how to resolve conflict according to the principle of non-violence, and in ways which are not destructive [...].

The article mentioned above goes on to illustrate some "practical work" suggested in Ministerial Decrees, along with the criticism of Pavone:

1. According to the Ministerial Decrees: "Intercultural Education is an element of a wider educational project regarding the socio-political themes of our
time”. Criticism: Here interculturality becomes one of the objects of “education”, along with education aiming at development, at peace, human rights, legality, road education, etc. The risk is that it might thus become an “external” element in the regular day-to-day education programs, or a project without any connection to normal curricula or disciplines.

2. “Intercultural Education as an education for the (European) citizen”. In this case Intercultural Education is aimed at transmitting to the future European citizen such instruments as would enable him/her to be competent and capable (both on the cognitive and the communicative plane) to live in the new dimension of the European Union. This involves a meaningful revision of the curricula (for instance, with reference to bi- and the tri-linguism). In reality this position neglects (or does not sufficiently deal with) the problematics related to globalization and doesn’t seem to be sufficiently critical towards the notion of Western Tradition (i.e., it threatens to become a “sectoral interculturality”, meaningful only for those who share the feeling of being a Westerner). Ultimately, this might lead to a “westernization of the world” (S. Latouche).

3. Intercultural Education as pedagogy of the reception. This proposal […] underlines the necessity to construct competences which enable one to handle encounters and conflicts in Intercultural Education. In the opinion of Pavone, such a perspective threatens to leave the “cognitive” competences in the dark.

4. Interculturality as education against racism. In fact, this is an elaboration of point 1 above. In particular, it underlines the risk that an excessive and uncritical approach to universalism might tend to hide and disguise a policy aimed at maintaining the status quo. Pavone holds that an education against racism, even though necessary, cannot by itself provide an adequate basis for a comprehensive plan of intercultural education.
5. Interculturalism and new technologies of communication. This theme has not at all been explored in pedagogical circles. IT-based communication (for instance, internet) seems to be now in a position to shape the intercultural language of the future. Nevertheless, the risk is that one will be overwhelmed by an excess of information, or that every issue is reduced to a sterile chatting. [...] 

Graziella Favaro outlines the results of projects realized so far in the framework of intercultural programs. Although she admits that much has been done on intercultural pedagogy, she also points to the limits of these projects. Here I shall refer to the criticism she has raised while stressing, among other things, a distinct contradiction between theories and practices. According to Favaro, all these projects have the following characteristics: 

1) Their scope being often limited, they present a casual, ad-hoc character as a product of spontaneousness and individual initiative.

2) Lack of institutional support is still evident. Intercultural programs are put into practice mostly at schools where there are great numbers of foreign students and the introduction of intercultural education in the training program of teachers or in university programs is only very recent. Here it must be noted that in the last two years this situation has very much changed due in part to large participation of all sort of institutions in the project 2008 “European Year of Intercultural Dialogue”, about which I will say more later in this paper.

3) About the context in which intercultural programs are realized, it is noteworthy that often there are different institutional logics behind them and contradictory messages are given by individual schools with the result that each project is represented as a sort of island, isolated from the
surrounding context.

4) Too often, programs and projects are focused on the anthropological and cultural aspects of the original culture as seen in an immutable and tradition-oriented perspective, and not on their changing, dynamic dimensions. The emphasis is on the origins of immigrants and not on the fact that they are "anchored" in a concrete and evolving situation, that they get involved day by day in relationships which bring about changes in their identity and enrich their life story.

5) In contrast to the tendency described above, many projects stress universalities and similarities, as if the mere fact that two individuals from different cultures are sitting next to each other is a sufficient to enhance communication and exchange.

III. 2008 the "European Year of Intercultural Dialogue", some criticism

The European Union has declared 2008 the "European Year of Intercultural Dialogue." On this occasion, funds amounting to about 10 million Euros have been earmarked in support of research and studies on interculturality and other activities. Moreover, EU supports with other co-funding 7 European projects and 27 National projects, one for each country member of EU.5)

The European Year of Intercultural Dialogue was officially inaugurated on Tuesday 8 January in Lubiana; in Italy, however, the opening was postponed to 12 February when a conference was held in Rome. In the second part of this Conference a Round Table called "Opening up Schools to the World"

was organized by a journalist of the state-owned TV channel Rai 2, Maria Concetta Mattei, with the participation of experts in the field of “School and Interculturalism”.

At the Round Table interesting aspects of the role played by intercultural education were dealt with from different points of views. The future demographic situation was considered by Andrea Ranieri as a good basis for the development of multiculturalism (immigration) in Italian cities. He pointed out that in 2025 there will be 4,700,000 citizens between 20 and 55 years of age less than today a situation similar to the rest of Europe. As a result, there will be an increase of people of over 60. Interesting is that he proposed to encourage the immigration of a particular type that of brains, of young intelligent promising students. Quoting Richard Florid, Ranieri mentions the “3 T’s”, that is Talent, Technology and Tolerance, as factors which can induce technological innovation in a country. The Representative of Schools, Giorgio Rembado singled out the extremely complicate bureaucracy of the school system as the main obstacle to the full realization of projects. This point of view was aptly illustrated by the representative of Confindustria, Claudio Gentili. For example, the slowness and difficulty of obtaining a consular visa may frustrate any kind of good intention of Interculturalism. School and Interculturalism programs, he stresses, should not be confined within educational institutions. Compared with other European countries, in Italy the average number of companies that invest in training courses and in culture is very low. This, he holds, is mostly due to the fact that a large majority of Italian companies are of small or medium scale. This is an important aspect to take into account when we consider that in other countries 90% of investments comes from big companies. Piero Bassetti
suggested sending representatives of Italian companies abroad, to China, for instance, in order to acquire more information about their economic partners. He adds that “future means challenge” and that in the case of interculturalism the real challenge “will not be anymore one between national cultures but between cultures as belonging to groups and communities which are not necessarily defined in terms of territorial nations”.

IV. Interculturality in School Education Programs and in the Training of Teachers: theory versus practice.

In brief, many experts agree that the real challenge lies in Intercultural School Education. It is here that new principles of education are built: “the right to development of each individual, the satisfaction of his/her needs arising from acknowledged rights and the respect for diversity in the exchange between cultures.”6) The number of foreign students enrolled, their age, the regional distribution of their enrollment, the level of education they reach compared with that of Italian students is an interesting basis to see how Intercultural Education Programs are applied in practice.

The General Directorate for Studies and Programming, and the Statistical Office of the Ministry of Education, Universities and Scientific Research presented interesting statistics of the number of foreign students enrolled in the year 2007-8.7) In that year the number of students not possessing Italian

7) http://www.helpconsumatori.it/data/docs/notiziario_stranieri_0708.pdf
citizenship (henceforward NTC) in Italian schools amounted to 6.4% of the total, corresponding to 574,133 units. The immigration phenomenon saw a record period in 2002-4 partly as a result of the 2002 provisions on regularization: over a ten-year span the increase in the number of students of foreign origin, including the so-called irregulars (those without a visa), was over 500,000. The Regulation Laws that were enacted in 1998 and 1999 provide that children of school-going age have a full right and a duty to enroll in government schools. The Elementary and Middle Schools have the highest percentage of foreign students, namely 7.7% of total students, whereas in Kindergarten and High Schools it is 6.7% and 4.3% respectively.

Moreover, in 2008 “second generation” children (born in Italy from parents of foreign origin) amount to 35% of NTC students, corresponding to 2.2% of the total (including Italian citizens). The number of enrolled “second generation” students drops dramatically as we move up from Elementary to Middle and High School. The number of NTC students born in Italy and enrolled for the first time in 2007-8 was 8% of the total of foreign students.

Romania is the country which has the highest number of enrolled students. This is also due to the entrance of Romania in the EU.

An interesting aspect is the number of foreign students enrolled in High Schools and their distribution: it is highest in Professional Institutes (8.7%), medium in Technical Institutes (4.8%) and very low in Classical and Scientific Lycæums (respectively, 1.4% and 1.9%. See Table 4). The analysis made by the General Directorate reveals that the age of those enrolled in Lycæums is “regular”, that is between 14 and 18, while it is “not regular” in Technical and Professional Institutes.

Lack of proficiency in Italian and problems of social integration are the
main causes of irregularity in the school career of foreign students. The statistics show a sharp divide between Italian and foreign students in terms of percentage of students who have to repeat the same level.

The geographic distribution of enrolled NTC students born abroad indicates that their number is higher in Northern Italy. Significantly, when the distribution of students born in Italy is taken into account, the situation seems to be more uniform. Even more interesting is the fact that NTC students enrolled for the first time this year are most numerous in Naples and its surroundings where the cost of life is cheaper.

Finally, a high number of gypsy students was recorded in 2007-8 all over Italy, with an increase of 4.3% to the previous year. This can be ascribed mainly to an agreement signed by the Ministry of Education and the Gipsy Agency in 2005 for the collaboration between government schools and social associations.

In conclusion, from European Ministerial decrees there clearly emerges a new line to follow in the educational system: intercultural education is identified as strategical basis to construct a new future European identity and thus resolve conflicts within the multi-ethnic society. Compared with previous education programs directed toward foreigners intercultural education from the theoretical point of view shows some novel aspects: projects are not only directed toward the immigrants but also intended for the locals. Moreover, these are broader projects involving entire educational programs for schools and activities at other institutions (hospitals, associations, and so on). From the language education point of view, the focus is not only on the acquisition of L2 (to the benefit of foreign students), but also on developing widespread foreign language competence (to the benefit of Italian students). It
involves the revision of text books by including contents on interculturalism, and offers training programs for teachers.

In practice, from the intercultural projects and programs offered by private and public institutions, associations, universities, and city municipalities one can find on the internet it is possible to abstract a few points. The common denominator of what is on offer is that the purpose of intercultural education is to teach and to learn how to live with diversity and this is realized in several ways:

1) encouraging exchanges of students, staff members, teachers between institutions of different countries (example, Erasmus and Socrates Programs between European countries and Erasmus Mundus with non-European countries); each university has activated MoUs with foreign institutions, for instance at University of Rome “La Sapienza”, founded in XIV century has signed more than two hundreds of MoUs with universities in the world, among China, Japan and Korea.

2) encouraging university courses with degrees in Interculturalism (MA, PhD), or special classes, conferences, seminars, intensive trainings on the knowledge of “others”, for the students. The acquisition of language competence is identified as a priority in the inter-relationship between cultures; nevertheless it is stressed that the future European citizen also has to be competent in cultural and socioeconomic diversities.

3) encouraging the knowledge of one’s own culture because it is the basis on which the student can reflect and learn how and in what way his own culture is different from other cultures in order to understand and accept common and different values.

4) encouraging the training of teachers for world culture programs and
teach them how to improve the procedures for involving foreign students in class room activities. These formation programs are offered through seminars, conferences and Master courses for teachers. At Vicenza, for instance where the presence of extra-communitarian is very high, the university course for teachers offers 250 hours on Methodology to learn Interculturalism, Cultural Anthropology, Globalization and Immigration, Inter-religion Dialogue and Social Psychology.

At first glance, the high number of projects and programs offered by universities, schools (Elementary, Middle and High schools), cultural associations, industrial firms in the field of interculturalism impress the reader. Nevertheless some questions arise: how they are realized in practice, if there are responses and from whom, to whom they are addressed. The answers are surely interesting and need further research. Here in my short paper I would like to conclude by pointing out few aspects.

The impression is that criticisms against Compensatory Education brought changes in terms of education policy which moved slowly toward intercultural education. The analysis of Intercultural Education programs from a practical point of view indicates nevertheless that there are strong educational programs addressed to the natives to learn about “others”, while programs to assist “others” to learn about “natives”, for instance supplementary classes taught in other languages about Italy or programs for the acquisition of L2 are weak. If Compensatory Education was focused on integration programs for foreign students, on the contrary Intercultural Education offers little to foreign students in terms of assistance for instance the acquisition of L2, and the role of “maestro di sostegno” (support teacher) is not well-defined. The second generation of foreigners often plays the role of
“cultural mediator”, although some of them know very little of their original language or culture. If they are to fulfil this role successfully therefore, these cultural mediators, too, need to learn more about the culture of their parents.

It is my opinion that in consideration of what has been said above, a program of Education of Korean Language (henceforth KLE) in a foreign country needs to be revised and approached from an Intercultural and not from a Multicultural point of view. KLE is meaningful if it is included in a wider program of Interculturalism aimed toward the understanding and the knowledge of diversity for the locals, that is to understand and learn about one of the languages spoken by foreigners (Koreans) in Rome, and for the people of Korean ethnicity, that is to educate Koreans to learn more about their own culture. The clear individualization of the purpose and the identification of students to whom KLE is addressed are important factors to be considered in order to establish the methodology of KLE.

This theoretical approach again is in contrast with the practical reality. In Rome KLE is taught at the School for Koreans, Hanin hakkyo, attended by Koreans, and at the Faculty of Oriental Studies of the University (henceforth FOS) of Rome “La Sapienza”, attended by Italians. At the School for Koreans the classes are taught by Koreans and in Korean, and the students are children of Koreans resident in Rome. The classes consist of 3 hours taught every Saturday afternoon. At FOS, Korean Studies is established since 2002, but formally only since 2006, offering BA, MA and PhD degrees. The Korean Language is taught five hours a week by Korean mother-tongue instructors plus two hours by a non-Korean mother-tongue instructor for the grammar, which is taught in Italian. The number of students is over one hundred but less than half of them major in Korean Studies. Korean
language classes may be either compulsory or elective, depending on the major chosen by the students.

What is important here to stress regarding these two different programs is that these two KLE programs have neither contact between them nor any relationship with the rest of society. Each institution organizes cultural programs which should function to create a “bridge” between the institutions and the society, but they do this in isolation. For obvious reasons KLE in the Korean School and in FOS remains different (because of differences in terms of school levels and aims) and is programmed for two separate groups of students different from ethnic and cultural point of view. Korean residents of Rome do not attend cultural events organized by the university, and vice versa. Nevertheless, from an Intercultural Education point of view it is desirable that more contacts are established between them which can produce more participation from both sides, locals and foreigners, in developing KLE and mutual cultural awareness.*

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이탈리아의 다문화 교육에 대한 소개 : 이론과 실천에 대하여

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세계화와 관련된 현상으로서, 이민은 확실한 교육에 있어서 가장 긴급한 문제 중의 하나이다. 세계는 남부지역 혹은 동유럽으로부터 소위 부국이라 일컬어지는 국가로의 이민 물결에 직면하고 있다. 유럽에는 2천만 명 가량의 사회주의 외부의 거주자가 있는 것으로 집계되고 있는데, 이탈리아는 독일, 프랑스 그리고 영국을 이어 네 번째로 이민자 수가 많은 나라이다. 이민은 외국인과 지역 거주자들이 시민으로서 공존하는 방안을 모든 국가가 모색해야 할 문제이다.

최근 대규모나 중간 규모 또한 소규모의 도심에 거주하는 시민들의 일상적인 경험은 다른 지역에서 온 (다른 방식으로 말하고, 놀고, 기도하고, 공부하고, 생각하고, 벌는) 사람들의 역사 및 일상기에 지속적으로 비교됨으로써 특징지어진다. 간문화교육은 그것의 목적을 그러한 차이를 이해하는 데 도움이 되는 교육에 봉사한다. 우리 일상생활에서 간문화교육의 중요한 역할은 또한 'intercultural'라는 키워드로 검색했을 때 관련된 활동들과 정보를 담고 있는 인터넷 웹사이트가 된다.

이 논문에서 나는 이탈리아에서의 간문화교육의 간략한 역사를 소개하고자 한다. 그에 앞서 다음의 개념들에 대해 다룰 것이다.

1) 간문화교육에 대한 정의와 재정의의 맥락에서 간문화주의의 의미에 대한 소개 및 간문화주의라는 개념이 지나는 의미의 다양성과 간문화주의로 간주되는 다른 개념들에 대한 해명.

2) 정치적 의도들, 행정상의 법령들, 비평 그리고 발휘하는 제도적 대안과 자발적 고립의 두 부류로 나뉘는 행정상의 법령들에 연계된 반응들.
학교교육과 교사 양성에서의 간문화 프로그램.

주제어: 다문화주의, 보정 교육, 간문화교육, 행정 법령, 이론과 실행 사이의 모순.
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As a phenomenon related to globalization, immigration is definitely one of the most pressing concerns of education. The whole world is facing a stream of immigrants from the Southern part of the world and from Eastern Europe toward the so-called “rich countries”. An estimate shows around 20 million extra-communitarian residents in Europe. Italy figures as the fourth most immigrant-populated country after Germany, France and England. Immigration means that each country has to find solutions for the civil cohabitation between foreigners and locals and this is a challenge of intercultural education.

Nowadays, the daily experience of all the citizens who live in large, medium and also small urban centers is marked by a continuous comparison with histories and biographies of people coming from elsewhere (different ways to speak, to play, to pray, to study, to think and to eat). Intercultural education sets as its objective an education that is conducive to an understanding of such differences. The importance of the role of intercultural education in our daily life is also testified by as many as 80 websites related to the activities and information listed by search engines under the Italian key word “interculturale”.

In this paper I intend to outline a brief history of intercultural education in Italy. Before that I shall deal with the following aspects: 1) introduction of the meaning of interculturality in the context of the definition and re-definition of the contents of intercultural education, together with clarifications about the maturation of the
meanings of the term, and a clarification of other terms with regard to interculturality; 2) political intentions, ministerial decrees, criticism and variegated and responses articulated to ministerial decrees which can be grouped in two, namely, institutional-alternative and spontaneous-isolated; 3) intercultural programs in school education and in training the teachers.

[Key Words] Multiculturalism, Interculturalism, Compensating Pedagogies, Intercultural Pedagogies, Ministerial decrees, contradictions theory versus practice