mediAzioni 51 (2026)
ISSN 1974-4382

# ACCOMPANIED AND UNACCOMPANIED MIGRANT CHILDREN'S AND ADOLESCENTS' PERSPECTIVE ON THEIR COMMUNICATION NEEDS: A FIELD STUDY IN TWO ITALIAN RECEPTION CENTRES

AMALIA AMATO, GABRIELE MACK[1]
UNIVERSITY OF BOLOGNA

amalia.amato@unibo.it
gabriele.mack@unibo.it

Citation: Amato, Amalia & Gabriele Mack (2026) "Accompanied and Unaccompanied Migrant Children's and Adolescents' Perspective on Their Communication Needs: A Field Study in Two Italian Reception Centres", *mediAzioni* 51: A1-A24, 10.60923/issn.1974-4382/21000, ISSN 1974-4382.

**Abstract**: In the last four decades Italy has become a country of destination for migrants, many of whom are unaccompanied children. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) guarantees every child "the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers". Although it might seem obvious, it is important to underline that these rights can only be enjoyed if children are aware of them, understand them, and can communicate their views effectively. Children are a particularly vulnerable group who have specific communication needs - even more so if they are migrants.

Semi-structured interviews with 15 children and adolescents living in reception centres in the South of Italy were conducted with the aim of investigating their communication needs and gain information about if and how they were catered for. Transcriptions of interviews were analysed using thematic analysis to identify recurrent topics and issues. The main aspects emerging from the analysis of interviews were grouped into external factors - mainly situational and social - and inherent/subjective ones, notably physical, emotional and relational ones.

As far as these young and very young migrants' communication needs are concerned, the results show a generalised lack of structured and organised language assistance to help them understand and cope with their situation, especially upon arrival. All participants expressed their wish to learn the local language as soon as possible as a means of becoming autonomous and finding their place in the country of arrival.

**Keywords**: accompanied and unaccompanied migrant children; communication needs; language assistance; interpreting.

[1] The interviews in this study were carried out within the EU-funded project ChILLS (Children in Legal Language Settings - Grant Agreement JUST-AG-2017/JUST-JACC-AG-2017–801695, 2018-2020). This work was jointly conceived by the two authors. In the final version A. Amato authored sections 4.; 4.1.; 4.2.; 4.3; 5.2. and 6.; G. Mack sections 1.; 2.; 3.; 5.; 5.1.;5.1.1.; 5.1.2. and 5.1.3.

## *1. Introduction*[2]

In the last four decades, Italy has changed from being a country of origin to a country of destination for migrants. Among the migrants who arrive in Italy by sea, air or land - mainly from Africa, Middle East and recently Ukraine - many are unaccompanied children and adolescents (UMC).[3] In Italy, in 2025 over 5,000 of the 12,000 newly registered UMC arrived by boat, mostly in Sicily.[4] The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) guarantees every child the right to freedom of expression, which includes "freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds" (Art.13). This freedom can only be enjoyed if children are aware of their rights, understand them, and can communicate their views effectively. Children and adolescents are a particularly vulnerable group of migrants who have specific needs. Unaccompanied and accompanied migrant children alike are often physically and psychologically under stress, have suffered trauma, and in the case of UMC, have no adult to rely on. Most of them do not speak the language of the destination country and must, therefore, seek assistance to communicate. Our study investigates migrant children's communication needs and how they were met. For this purpose, we conducted 15 semi-structured interviews in two reception centres in Sicily hosting both accompanied and unaccompanied minors arriving from Africa and the Middle East.[5] Our findings show a generalised lack of organised language provision by the Italian authorities to help these young and very young migrants communicate.

## *2. Communicating with migrant children through interpreters or mediators*

There is a large body of research on migrant children by social scientists, psychologists, health care and children's rights experts who deal with different issues related to their social integration, schooling, mental and physical health and legal issues, amongst others, but only a relatively small number of publications problematise language barriers (e.g. Fontana 2014[6]; see also section 3). Even fewer studies focus on how language barriers are perceived by young people themselves. However, participatory research (White and Bushin 2011),

[2] Our sincere thanks to the two anonymous reviewers whose suggestions made us improve our text substantially.
[3] https://www.unicef.it/emergenze/rifugiati-migranti-europa/
[4] https://analytics.lavoro.gov.it/t/PublicSIM/views/IMSNAchehannofattoingressoinItalianelcorsodelmesediriferimento/IMSNAchehannofattoingressoinItalianelcorsodelmesediriferimento. According to a report published by Save the Children (2024: 18), "[b]etween 2014 and 2024, 127,662 unaccompanied foreign minors (MSNA/UMC) arrived in Italy alone by sea, mainly adolescents and pre-adolescents, but in some cases also children, with an average of 11,600 arrivals per year. As of 30 October 2024, there were 19,215 UMC in Italy. This number includes all minors who arrived in our country during the year and in previous years and who are currently in the reception and protection system (…). Of these, 52.2% are 17 years old, 23.8% are 16, and 8.8% are 15, 13.6% between 7 and 14, and 1.7% are 6 years or younger. 87.7% are male, 12.3% female, i.e. 2,363 girls and young women."
[5] Our deepest felt thanks go to the two second reception centres in Sicily where we conducted the interviews with the children and staff.
[6] This publication well describes the context of the interviews of the present study.

10.60923/issn.1974-4382/21000

interdisciplinary approaches (e.g. in the ChildMove project, 2020-2023[7]) and triangulation of perceptions (Mörgen 2025) are gaining momentum in research design in this field. Much of this research is conducted in English or only in the local language, and the complex question of the language(s) used to communicate with the migrant minors often remains unmentioned (Save the Children 2019; Thommessen et al. 2017; AGIA and UNHCR 2018). Many authors mention the presence of an interpreter or mediator,[8] but do not elaborate on this crucial aspect (e.g. Connolly 2015; Jones and Kafetsios 2002). Behrendt and his co-authors, who conducted semi-structured interviews with 79 unaccompanied refugee minors from various backgrounds in two first reception centres in Belgium, mention without further comment that they communicated "with cultural mediators if required" (2024: 47), though research within the same project had already shown that "difficulties to communicate with others due to the foreign languages" and "lack of information" are major daily stressors in unaccompanied young refugees' experience (Behrendt et al. 2022: 685, Table 3).

One research work explicitly mentions offering foreign children interpreting to communicate, which was turned down by them (Majumder et al. 2015). In other studies, the researchers list multiple reasons against the use of interpreters:

> We did not want to filter experiences through an interpreter and, while it would have been optimal to conduct the project in the participants' preferred languages, time and resources, and the fact that the school was keen to use the project as another way for participants to practice English, meant that we had to work around language. (Rodríguez-Jiménez and Gifford 2010: 36)

Among the few studies focusing on interpreting for unaccompanied migrant children, the one conducted by Sultanić (2021) deals with coping mechanisms of interpreters confronted with traumatic narratives of unaccompanied child migrants in the United States and reveals the psychological involvement of and impact on interpreters in this setting. More elaborate comments on the use of interpreters in settings involving migrant children are to be found exclusively in Keselman's research on interpreter-mediated hearings of asylum-seeking children conducted in Russian and Swedish (for an overview, see Keselman 2009). In particular, the Swedish researcher and her co-authors come to the conclusion that "interpreters are powerful participants who can profoundly influence the fact-finding aspects of asylum investigations" (Keselman et al.

[7] https://childmove.com

[8] The professional profile of 'cultural mediators' in Italy was first defined by the Board of Economy and Labour (CNEL) in 2000. In 2009, the job description and role definition changed to 'intercultural mediators' and were described as follows: "The intercultural mediator is an active agent in the process of social integration and works to facilitate communication, dialogue, and mutual understanding between people with different cultures, languages, and religions. They are professionals who act in high-density immigration contexts, facilitating relations between migrant citizens and institutions, public services, and private facilities, *without replacing* either one or the other." (CNEL 2009: 3; translation by the authors, italics in the original). In other countries and in some Italian regions they are also called language/linguistic mediators and may have a slightly different job description. In this paper we will use the expression mediator(s) for this professional profile.

10.60923/issn.1974-4382/21000

2010: 333), and state that unprofessional interpreting increases power asymmetry. For this reason,

> [b]oth caseworkers and interpreters need special training in the characteristics of desirable interview techniques. They also need to ensure that their collaboration is based on a joint understanding of how messages should be translated and of the ways in which meaning can be changed when the form and structure of utterances are changed. (Keselman et al. 2008: 113)

This brief overview of previous studies on communication with migrant children shows that, so far, research on language issues concerning migrant children has mainly focused on interpreters and mediators and/or other adult stakeholders rather than on children themselves and the expression of communication needs based on children's experience and perception which, conversely, is the focus of this work. The project from which the interviews described in this paper are drawn from (see also Amato and Mack 2017; Salaets and Balogh 2017; Salaets and Balogh 2019; Amato and Mack 2022) seems, so far, to be the only one that attempts to directly give children voice to express their language needs, how they perceive them, whether or not they were met upon arrival in Italy, and how they perceive interpreting and language mediation on the basis of their first-hand experience.

## *3. Vulnerability*

Exploring the complexity of the concept of vulnerability is far beyond the scope of this paper. Besides being an "ontological condition[s] of our humanity as embodied beings" (Dodds 2013: 183), vulnerability is also social and relational, compounded by a series of objective and subjective, external/situational and intrinsic/inherent factors (Rogers et al. 2012) which can be variously intertwined and experienced in various forms and to different degrees, and can vary in relation to temporary circumstances or factors. International and national law consider children (i.e. persons under the age of eighteen) to be vulnerable in their own right, and recognise their right to special protection and safeguards, especially, but not exclusively, if they are unaccompanied or separated from their family.

Inherent vulnerability elements include, first and foremost, psychophysical ones, e.g. age, physical, intellectual and psychological characteristics, cognitive and social skills, and the stage of development reached, which may subjectively vary not only according to age but also in relation to health conditions and possible disabling factors; socio-cultural experiences also have an impact on a child's development, as well as stress and anxiety inducing ones, or possible traumas.

Situational factors of vulnerability, on the other hand, are the context-specific conditions of young people who have often had to leave family and/or friends behind to flee from conflict or disadvantaged living conditions, to put it mildly, and often have no adult to rely on. These factors include their culture and environment of origin, their level of education, their experiences during an

10.60923/issn.1974-4382/21000

often exhausting and dangerous journey, being exposed to abuse and violence, their repeated contacts with alien contexts, being stigmatised as irregular or even illegal migrants, but also completely fortuitous circumstances such as finding an interpreter or a mediator speaking one of their languages to help them understand what is going on when they most need it.

It should also be considered, though, that the condition of disadvantage stemming from these circumstances can be countered in many ways, not least through responsiveness and resilience. "Children and young people play an active role in the family and collective experience of migration, making decisions and taking actions that go against the trope of children as simple objects of protection" (Niño Vega 2023: 62). It is therefore important to make sure that the vulnerability and 'minority' discourse does not lead to patronizing attitudes (Walker 2023).

Language skills, or the lack thereof, are a crucial element which often is not given due weight in literature (cf. Kohli and Mather 2003; Long 2018; AGIA and UNHCR 2019; Baú 2020), as many children and adolescents show remarkable determination and speed in learning a new language. Apart from the fact that it takes quite some time to reach even a minimum level of autonomy in using a new language, not all foreign minors have the opportunity to do so and reach levels of proficiency that allow them to also deal with sensitive topics with serious legal implications. In any case, at the time of arrival, only a tiny percentage of migrant children have sufficient language knowledge to understand the complex situation in which they find themselves, to become aware of their rights, and to articulate their thoughts and opinions without the help of a qualified interpreter or mediator. Yet the path these young people will follow in the (near) future is often set precisely at that stage. This is why this study focuses mainly on the period immediately after arrival, when the young interviewees were unable to communicate autonomously with institutions or in administrative and/or judicial proceedings using a language they did not know.

## *4. The Study*

This study is the result of ChiLLS - *Children in Legal Language Settings*, a research project funded by the Directorate-General for Justice of the European Commission.[9] The project focused on the protection of (language) rights of children and adolescents with multiple vulnerabilities who come into contact with the legal or law enforcement system in their destination country. The aim of the project was two-fold: on the one hand, it aimed to inform young migrants about their right to communicate even if they do not speak the language of the country, and on the other hand, to develop tools and resources for professionals working with children with a migration background.[10] To this end, the project gave children and young people who had experienced the need to understand and be understood in a completely new environment the opportunity to share

[9] https://site.unibo.it/interpretazione-minori-chills/en

[10] Child-friendly materials were produced within thee ChILLS project to inform minors about their right to communicate and can be found at https://site.unibo.it/interpretazione-minori-chills/en/deliverables/for-minors

10.60923/issn.1974-4382/21000

their experience. This was done by adopting a child-centred approach based on the central idea that children are the main actors and not the object of study. They have information that can contribute to improve the protection and support which should be ensured by the legal and administrative systems in destination countries. Children convicted for a criminal offence in Belgium, and unaccompanied and accompanied migrant children in Sicily were therefore asked to participate in semi-structured interviews. This article reports the field study conducted with migrant children in Sicily.

The research questions were the following: to what extent were accompanied and unaccompanied foreign minors - who arrived in Italy as migrants or as refugees and did not speak Italian - facilitated in communicating with the authorities and reception professionals with whom they came into contact? Regardless of how they arrived, whether by sea, land or air (via a humanitarian corridor), from whom and how did they receive initial information about what awaited them and the administrative process they were to follow in Italy? Who helped them communicate with those who did not speak their language? Which professionals did they come into contact with, and how did they communicate with them? Did they feel they understood and made themselves understood despite their lack or insufficient knowledge of the local language? In short: were their communication needs met? This first-hand experience of a small sample of children and adolescents cannot be generalised to all contexts and all foreign-language speaking minors, but it provides some insight that is worth reflecting upon.

### 4.1. Semi-structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews (SSI) were chosen as the tool for our investigation to give a voice to migrant children because ”[they] provide a space for extended conversations that allow the researcher insights into how people think and what they believe” (Knott et al. 2022: 1). This format gives interviewers great conversational space to adapt to the children’s responses, as well as the possibility of diverting from the topic guide and even introducing new topics. The topic guide of the semi-structured interview was approved by the Bioethics Committee of the University of Bologna. Before the interviews, the parents of the accompanied minors and the guardians of the unaccompanied minors, as well as the interviewees themselves, were informed about the methods and objectives of the study and signed the data protection and informed consent forms. The interview content was prepared by an international research team comprising three child rights experts, a developmental psychologist, a child lawyer, two representatives of the language services of the International Criminal Court in The Hague, and four researchers in multilingual and intercultural communication. Each topic was introduced with open questions to allow for a free narrative by the interviewee, as recommended in the literature (Lamb et al. 2011), and included prompts in order for the child to report examples of first-hand experiences. Although it can be difficult to anticipate answers which can potentially awaken negative or even traumatic memories, questions were specifically designed to avoid secondary victimisation by only focussing on how

10.60923/issn.1974-4382/21000

communication took place upon arrival in Italy. The interviewers had previously followed two seminars on how to conduct child-friendly interviews. Furthermore, as requested by both the parents of younger accompanied children and the managers of the reception centres, a social worker or an educator from the reception centre was always present to act as a familiar reference person for the children and to monitor the interviews.

The interviewees had been offered in advance to choose what language they preferred to use in the interview and to be assisted by a mediator to help them in their preferred language if the researchers did not speak that language. The SSI was introduced by a brief rapport-building phase to illustrate the research project once more, stress the importance of the interviewees' contribution to the project, and inform them about the possibility of withdrawing from and interrupting the interview at any time without having to provide any explanation. The wording was adjusted to the age of the interviewees, their level of language knowledge, and how the conversation unfolded. The first topic of the interview aimed to investigate how the interviewees had managed to communicate when they arrived in Italy, the second enquired about professionals they might have met from the moment of arrival onwards, and how they had communicated with them. The aim was to understand what kind of language assistance the minors had received, at which stages of their stay in Italy this type of assistance had been available (and at which ones it had not), and what memories they retained of it. Since abstract questions are often easier for participants to answer after having been asked more concrete questions (Knott et al. 2022), throughout the interview, participants were invited to give examples based on their experiences. Being asked to recall some instances of good or bad communication, children could remember if they had been able to understand and be understood in a satisfactory manner, and if so, in which situations this occurred. In the final part of the interview, the participants were asked to provide instances of communication perceived as particularly successful or unsuccessful, and were also asked to tell the interviewers which aspects they had perceived as facilitating or detrimental in communication mediated by someone who had provided language assistance to them.

During the interviews, some problematic aspects emerged (cf. Westcott and Littleton 2005). The first one concerns the difficulty in building a common ground for dialogue between the interviewers and the interviewees in the short time available, since all interviews had to take place on two afternoons. Another issue relates to communicating with young people who have limited language competence, as there can be comprehension and expression problems, and difficulties may arise in structuring a narrative, or in conceptualising questions, especially if they invite speculation. There may also be reluctance to freely express one's opinion in front of strangers – the interviewers and mediators – and/or an employee of the reception centre. In light of this experience, it might be advisable for future projects to allow for more time to establish a relationship of trust with interviewees and collect more information about interviewees in advance and learn more about the children's proficiency in the languages they know. The best solution would be for each participant to use the language(s) they prefer and also have an interpreter on standby (Monteoliva-García 2022)

10.60923/issn.1974-4382/21000

who intervenes if need be. While the conversation unfolds, it is also crucial to carefully monitor the roles taken up by all participants, including those of the person who translates.

### 4.2. Participants

Four girls and eleven boys took part in the 15 interviews collected in Sicily. Twelve of them were under 18 years of age. Seven of them were between five and twelve years old and had arrived in Italy with their families by plane from Syria via a humanitarian corridor. Five male teenagers between 16 and 17 years of age and one who had just come of age were unaccompanied and had landed in Sicily by boat. The last two interviewees were over 18 years old but had arrived in Italy as minors by boat when they were 15 years old and later became mediators. The participants were asked to recall their feelings and impressions as newly arrived minors in a foreign country who could not yet communicate in Italian. With the exception of the two mediators who had arrived as UMC about 7 years before, all the interviewees had been in Sicily for no more than three years, in some cases for only a few weeks. At the time of the interviews, some of them lived in a second reception centre[11] that also hosted families, and some in two second reception facilities for unaccompanied minors. Nine interviewees preferred to speak Italian during the interview (see section 3.), while six of them chose to speak their mother tongue (Tunisian and Syrian) and were assisted by two mediators: a young Moroccan woman and a young Egyptian man. The latter was a full-time employee of the facility hosting unaccompanied minors and translated for two Tunisian boys, whereas the Moroccan mediator was a free-lancer recommended by the second reception centre and translated for the Syrian children. One interview with a Bengali boy speaking Bangla had to be conducted in (basic) English, since no mediator could be found for this language in the region. An interesting aspect is that many children, especially the older ones, said they had some knowledge of other languages than their first language and Italian: the Bengali boy knew some English and spoke Punjabi; a Gambian Mandinka-speaking boy also spoke English; a Senegalese Fula-speaking boy also spoke English and French; finally, an Ivorian boy, who had grown up in a bilingual family and spoke both French and English, had learned Italian since his arrival in Italy.

### 4.3. Data Collection and Methods of Analysis

The interviews took place at the premises where the children and young people lived to make them feel at ease as much as possible, and so as not to disrupt their daily routine. As mentioned before, during all interviews, an educator or social worker employed by the reception centre was always present. All interviews were both video and audio recorded, and later fully transcribed.

[11] At the time of this research, second reception centres hosted persons entitled to international protection, refugees and asylum seekers. Their main focus is on socio-economic integration and autonomy of the migrants/refugees/asylums seekers they host. Since then the reception system in Italy has gone through various changes.

10.60923/issn.1974-4382/21000

The data analysis was conducted with a qualitative approach which involves an in-depth understanding of the investigated phenomena, a commitment to participants' viewpoints, and reporting participants' commentaries (Streubert and Carpenter 2011). Both researchers listened to the recordings and examined the transcripts several times, and carried out a first analysis inductively identifying themes and subthemes in the interviewees' answers. Thematic analysis is understood as "a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organizes and describes your data set in (rich) detail" (Braun and Clarke 2006: 79). Following these authors, according to Vaismoradi et al. "[a theme] captures something important about data in relation to the research question, and represents some level of response pattern or meaning within the data set" (2013: 402). An essentialist approach was adopted for the analysis which aims to report the data as "experiences, meanings and the reality of participants" (Braun and Clarke 2006: 82), in other words their reality rather than the researcher's interpretation of data. Themes are "patterns of meaning anchored by a shared idea or concept […] not summaries of meaning related to a topic" (Brown and Clarke 2021: 7). For each question of each interview topics emerging from the answers were coded and, in a second stage, grouped into overarching macro-themes. The result is a concise but sufficiently detailed picture of the communication needs of the young interviewees and the responses to these needs as expressed by them. Mind-maps were used to structure and organise the main findings relevant for the research questions.

Thematic analysis was complemented with a more fine-grained turn-by-turn analysis of transcriptions in which themes were enriched with a microanalytical approach of sequences of talk. This led to additional aspects of the interviews coming to light.

The choice to speak Italian by nine out of 15 participants did not allow for an interview that went beyond very simple exchanges, and made it difficult - at least in our case - to address specific issues in a more nuanced manner, though this choice seems to suggest the children's interest, willingness, and strong aspiration to become autonomous and speak with their own voice. Conversations translated by mediators turned out to be more articulate, but the in-depth analysis (Pace 2021) of turns transcribed and translated from Arabic into Italian revealed autonomous discursive initiatives and additions by one of the mediators which the researchers were not able to identify during the interview due to a lack of knowledge of Arabic but that had a significant impact on the course of the interview.

## *5. Analysis of Interviews*

The analysis of the interviews identified three main themes: i) interviewees' communication needs and their satisfaction; ii) the multiplicity of linguistic constellations that emerged from the interviewees' accounts; iii) the characteristics of the various individuals who acted as mediators/interpreters for the interviewees. Another theme that emerged very clearly was the strong aspiration of all the interviewees to gain autonomy by learning Italian.

10.60923/issn.1974-4382/21000

## 5.1. Interviewees' Communication Needs

Interviewees' communication needs and their satisfaction were the main focus of the thematic analysis. Various aspects emerged in the interviews, which were systematized in two mind maps. The first (Figure 1) focusses on the primary communication needs of the subjects (upper part: receiving and providing information, managing/expressing emotions, and feeling/making themselves understood) and the parties able to satisfy these needs (lower part: peers, helpers and institutions, often indirectly through intermediaries).

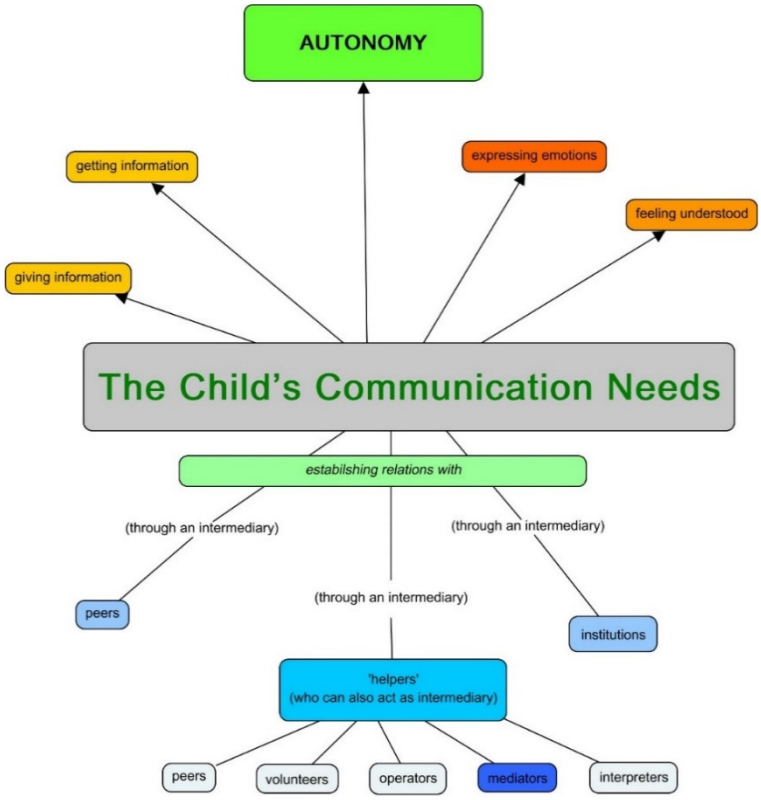


***Figure 1.*** Analytical representation of categories concerning the interviewees' communication needs

Recurrent themes were grouped into three macro-themes (Figure 2) covering information needs, emotional needs, and relational needs (establishing relationships). All these can only be satisfied by interacting, i.e. communicating with others, with language playing a crucial role.

10.60923/issn.1974-4382/21000

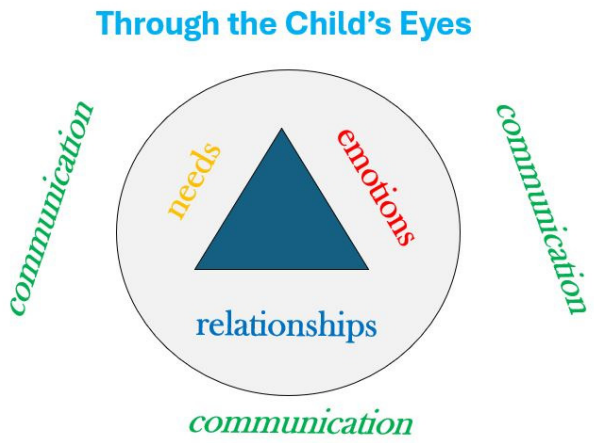


***Figure 2.*** Macro-themes of communication needs

Although non-linguistic components are also relevant and cut across all areas of communication, a large part of communication occurs through verbal exchanges. If two interlocutors cannot find a "common language" that enables a satisfactory exchange, a need or a request very often cannot be satisfied unless a third person intervenes in order to establish a communication channel. To illustrate the different communication needs, some excerpts from the interviews will be quoted and discussed.

### *5.1.1. Giving and Receiving Information*

Being able to provide and receive information is essential for an unaccompanied child or adolescent who migrates to a foreign country. The following quote comes from the story of an unaccompanied boy who was rescued from a sinking boat in the Mediterranean Sea and disembarked in Sicily. The first place where "irregular migrants" are taken for identification is a police station where they are asked to show their documents and, in case they have none, to provide personal details. In this context, age is an essential piece of information in order to be granted international protection, which is automatically applicable to underage boys and girls (below 18 years of age in Italy). One of our interviewees recalled that the mediator made a mistake in reporting the boy's age, as he told us:[12]

> Maybe if I had a chance to explain to him (referring to the mediator) not / being under pressure with too much stress he also got my date of birth wrong" (20191001_13_10_16C6).[13]

[12] If not stated otherwise, all quotations given in the following are our translations from the Italian and Arabic transcripts. Transcripts of utterances were not normalised and reproduce as faithfully as possible what was actually said, including mistakes or awkward expressions and, to some extent, prosodic and non-verbal features. The sign / is used from time for utterance segmentation to help readers.
[13] A slash (/) is used to chunk utterances to help readership.

10.60923/issn.1974-4382/21000

Reporting a wrong birth date to the police can have serious consequences because children under 18 years of age are entitled to international protection in Italy whereas persons over 18 are considered adults and are not entitled to international protection unless they are asylum seekers applying for refugee status.

A Syrian girl recalled that during her first days at primary school in Sicily, the mediator translated only what the teacher said to her or to the class, and not what she had to say to the teacher or her classmates:

> Only when the teachers say (20191002_16_33_36S6).

Another Syrian girl explained how she used her ingenuity and personal resources since there was no one to assist her with the language:

> When I wanted to go to the toilet and I do not know how to say it and I listen al- I hear how my friends say it and I have said it (20191002_15_42_40S3).

However, in other instances, the lack of information leaves children in a void which may deprive them of their legitimate rights as in the case of a boy who was not informed he could have emotional support in the reception centre where he was placed:

> In the beginning I did not understand this thing whether there was a psychologist (20191001_13_10_16C6).

Even the most crucial questions like what is going to happen after arrival may remain unanswered for an unaccompanied migrant child, as reported by a boy:

> During the first two nights I was totally / I did not know what I had to do (20191001_13_10_16C6).

### *5.1.2. Managing Emotions*

Emotions are the second macro-theme that arose during the interviews. Being able to express one's feelings was recognised as a very important means of coping with anxiety, feelings of helplessness, anger and aggression:

> In the early days I / I was missing my family I was missing this and you fall apart straightforward / when we fall apart and there is / it depends / if there is a cultural and language mediator you succeed to make things work straightforward / with the mediator and so on you can vent by talking (20191001_13_10_16C6).

A person who speaks the same language can become a reference person or even a mentor for young people in a reception centre:

> This mediator always calm / when he saw [us] angry he would intervene and make us talk (20191001_13_10_16C6).

Different communication needs are often intertwined:

> At the beginning of the disembarkation we didn't understand anything / I had a bit of a health ailment / I couldn't even communicate it / there I got a bit nervous because even to ask to go to the toilet I couldn't communicate (20191001_13_10_16C6).

In the excerpt above a boy recalls his anxiety about not knowing what was going to happen to him combined with the frustration about his inability to express a basic need like having to use the toilet.

This inability to express oneself can also generate some negative feelings such as anger or nervousness as expressed by a boy who had a strong stomach ache and was not able to talk to the doctor about his condition for lack of language assistance:

> I used to get angry because the pain was so bad and I could not even communicate to the doctor (20191001_13_10_16C6).

### *5.1.3. Establishing Relationships*

The third theme that stands out in our analysis of the interviews is interpersonal relationships. Not being able to communicate accentuates feelings of powerlessness, as expressed by a Moroccan girl:

> When I arrived if you do not have let's say someone next to you / I mean who helps you translating things / how can you go on / especially in the first period when you arrive (20191002_17_18_00S8).

A similar, but less intense feeling can be sensed in the words of a Syrian boy who had experienced his first day in an Italian school on the same morning of the day of the interview. He had been taken to school by the mediator who worked at the reception centre, who had briefly introduced him to the teacher and the class and then had left.[14] When asked how he felt about that experience, the boy replied:

> I was sad because there was no Syrian to talk to (20191002_15_58_33S4).

Feeling understood creates a sense of safety and control, if not even of belonging or familiarity, of being back to a sort of normality as reported by a boy when talking about the mediator he met at the reception centre:

> The mediator was a Tunisian I was Egyptian / we didn't make a mediator / a mediator and a boy / we made like a family (20191001_13_10_16C6).

[14] The two researchers were allowed to be present.

10.60923/issn.1974-4382/21000

Feeling understood can also lead to a greater level of self-awareness and understanding of one's own situation, as shown by the words of the young mediator, recalling having met a mediator after landing in Sicily as a UMC:

> He made me realise, for example, that you have / by using your brain you have / by using calmness all things are solved (20191001_13_10_16C6).

## 5.2. Children's Needs and Needs of Institutions

As can be seen from the excerpts above, there are two parties with communication needs: on the one hand, the children and young people, and on the other hand the surrounding environment, particularly institutions. The latter were mentioned in some of the interviews as interlocutors - the police, the judge, presumably the Territorial Commission[15], the educator - while others, such as doctors and psychologists (whom these minors were supposed to meet with according to Italian legislation), were only mentioned in a few cases, and only after prompting the interviewees. Consultations with a doctor were mentioned by two interviewees and, according to their narrative, they both had been conducted without a mediator. Example 1 is taken from an interview with a Tunisian boy.[16]

**Example 1** (Interview 20191001_11_38_00C2)

| | |
|---|---|
| ITW1: | come hai parlato con il medico? |
| MED: | لا كد روت عم ح ك تي ك شاف<br>*how did you speak to the doctor?* |
| MIN: | ا ب ص يع نع ك فش م هاع حم ك شت<br>*I did not talk to him he examined my fingers*<br>((touching his fingers)) |
| MED:<br>→ | non ci ho parlato ho fatto il controllo generico<br>*I did not talk to him I had a general check* |
| ITW1: | non gli hanno spiegato? non c'era il mediatore che traduceva?<br>*no one explained? there was no language and cultural mediator?* |
| MED:<br>→ | non c'era il mediatore<br>*there was no mediator* |

[15] Territorial Commissions in Italy are the adjudicating bodies for Refugee Status Determination procedures. They are based at Prefectures which are the local agencies of the central Government in Italy.

[16] Transcription conventions:
ITW1 = interviewer 1
ITW2 = interviewer 2
MED = mediator
MIN = minor
xxx-: truncated word
(italics): backtranslation of turns in Italian and Arabic
[xxx]: overlapping talk
((x)): transcriber's note
/ = abandoned utterance, unfinished utterance

10.60923/issn.1974-4382/21000

As can be seen from the excerpt above, the boy reports (also with the use of gestures, as can be seen in the video) that the doctor carried out the age assessment through the hand assessment method, while the mediator reports a general check-up. The information concerning the age assessment through a medical examination never reached the interviewers, who only accessed it after receiving the Arabic transcript and translation. This information could have given rise to further investigation, which was not possible as the mediator did not faithfully transfer the content of the boy's turn of talk. The interviewer then asked a confirmation question which the mediator answered directly, without translating it and waiting for the boy's answer. This excerpt offers a small illustration of an issue that will be dealt with in section 5.3. when discussing the language constellations pertaining to both the young migrant minors who were interviewed and the various (often improvised) language assistants who helped them communicate during their reception process.

Example 2 contains an excerpt from the interview with a young Senegalese boy dealing with the same subject:

**Example 2** (Interview 20191001_12_38_24C5)

| | |
|---|---|
| ITW 2: | bene / e hai mai incontrato anche altre persone italiane dove era importante capire / per esempio un medico / ti è successo di dover parlare con un medico<br>*okay / and have you ever met also other Italian people where it was important to understand / for instance a doctor / has it ever happened to you to speak to a doctor* |
| MIN: | medico come?<br>*doctor how?* |
| ITW 1: | docteur médecin<br>*doctor medical doctor* |
| MIN: | sì eh / io andato a ospedale ma loro mi chiedi solo eh come ti senti<br>*yes eh / I gone to hospital but they me ask only eh how do you feel* |
| ITW 1: | sì<br>*yes* |
| MIN: | sì<br>*yes* |
| ITW 1: | e come hai fatto a par[lare]?<br>*and how did you manage to sp[eak]* |
| ITW 2: | [e lì co]me vi siete capiti?<br>*[and there h]ow did you understand each other?* |
| MIN: | no io / questo è / francese loro loro a me parlare<br>*no I / this is / French they they speak to me* |
| ITW 2: | col francese / e quindi hai parlato direttamente con loro?<br>*with French / and so you spoke directly to them?* |
| MIN: | sì ho parlato con direttamente con lui parlo francese<br>*yes I spoke directly to him I speak French* |

As the excerpt above shows, the boy reports having met a doctor without any language assistance and communicating with him in French.

Only in institutional meetings, and in but one case with the educator, is the presence of a mediator almost always mentioned. The police are reported to have

10.60923/issn.1974-4382/21000

sometimes engaged other migrant people as interpreters, people who happened to speak the same language as the child migrant and who were at the police station on the same day, as reported in example 3, where the interviewer asks a Tunisian boy how he managed to talk to the police:

**Example 3** (Interview 20191001_12_00_07C3)

| | |
|---|---|
| MED: | لا لوب يز ه عم ترده ي ك شاف<br>*how did you manage to speak to the police?* |
| MIN: | طلا ا ب لا ي هي ت ك مل حاو د م ناع ا ك نا<br>*there was one with us who spoke Italian* |
| MED:<br>→ | م ؟ني<br>*who?* |
| MIN: | ((person's name)) |
| MED:<br>→ | c'era con lui un ragazzo che parlava un pochino italiano<br>*there was with him a boy who spoke a little bit of Italian* |
| ITW 1: | è arrivato con lui?<br>*who arrived with him?* |
| MED:<br>→ | sì<br>*yes* |
| MIN: | ف تمه جر ع دع بو لاطا ي ف اي ي ك ع شي ك ف نا تمه ب كرحو هي حورو و لاط يإ ي ف اي ك نا<br>*understood he lived here in Italy then they sent him back and he came back to Italy* |
| MED: | c'era un ragazzo che viveva qui in Italia poi l'hanno rimandato al suo paese dopo è ritornato con loro è sbarcato<br>*there was a boy who lived here in Italy then they sent him back to his country after he came back with them and he disembarked* |
| MED:<br>→ | لا لاوط لع لا مجرت م ل كوزه س لوب ةي لوا كوزهم<br>*when the police caught you in the beginning there was also a translator?* |
| MIN: | م ب مجرت ر نش ل ي فه ماك وب نوزه لا ي<br>*no at the camp there were many translators* |

In this case, the interviewee reports that he has met mediators - whom he calls *translators* - at the reception centre - which he calls *camp* – but not at the police station, where a boy who spoke the same language acted as an interpreter. In this excerpt, once again, there are some autonomous conversational initiatives by the mediator which have been marked with an arrow. Although discussing the mediator's role is outside the scope of this paper, additions and omissions did not go unnoticed and were discussed by Pace (2021).

In another case - example 4 -, communication with the police takes place in a vehicular language, instead. In the following excerpt, the interviewer is enquiring about the first time a young Gambian met some Italian interlocutors:

**Example 4** (20191001_12_22_54C4)

ITW1: […] innanzitutto ti volevo chiedere quando sei arrivato qua in Italia no / chi hai incontrato per primo
*first of all I wanted to ask you when you arrived here in italy no / who did you meet first?*

MIN: ho incontrato gli italiani la polizia a Palazzo
*I met the Italians the police in Palazzo*

ITW 1: la polizia
*the police*

MIN: sì
*yes*

ITW 1: e tu non parlavi italiano a Pal[azzo]
*and you did not speak Italian in Pal[azzo]*

MIN: [no]

ITW 1: e come hai fatto a parlare con la polizia?
*and how did you manage to speak to the police?*

MIN: okay con inglese
*okay with English*

ITW 1: okay

MIN: sì l'ingl[ese con loro sì]
yes *Engl[ish with them yes]*

ITW 1: [hai usato l'ingle]se e loro sapevano l'inglese?
[*you used Engli]sh and they knew English?*

MIN: sì
*yes*

Additionally, the availability of language services in schools is very limited. Above, we quoted the Syrian child who was accompanied on his first day at school by a mediator employed by the reception centre. The mediator could only stay in the classroom long enough to make introductions and translate a short welcome by the teacher. Notwithstanding these difficulties, teachers do their best to meet the children's communication needs (example 5) as reported by a Syrian girl whose teacher in school had some knowledge of Arabic and used it to help her:

10.60923/issn.1974-4382/21000

**Example 5** (20190930_14_33_51_S1)

| | |
|---|---|
| MIN: | perché in classe / nessuno può entrare in classe e aiuta me / come si fa / solo la professoressa spiega a me / dice alcune parole capisco/ perché la professoressa parla l'arabo un pochino<br>*because in the classroom / no one can come in the classroom and help me / how do you manage / only the teacher explains to me / she says some words I understand / because the* |
| ITW1: | uhm uhm |
| MIN: | sì parlo con lei in arabo così / dopo ho imparato l'itali[ano]<br>*yes I speak Arabic with her so / after I learned Ital[ian]* |
| ITW 1: | [ah la ma]estra sa un po' di arabo<br>*[ah the tea]cher knows a little Arabic* |
| MIN: | sì<br>*yes* |
| ITW 1: | bello l'ha impara- non è araba? / cioè l'ha imparato perché voleva parlare con voi?<br>*how nice she lern- is she not Arab / taht is she learned it because she wanted to talk to you?* |
| MIN: | sì perché lei per un lavoro andata in Libia e ha imparato l'arabo<br>*yes because she for work went to Libya and learned Arabic* |

## 5.3. Language Constellations

The languages used by the children and young people in our small sample reveal an extended form of 'circumstantial multilingualism' which has a direct and strong impact on communication.[17] A closer look at this finding provides further insight of no small relevance when investigating the satisfaction of children's communicative needs. In particular, the status of the various languages used and the degree of proficiency shown by the various participants in the interaction with minors have painted quite a complex picture. The children and young people in our sample talked with their interlocutors either directly, when they shared a language with them, or through someone who acted as mediator.

For the purposes of this study, we consider as first language (L1) a language learned in childhood, in which first socialisation and often also schooling took place, while second languages (L2) are learned later on, in different stages of life and in various ways, with variable levels of proficiency (Garraffa et al. 2023). In both cases, the degree of mastery an individual has can vary enormously depending on numerous factors: the same language can be better understood and spoken by a L2 speaker than by a person who has learned that language in a family or school context but has limited linguistic competence. If a person is acting as an interpreter or mediator, a further variable to consider is their qualifications and experience.

The summary below briefly describes the different linguistic constellations in the interactions between the foreign minors we interviewed and the Italian interlocutors (mainly officials and professionals) they met after arrival.

[17] "Circumstantial bilingualism: means that the second language (L2) is acquired forcedly as a result of conditions and occurrences such as moving to another country where the person's home language is not spoken. It is considered a bilingualism of low prestige" (Garraffa et al. 2023: 120).

10.60923/issn.1974-4382/21000

**a.** Direct Communication without an Interpreter:

- communication in a child's first language with an interlocutor who speaks it as a second language (in our sample, a French-speaking Ivorian boy communicates with Italians who have a limited knowledge of French);
- communication using a vehicular language, i.e. an L2 language for both interlocutors (a Bengali boy, a Gambian boy, and a Senegalese boy use English or French as foreign vehicular languages to communicate with Italians who have a limited knowledge of these two languages);
- communication in a child's L2 language with an interlocutor for whom that language is an L1 (the Syrian girl who speaks Italian with her classmates and teachers).

**b.** Communication through an Interpreter or (trained or untrained) Mediator:

- communication in the child's first language through a mediator who has the same L1 and speaks Italian as a second language (a Moroccan girl talks to an Italian judge through a Moroccan mediator);
- communication in a child's L1 with a mediator who uses two L2 languages: the one of the boy or girl, and that of the interlocutor (a Tunisian boy is interpreted by an Egyptian mediator who speaks Arabic as 'lingua franca' and Italian);
- communication in a child's second language through an untrained person who has some knowledge of Italian as a second language (the Bengali boy speaks Punjabi to a Punjabi man knowing some Italian, who translates for him).

Another possibility of mediated communication is relay interpreting. We found no trace of it in this study, but it is known to be used, albeit as a last resort, in the 'Territorial Commissions' who grant or deny the refugee status in Italy). In this case the communication between the boy or girl and the Italian authorities takes place through two mediators (a first mediator translates from Bambara into French, used as a vehicular language, and then a second mediator translates from French into Italian for the authorities who are the final recipients of the original message produced in Bambara).

The most favourable language combination mentioned in the narratives of our interviewees is the one of a Moroccan girl who met a trained Moroccan mediator who spoke Italian reasonably well in the reception centre where she stayed. The most problematic scenario is that of a Bengali boy using his admittedly limited knowledge of Punjabi to talk to a native Punjabi migrant who acted as an ad-hoc interpreter using his knowledge of Italian, the level of which remains unknown, in order to communicate with Italian interlocutors.

## *6. Concluding Remarks*

As highlighted in our discussion about our data collection, some drawbacks arose during our field study. A fundamental aspect concerns the choice of the language to be used in the interview, a crucial factor for the interviewee's ability to express themselves. In our case most children opted to speak Italian during the interview instead of using their first language and be assisted by an interpreter or mediator

10.60923/issn.1974-4382/21000

to communicate. At least in some cases, and despite the researchers' use of basic Italian to facilitate comprehension, this turned out as a drawback, as the initial explanations which were intended to create a shared frame of reference were only partially understood, the questions had to be simplified, and the co-construction of meaning in the interaction was sometimes very limited, as well as the narrative of subjective experience, although explicitly envisaged and solicited. In light of this experience, it is advisable to find out before the interview the level of language knowledge of the interviewees. In order to respect their wish for autonomy, a possible solution could be to be prepared to use more than one language, if possible, and/or have an interpreter on standby who only intervenes when necessary.

Another aspect which needs careful consideration is that there might be a wide age gap among interviewees: for the very young children in our study, it might have been advisable to complement the interview with other non-linguistic research tools. Finally, regardless of the interviewees' age, and even if the researchers had followed two training courses on how to interview minors, some questions turned out to be too abstract (which again could probably be related also to the interviewees' limited knowledge of Italian). Furthermore, some words indicating professionals with whom the minors had supposedly come into contact (e.g. 'social worker' 'educator' and 'psychologist') sometimes proved to be difficult to understand for them.

Despite these difficulties and the limited size of our sample, our findings shed some light on language assistance provided to accompanied and unaccompanied migrant children who arrive in Italy. From children's narratives, it is clear that language assistance was offered almost exclusively where legal obligations require that Italian authorities gather information, for instance for identification purposes. Upon arrival, and until children are placed in a secondary reception centre, their own language needs seem neither to be considered relevant nor a priority for the reception system. Even in schools, the place where social integration should begin to take place, language assistance is extremely limited, and the impossibility of communicating with teachers and schoolmates exposes these children to negative experiences and generates further disadvantages for them. The children's strong preference for speaking Italian with the researchers testifies their wish for autonomy, although it could also, in some cases, reflect previous negative experience with language mediation. Our results regarding insufficient language assistance for migrant children confirm the findings by Filmer and Federici (2018) who investigated the same issue at a large reception centre for asylum seekers and visa applicants in Italy, and those by Veglio (2017) and Sorgoni (2013) who investigated language assistance provided during appeals against rejections of refugee status, and during the first stage of asylum seeking, respectively. Failing to guarantee children the full enjoyment of language rights is particularly detrimental because their future life and citizenry heavily depend on their education, socialisation and integration (not assimilation) in their destination country. Depriving them of the possibility of expressing themselves and being understood in such a crucial time of their lives not only clashes with what is set out in the UN Convention, but also jeopardises their future prospects.

10.60923/issn.1974-4382/21000

REFERENCES[18]

AGIA and UNHCR (2018) *Minori stranieri non accompagnati: una valutazione partecipata dei bisogni. Relazione sulle visite nei centri - anticipazione del rapporto finale,* Geneva: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.https://www.garanteinfanzia.org/sites/default/files/report-agia-unhcr-6-18.pdf.

------ (2019) *L'ascolto e la partecipazione dei minori stranieri non accompagnati in Italia,* Geneva: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. https://www.garanteinfanzia.org/sites/default/files/2020-03/report-agia-unhcr-finale.pdf.

Amato, A. and G. Mack (2017) "Interpreters Working with Children in Italy. Profile, Role and Expectations", *inTRAlinea* 19.http://www.intralinea.org/archive/article/2263.

------ (2022) *La comunicazione multilingue con minorenni nei contesti,* Milano: LED Edizioni Universitarie di Lettere Economia Diritto. https://www.ledonline.it/index.php/LCM-Journal/pages/view/qlcm-18-Comunicazione-multilingue-minorenni.

Baú, V. (2020) *Communicating with Unaccompanied Foreign Minors. How UN Agencies Engage with Newly Arrived Migrant and Refugee Children in Italy*, Respond Working Paper Series 71.

Behrendt, M., I. Lietaert, S. Bal and I. Derluyn (2024). "Coping Strategies of Unaccompanied Refugee Minors Shortly after Arrival in Belgium", *Transcultural Psychiatry* 61(1): 47-59.

Behrendt, M., E. Pfeiffer, I. Devlieger, S. Adeyinka, M. Rota, O. Uzureau, I. Lietaert and I. Derluyn (2022) "The Impact of Daily Stressors on Unaccompanied Young Refugees' Mental Health: A Longitudinal Study", *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* 92(6): 681-692.

Braun, V. and V. Clarke (2006) "Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology", *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 3 (2): 77-101.

------ (2021) "Conceptual and Design Thinking for Thematic Analysis", *Qualitative Psychology 9*(1): 3-26.

Connolly, H. (2015) "Seeing the Relationship between the UNCRC and the Asylum System through the Eyes of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children and Young People", *The International Journal of Children's Rights* 23(1): 52-77.

Consiglio Nazionale dell'Economia e del Lavoro (CNEL) (2000) *Politiche per la mediazione culturale. Formazione ed impiego dei mediatori culturali*, Unpublished document.

------ (2009) *Mediazione e mediatori interculturali: Indicazioni operative,* Roma: CNEL. https://italiena.files.wordpress.com/2012/04/documento-finale-mediazione-culturale-cnel.pdf.

[18] If not specified otherwise, all links were last accessed on February 28, 2026.

10.60923/issn.1974-4382/21000

Dodds, S. (2013) “Dependence, Care, and Vulnerability”, in C. Mackenzie, W. Rogers and S. Dodds (eds) *Vulnerability: New Essays in Ethics and Feminist Philosophy,* 181-203, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Filmer, D. and F. Federici (2018) “Mediating Migration Crises: Sicily and the Languages of Despair”, *European Journal of Language Policy* 10 (2): 229-251.

Fontana, M. P. (2014) “L'accoglienza dei minori stranieri sbarcati in Sicilia”, *Studi Zancan* 15 (1): 61-70.

Garraffa, M., A. Sorace and M. Vender (2023) *Bilingualism Matters: Language Learning across the Lifespan*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press. Translated and adapted to English by J. W. Schwieter.

Jones, L. and K. Kafetsios. (2002) “Assessing Adolescent Mental Health in War-affected Societies: The Significance of Symptoms”, *Child Abuse and Neglect* 26 (10): 1059-1080.

Keselman, O. (2009) *Restricting Participation. Unaccompanied Children in Interpreter-mediated Asylum Hearings in Sweden,* Linköping: Linköping Studies in Arts and Science 501.

Keselman, O., A-C. Cederborg, M. E. Lamb and Ö. Dahlström (2008) “Mediated Communication with Minors in Asylum-seeking Hearings”, *Journal of Refugee Studies* 21(1): 103-116.

------ (2010) “Asylum-seeking Minors in Interpreter-mediated Interviews: What Do they Say and What Happens to their Responses?”, *Journal of Child and Family Social Work* 15(3): 325-334.

Knott, E., A. H. Rao, K. Summers and C. Teeger (2022) “Interviews in the Social Sciences”, *Nature Reviews Methods Primers* 2(73): 1-15.

Kohli, R. and R. Mather (2003) “Promoting Psychosocial Wellbeing in Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Young People in the United Kingdom”, *Child and Family Social Work* 8(3): 201-212.

Lamb, M. E., D. J. La Rooy, L. C. Malloy and C. Katz (eds) (2011) *Children’s Testimony. A Handbook of Psychological Research and Forensic Practice*, 2nd ed., Chichester, UK: Wiley Blackwell.

Long, J. (ed.) (2018) *Tutori volontari di minori stranieri non accompagnati. Materiali per l’informazione e la formazione,* Milano: Wolters Kluwer Italia.

Majumder, P., M. O'Reilly, K. Karim and P. Vostanis (2015) “'This Doctor, I Not Trust him, I'm Not Safe': The Perceptions of Mental Health and Services by Unaccompanied Refugee Adolescents”, *International Journal of Social Psychiatry* 61(2): 129-136.

Mörgen, R. (2025) “Perspektiventriangulation: „Kind-Sein“ aus Sicht von unbegleiteten Kindern mit Fluchterfahrung und ihren Pflegeeltern in der Schweiz”, *Fallarchiv Kindheitspädagogische Forschung* 8(2): 3-37 (Art. 4)

Monteoliva-García, E. (2022) “The Collaborative and Selective Nature of Interpreting in Police Interviews with Stand-by Interpreting”, *Interpreting* 22(2): 262-287.

Niño Vega, N. C. (2023) “The Exodus of Venezuelan Children and Youth: Geopolitics of Care and Protection”, in R. Rosen, E. Chase, S. Crafter, V. Glockner and S. Mitra (eds), *Crisis for Whom? Critical Global Perspectives on Childhood, Care, and Migration*, 52-64, Chicago: UCL Press.

10.60923/issn.1974-4382/21000

Pace, N. (2021) *La mediazione linguistico-culturale nel contesto migratorio italiano. Interviste a due minori stranieri non accompagnati*, MA thesis, Università di Bologna, Corso di Studio in Interpretazione.

Rodríguez-Jiménez, A. and S. M. Gifford (2010) "'Finding Voice'. Learnings and Insights from a Participatory Media Project with Recently Arrived Afghan Young Men with Refugee Backgrounds", *Youth Studies Australia* 29: 33-41.

Rogers, W., C. Mackenzie and S. Dodds (2012) "Why Bioethics Needs a Concept of Vulnerability", *International Journal of Feminist Approaches to Bioethics* 5(2): 11-38.

Salaets, H. and K. Balogh (2017) "Participants' and Interpreters' Perception of the Interpreter's Role in Interpreter-mediated Investigative Interviews of Minors: Belgium and Italy as a Case", in C. Valero-Garcés and R. Tipton (eds) *Ideology, Ethics and Policy Development in Public Service Interpreting and Translation*, 151-178, Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

Salaets, H. and K. Balogh (2019) "Interpreter-mediated Questioning of Minors (ImQM): The Voice of the Children and their Rapport with the Interpreter", *Revista de Llengua i Dret* 71: 27-44.

Save the Children (2019) *A Better Tomorrow. Syria's Children Have their Say*. https://s3.savethechildren.it/public/files/uploads/pubblicazioni/un-domani-migliore-la-voce-dei-bambini-siriani.pdf.

------ (2024) *Nascosti in piena vista*. https://s3-www.savethechildren.it/public/allegati/nascosti-piena-vista-2024.pdf.

Sorgoni, B. (2013) "Chiedere asilo. Racconti, traduzioni, trascrizioni", *Antropologia* 13(15): 131-151.

Streubert, H. J. and D. R. Carpenter (2011) *Qualitative Research in Nursing: Advancing the Humanistic Imperative*, 5th ed., Philadelphia: Lippincott Williams and Wilkins.

Sultanić, I. (2021) "Interpreting Traumatic Narratives of Unaccompanied Child Migrants in the United States: Effects, Challenges and Strategies", *Linguistica Antverpiensia* NS 20: 227-247.

Thommessen, S., A. O'Toole, P. Corcoran and B. K. Todd (2017) "Voices Rarely Heard: Personal Construct Assessments of Sub-Saharan Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking and Refugee Youth in England", *Children and Youth Services Review* 81: 293-300.

United Nations Organization "The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child", General Assembly Resolution 44/25 of 20 November 1989 (CRC).

Vaismoradi, M., H. Turunen and T. Bondas (2013) "Content Analysis and Thematic Analysis: Implications for Conducting a Qualitative Descriptive Study", *Nursing and Health Sciences* 15: 398–405.

Veglio, M. (2017) "Uomini tradotti. Prove di dialogo con richiedenti asilo", *Diritto, Immigrazione e Cittadinanza* 2(2): 1-40.

Walker, S. (2023) "The Wrestlers: the Tactics and Practices of Care of Young African 'Unaccompanied Minors' in Italy", in R. Rosen, E. Chase, S. Crafter, V. Glockner and S. Mitra (eds), *Crisis for Whom? Critical Global Perspectives on Childhood, Care, and Migration*, 94-105, Chicago: UCL Press.

10.60923/issn.1974-4382/21000

Westcott, H. L. and K. S. Littleton (2005) “Exploring Meaning in Interviews with Children”, in S. Greene and D. Hogan (eds) *Researching Children’s Experience. Approaches and Methods*, 141-157, London: Sage.

White, A. and N. Bushin (2011) “More than Methods: Learning from Research with Children Seeking Asylum in Ireland”, *Population Space and Place* 17, 326-337.

10.60923/issn.1974-4382/21000