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South Tyrol's Education System: Plurilingual Answers for Monolinguistic Spheres?

Elisabeth Alber

Senior Researcher at the Institute for Studies on Federalism and Regionalism at the European Academy of Bolzano/Bozen (EURAC).

1. Introduction

The Autonomous Province of Bolzano/Bozen in Northern Italy is generally considered to be one of the most successful examples of the accommodation of minorities through territorial self-government. According to the census in 2001, South Tyrol's population of about half a million people consists of 69.15 percent of German speakers, 26.47 percent of Italian speakers and 4.37 percent of Ladin speakers.

In the Province (hereinafter South Tyrol) the German language has the same standing as Italian,¹ the official language of the state, and can be used in the whole public sphere. Each person has the right to address the administration in Italian or German. The general rule established by the Autonomy Statute is that administration must be bilingual in the whole territory of South Tyrol (and trilingual in the Ladin valleys),² and that the choice of language is made by the individual. The civil servants (and persons working for companies in charge of the provision of public utility services) are required to be bilingual (trilingual in the Ladin val-

1. Art. 99 of the Second Autonomy Statute (ASt).

2. This means that in South Tyrol the use of the two official languages is based on the personal principle, while for the use of Ladin follows the territorial principle.

leys), which has to be proved by a public examination.³ All these provisions and even more importantly all the stipulations on the use of language are reinforced by strict legal remedies. The Autonomy Statute and its enactment decrees contain numerous and detailed guarantees for the case of an alleged violation of the minority (rather: group) rights, available to individuals and groups as a means to strengthen mutual confidence.⁴

The education and school system in South Tyrol is based on the principle of separation and monolingual instruction (in German-and Italian-language schools). The plurilingual Ladin school system uses the principle of ‘teaching language parity’ (hours are given in German and Italian in an equal amount and Ladin itself is also taught and used as a back-up language while teaching). With regard to administration in the school system, three independent inspectors are appointed, being responsible for the overall functioning of the respective schools. Teaching in tertiary education institutions in South Tyrol is trilingual (German, Italian and English) and partially also provided in Ladin language (training for teachers at the Faculty of Education Sciences).

The *status quo* of the threefold sophisticated provincial schooling system has to be considered through the lens of South Tyrol’s history. Therefore, the paper firstly provides an overview of the history of South Tyrol and the settlement of the conflict by outlining the consequences for the German-language school system (chapter 2). Then the current legislative frame enshrined in the Second Autonomy Statute (1972) and the essential features of the German-and Italian-language school system are analysed (chapter 3). The analysis outlines the specific rules regulating the school system. In practice, two separate and parallel school systems (nursery, primary, secondary and upper secondary school) are established, with pupils taught in their “*mother tongue*” by teachers of the same language. The paper goes on by analysing the plurilingual “Parity Model of Ladin-language schools”(chapter 4) that is characterized by the principle of ‘teaching language parity.’ Tertiary education in South Tyrol is as well based on plurilingualism (chapter 5). The Free University of Bolzano/Bozen was established in 1997 and provides for a unique Faculty of Education Sciences that trains teachers to be employed in South Tyrol. Furthermore, the bilingual “integrated curriculum in Italian Law” at the University of Innsbruck (Austria) plays a fundamental role in training specialists and executive staff for South

3. Presidential Decree (dPR) no. 752 of 1976 established bilingualism as a prerequisite for employment in the public service (broadly interpreted).

4. These guarantees include, inter alia, the right of linguistic groups represented in the provincial Parliament to veto a draft law they consider in breach of the equality between the groups (alarm-bell procedure, that can ultimately end in front of the Constitutional Court, Art. 56 ASt) and the right to challenge decisions of non-admission to schools on grounds of insufficient language skills (Art. 19 ASt).

Tyrol's German-language administration (referring to Italian legal institutes).⁵

The paper concludes by an analysis on how stakeholders and politics react to the demands of partially abandoning monolingualism as a teaching principle in the school system (chapter 6). Especially in the urban areas demands for plurilingual teaching increase. Schools use their partial autonomy in didactics and teaching to introduce 'language immersion' as a teaching method of the second language (the target language is used for instruction). Other schools opt for pupil exchanges and projects among classes with different instruction languages. Cross-border cooperation, increased immigration and Europeanization are just some of current challenges South Tyrol's school system has to face.

2. South Tyrol's education and school system before 1972

After World War I, with the peace treaty of St. Germain (1919), both Trentino (predominantly Italian) and South Tyrol (predominantly German) were annexed to Italy. The Italian Government promised to protect the German-speaking minority through territorial and cultural autonomy, but any effort was stopped in 1922 when the fascist regime came to power. During the fascist dictatorship a number of repressive measures were taken against the German-speaking minority. This led to the dismantling of the functioning German-language school system. In 1921, the enactment of the legislative decree 'Corbino' introduced the obligatory enrolment of Italian-speaking children in schools where Italian was the language of instruction, thus contradicting the principle of free choice in force today (see chapter 3). In July 1923, the Commissioner for language and culture in South Tyrol, Ettore Tolomei presented the program for the Italianization of the territory, which included, among other measures, the creation of Italian-language nursery and primary schools. On 23 October 1923 the fascist government promulgated a regulation (*riforma Gentile*) forbidding German-language instruction in South Tyrol and by the end of 1929 all optional German language courses were definitively forbidden. From 1923 to 1927 more than 70% of teachers in German-language schools were dismissed; public and private German language

5. The effective and coherent use of a minority language in the public sphere does not only depend on the status of the language, but also on more specific problems that might constitute a practical obstacle to the full use of a language. Language is very specific to the country it refers to. Overall, a bilingual regime can only work if terminology in the minority language is reliable. While this is not a problem with regard to everyday's German, in some special fields such as in particular legal terminology the concepts and the terms may differ from those used in Austria or Germany, due to the difference in the legal system. Therefore, the by-law on the use of languages has set up a special joint commission consisting of six experts, three Italian speakers and three German speakers (Art. 6 par. 1 dPR no. 574/1988) whose task is to standardize terminology. They determine, update and validate the legal, administrative and technical terminology in use by the public administration and judiciary as well as by concessionary agents of public utility services. See in detail, E. Alber, F. Palermo, "Creating, Studying and Experimenting with Bilingual Law in South Tyrol: Lost in Interpretation?" in: *Bilingual Higher Education in the Legal Context*, ed. X. Arzoz, (Martinus Nijhoff Publishers Leiden Boston, 2012), 287-309 (297-303).

teaching was also forbidden.⁶ With regard to higher education no foreign degrees were recognized and post-secondary studies at foreign universities were prohibited.⁷

In 1939 Hitler and Mussolini agreed on a ‘final solution’ for the South Tyrolean question: accordingly, the German-speaking South Tyroleans had to choose between keeping their identity (thus becoming Germans and being forcibly moved to Hitler’s Reich) and keeping their home (thus accepting to assimilate including by changing their names). Around 86% of the German-speaking population decided to leave, although only a small part of them really left, due to the outbreak of war, and many returned after the war.⁸ Art. 22 of that Agreement foresaw the creation of German courses for the children of those who decided to leave for the Third Reich.

In 1946, the Peace treaty confirmed South Tyrol as part of Italy, but it provided for an international anchoring of minority rights, ensuring that the German-speaking population would be given special provisions.⁹ According to Art. 1 (a) of the Gruber-Degasperi Agreement, enshrined in Annex IV of the Peace Treaty, German-speakers had to be guaranteed “*elementary and secondary teaching in the mother-tongue*”, in accordance with legislation already enacted or awaiting enactment. Shortly beforehand, on 4 October 1943 German-language schools ‘reopened’; mother tongue education was enforced again and reintroduced at primary and secondary level. Its organization was extremely difficult due to the fact that there were almost no qualified teachers.¹⁰ Teachers of German mother tongue did not have an appropriate educational background and, due to the big demand, students themselves were employed as teachers. A series of specialisation courses was started by the Austrian University of Innsbruck in cooperation with the Italian University of Padua counteracting the educational arrears.

In the course of summer 1946 the school inspector Francesco Zorzi elaborated guidelines for a new institutional structure concerning elementary schools in South Tyrol. It included an education superintendent able to understand German, German-language instruction and teachers of German mother tongue. According to Art. 1 of the legislative decree no. 555/1947¹¹ school teaching in primary schools in the Province of Bolzano and the bilingual areas of the Province

6. C. Vidoni, *La scuola dell'autonomia provinciale* (Armando Editore, Roma, 2006), 17.

7. R. Seberich, *Südtiroler Schulgeschichte* (Edition Raetia, Bozen, 2000), 239.

8. E. Lantschner, “History of South Tyrol Conflict and its Settlement,” in: *Tolerance through Law. Self-Governance and Group Rights in South Tyrol*, eds. J. Woelk, F. Palermo and J. Marko (Martinus Nijhoff, Leiden-Boston, 2008), 3-15.

9. The smallest (and oldest) linguistic group, the Ladins, are technically not covered by the Gruber-Degasperi Agreement. The claims of the Ladin minority group has been traditionally put forward by the German speaking group and by its most representative party, the South Tyroleans’ People’s Party (SVP).

10. C. Vidoni, *La scuola dell'autonomia provinciale*, (Armando Editore, Roma, 2006), 20-21.

11. D.C.S. 16 maggio 1947, no. 555 – insegnamento in lingua materna nelle scuole elementari dell’Alto Adige.

of Trento had to be provided in the mother tongue of the pupils, preferably by teachers for whom the language of instruction was their mother tongue. School enrolment back then was based on the decision of the parents or the guardian (as it is today according to Art. 19 of the Second Autonomy of 1972).

For tertiary education, Art. 3 (b) of the Gruber-Degasperi agreement committed Italy to concur in a joint agreement on the reciprocal recognition of validity of certain study degrees and university diplomas for the sake of neighbourly relations. However, it was only in 1952 that the agreement for the promotion of cultural relationships between Italy and Austria was signed.¹² It was only in 1979 that German- and Ladin-speaking South Tyroleans were set on a par with Austrian citizens for the sake of access to services in Austria, including access to university and students' benefits.¹³ In concrete terms this implied that diplomas of secondary education were equated with those of Austrian high schools and that South Tyroleans were entitled to the same treatment with regard to study fees (§ 4 par. 1 of the Austrian Law on equal status for South Tyroleans); additionally, the Austrian University system opened up for full and associated professorships for South Tyroleans in spite of them holding Italian citizenship (§ 2). In 1982 Austria and Italy finally agreed on the manner and extent to which a cooperation of universities should become reality. The Agreement between the Republic of Austria and the Republic of Italy entered into force on 1 October 1983.¹⁴ This bilateral agreement paved the way for the 'integrated curriculum on Italian law' of the University of Innsbruck in cooperation with the Italian University of Padua.¹⁵

In 1948 the Italian Parliament issued, by constitutional act, an Autonomy Statute (ASt, regional constitution), which ensured far-reaching autonomy but essentially at a regional level (including the Province of Trento), where the Italians were the clear majority. This was significant because of the fact that primary legislative powers in key sectors of the economy were vested in the Region (and not in the Provinces of Trento and Bolzano). With regard to education, the Province of Bolzano enjoyed primary legislative powers only in relation to specialized courses in agriculture and commerce (Art. 11 of the ASt). For primary, secondary and uppersecondary education the Province of Bolzano was only granted secondary legislative powers (Art. 12 of the ASt) within the limits of a national framework law. The ASt provided for teaching in mother tongue and 'mother tongue teaching' in the second language. Furthermore, Art. 15 provided that in German-language schools teaching of Italian (being the official language) was obligatory. On the contrary, Italian-language schools did not have to provide for

12. BGBl. no. 270/1954.

13. *Gleichstellungsgesetz, Bundesgesetz* 25.01.1979, BGBl. no. 57.

14. BGBl. no. 423/1983.

15. See chapter 5 in this paper.

German language classes. It is interesting to stress that two previous legislative decrees (no. 775/1945 and no. 555/1947) provided for mandatory German classes in schools having Italian as language of instruction (even though the implementation of such classes was almost impossible due to the lack of German teachers). Furthermore, the regulation on school enrolment provided in legislative decree no. 555/1947 (declaration of the father or the guardian) was not taken over in the provisions of the ASt.

The teaching and administrative staff were substantially an integral part of the Italian national educational system. Back then the provincial school system had little financial means and all regional and provincial laws required approval by the central government in Rome.

In the early 1960s the Austrian Government urged the UN to take position on the South Tyrolean case (two resolutions in 1960 and 1961). This led to negotiations within a special commission, whose members finally agreed on the so called “*package*” of legislative measures. With regard to education and school policy the package provided 20 measures, which concerned, among others, the transfer of primary legislative powers in the schooling sector and new procedures for the appointment of school inspectors of each school division.¹⁶

The most important consequence of the ‘package’ was the reform of the First Autonomy Statute 1948 that foresaw the transfer of essentially all legislative and administrative powers from the Autonomous Region Trentino-South Tyrol to the two Autonomous Provinces of South Tyrol and Trentino. The Second Autonomy Statute applies generally to both Provinces in the same way, but South Tyrol has in addition special provisions regarding, among others, the use of mother tongue and the organization of the school system. The implementation of the specific measures lasted until 1992, when the conflict was formally closed.

Today South Tyrol’s population enjoys the highest degree of protection within the Italian Republic, whose Constitution takes only the language as a distinctive feature to identify minorities.

3. South Tyrol’s education and school system: essential features

The Autonomy Statute as promulgated in 1972 (Second ASt)¹⁷ provides South Tyrolese with very broad legislative and administrative powers, which include nearly all competences except the army, administration of justice, the police and a few minor issues. Even more importantly, the relationship between South Tyrol and the Italian state is essentially bilateral: all enactment decrees to the Autonomy Statute (which prevail over laws of the national Parliament) are negotiated by a

16. C. Vidoni, *La scuola dell'autonomia provinciale* (Armando Editore, Roma, 2006), 42-44.

17. Presidential Decree (dPR) no. 670 of 31 August 1972.

joint commission composed of 6 people, representing on an equal footing the state and South Tyrol (3 each) as well as the Italian and the German speaking group.¹⁸ This makes the basic rules unchangeable against the will of South Tyrol and ultimately of its dominant population, the German speaking minority.¹⁹ The whole institutional setting in South Tyrol is a power-sharing system based on strict separation and forced cooperation of the two main linguistic groups, German and Italian speakers.²⁰ In the civil service, jobs are assigned to the linguistic groups “in proportion to the size of the groups themselves, as they appear in the declarations of the official census”.²¹ This rule stretches to privatized institutions such as the railroad and the postal service and aims to guarantee both the representation of the groups as such and the provision of bilingual services (trilingual in the Ladin area) throughout the territory of South Tyrol.

Separation is the rule also in education. Each group runs its own schools, from the nursery to upper secondary schools, and they are competent for the administration and programmes of the school of their respective linguistic group. The distinct authorities are also responsible for the legal treatment and salary of teachers, who must prove their mother tongue to be entitled to teach in the school of the respective group. The education and school system (school authorities and respective school inspectors, the three pedagogical institutes supporting the development of the schools and the three evaluation authorities) is thus subject to an administration referable to the provincial institutional regime.²² Due to the principle of monolingualism, in the Italian-language schools all subjects are taught in Italian and, conversely, the schools with German language of instruction only teach in German.

18. F. Palermo, “Implementation and Amendment of the Autonomy Statute,” in: *Tolerance through Law. Self-Governance and Group Rights in South Tyrol*, Martinus Nijhoff, eds. J. Woelk, F. Palermo, and J. Marko (Leiden-Boston, 2008), 143-159.

19. J. Woelk, “What it Means to be Special in Relations with the Central State: Institutions and Procedures,” in: *Tolerance through Law. Self-Governance and Group Rights in South Tyrol*, eds. J. Woelk, F. Palermo, and J. Marko (Martinus Nijhoff, Leiden-Boston, 2008), 121-142.

20. S. Wolff, “Complex Power Sharing as Conflict Resolution: South Tyrol in Comparative perspective,” *Tolerance through Law. Self-Governance and Group Rights in South Tyrol*, eds. J. Woelk, F. Palermo, and J. Marko (Martinus Nijhoff, Leiden-Boston, 2008), 329-370.

21. Through this declaration the strength of the linguistic groups can be ascertained, and it then forms the legal foundation of the public life. Those who do not make the declaration are excluded from applying for public posts, offices, public housing and various social contributions. E. Lantschner, G. Poggeschi, “Quota System, Census and Declaration of Affiliation to a Linguistic Group,” in: *Tolerance through Law. Self-Governance and Group Rights in South Tyrol* eds. J. Woelk, F. Palermo, and J. Marko (Martinus Nijhoff, Leiden-Boston, 2008), 219-234.

In French language, F. Palermo, “Un système de ‘proportionnelle ethnique’: le secteur public du Trentin-Haut Adige,” *118 Revue française d’administration publique* (2006): 321-334.

22. Provincial Law No. 13/1987. See P. Höllrigl, R. Meraner, and I. Nicolussi, “Umsetzung der Autonomie der Schulen und der Schulreform in Südtirol,” in: *Schulreformen in Italien und ihre Umsetzung in Südtirol, Studien Verlag*, eds. P. Höllrigl, R. Meraner, K. Promberger (Innsbruck/Wien/Bozen, 2005), 153-210 (162-167).

The Second ASt attributes to South Tyrol primary and secondary legislative powers with regard to the school system (Art.s 8, 9 and 19 of the Second ASt); regulation is to be found in the respective enactment decrees to the Second ASt. According to Art. 8 Second ASt, South Tyrol enjoys exclusive legislative power on nursery schools, school welfare, school buildings and vocational training. Furthermore, the Province is entitled to issue laws on primary and secondary education (and teacher training) in conformity with the principles established by state legislation.²³ Art. 19 par. 1 of the Second ASt provides for regulation on the language of instruction. This Article is the cornerstone of the provincial education and school system. It provides for mother tongue instruction and second language teaching. Teaching of the 'second language' (this is the official name of Italian in German schools and of German in Italian schools) is compulsory and determined by provincial law (as provided in Art. 6 par. 1 dPR no. 89/1983). Second language teachers are required to prove an adequate knowledge of the language of instruction of the school.

Art. 19 Second ASt also provides for special measures in the schooling contents, the structure and the administration of the provincial school system. They are in derogation of the principles established by state law but functional to the needs of South Tyrol. This results in three independent school authorities (the Italian, the German and the Ladin one) and in obligatory second language teaching. As to diplomas obtained in German-language secondary schools, they are equivalent to those of schools having Italian as instruction language. In order to guarantee this equivalence, the National Higher Education Council must be consulted with regard to the teaching programmes and examinations.²⁴ As to the administration of South Tyrol's school system, since 1996 the Provincial Government appoints both the superintendent (in agreement with the National Ministry of Education) as well as the German and Ladin school inspectors (prior consultation with the National Ministry of Education).²⁵ In the rest of Italy, the regional level is responsible for implementing the overall national education and schooling offer; some administrative tasks are fulfilled by offices at provincial level.

The principle of free choice of enrolling either in German-, Italian- or Ladin-language schools applies as a general rule in the Second ASt (Art. 19 par. 3). Parents have the right to enrol their children into schools of their choice. This right cannot be abused to influence in any manner the language of instruction of the respective school. The school authority has the right to contest and refuse in-

23. Art. 30, 33 and 34 of the Italian Constitution refer to the general principles applicable to education, State schools and the right to free education within the cycle of compulsory education.

24. Art. 8 Second ASt; Art. 3 of the dPR 89/1983.

25. Legislative decree no. 434/1996.

scriptions if the pupil's language skills are considered to be too weak and are thus not able to 'usefully' follow the lesson (or, broadly interpreted, compromise the efficiency of the lesson). The case is submitted to a joint commission with equal representation appointed by the respective school inspector and the superintendent. Provided that the respective school authority confirms its decision to refuse the enrolment, the parents have the possibility to challenge the decision in front of the Autonomous Section of the Bolzano/Bozen Regional Court of Administrative Justice.²⁶ As to the contents, South Tyrol is granted the right to adapt the syllabi to local necessities, notwithstanding their conformity with the fundamental principles at national level. Given that the knowledge of the German and Italian language is not only a fundamental means of peaceful co-existence, but part of a South Tyrolean public sphere within Europe, the search for innovative syllabi in language learning seems essential. Provided that one validates this argument, both the German- and Italian-language schools could legitimately adopt new measures without prejudicing the principle of mother-tongue teaching enshrined in Art. 19 Second ASst;²⁷ for example, Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), in which pupils learn a subject through the medium of a foreign language.

4. The plurilingual Ladin Parity Model

Ladin is the third community language in South Tyrol and is spoken in two valleys. Ladin-speakers are granted the right to use the language in public offices in the Ladin municipalities, but also in offices located outside of those valleys, if those offices represent Ladin interests. Art. 32 of the dPR no. 574/1988 regulates its use in administration (the same by-law specifies also the use of German and Italian language)²⁸ and determines that the Ladin citizen can use Ladin with the public and if located in the Ladin municipalities (within the two valleys Gröden and Badia in the Dolomites area); additionally, Ladin can be used in contact with regional and provincial authorities if they are in charge of representing Ladin interests (for example, with the Ladin Education Authority established in 1975 and the Ladin Pedagogical Institute created in 1987, both having their seat

26. dPR no. 301/1988 (5); cf. E. M. Pföstl, Die Entwicklung, "der Rechtsprechung des Verfassungsgerichtshofes unter besonderer Bezugnahme auf die Schulordnung der autonomen Provinz Bozen," *Informatore* 1998/2, 70-91 (81).

27. C. Vidoni, *La scuola dell'autonomia provinciale* (Armando Editore, Roma, 2006), 128.

28. In particular, the use of language in relations with the administration could be regulated in its main parts even before the new ASst was adopted in 1972, whereas the establishment of a fully bilingual judiciary was postponed until 1988, when the fundamental by-law on the use of languages (dPR no. 574/1988) was eventually enacted.

in Bolzano/Bozen/Bulsan). However, there is no indication in the by-law about standardizing legal terminology in Ladin language.²⁹

Ladin schools are based on the principle of ‘teaching language parity’, with the same number of hours given in German and Italian. Ladin itself is also taught, used as a back-up language and, in the lowest grade, as a language of instruction. The right to Ladin-language schools is enshrined in Art. 19 par. 2 of the Second ASt, which provides that “*Ladin shall also be used as a teaching language in schools of every type and grade [...]*.” Already the Ministerial Decree no. 5145/76 of the year 1948 enunciated provisions that now are inherent to the so-called “Parity Model of Ladin School”: it provided that certain subjects had to be taught in German, the rest in Italian language. Ladin had also to be used as language of instruction in all levels of education. The Ladin population has always fought for the elaboration of a trilingual primary schooling system. The debate continued to be heated also with the entry into force of the Second ASt in 1972. The ruling South Tyrolean People’s Party (SVP), led by its demands for full autonomy in the school system, was demanding either a German or Italian school in the Ladin valleys (in conformity with the right of being offered teaching in mother tongue throughout all subjects during obligatory education). The dispute culminated in an appeal against Art. 7 of the enactment decree no. 116/1973 which concerns the principle of teaching language parity and the use of Ladin as an assistant language. The Constitutional Court dismissed the appeal (judgement no. 101/1976) and the Parity Model of Ladin schools became the official one in the Ladin municipalities.³⁰ The judgement excludes the possibility to choose between a school having Italian or German as language of instruction and confirms the *de facto* discrimination of German or Italian-speaking children with regard to mother-tongue instruction. According to the Constitutional Court the right to attend German- or Italian-language schools is precluded in the Ladin municipalities under the terms of Art. 19 Second ASt because of the trilingualism of the Ladin schools.³¹ Today this model arouses public interest and Ladins consider it as an ideal model.³² The success rate of Ladin-speakers in the bi(tri)lingualism exam on provincial level seems also to concede this point to the supporter of the Ladin school model. Already in nursery school, children are confronted with three languages. In primary and secondary school teaching is provided with the same

29. At present both ‘Ladin forms’ in the valleys, the ‘Gadertaler Ladin’ and the ‘Grödner Ladin’, are considered literary language in South Tyrol (decision no. 210/2003 of the Provincial Government).

30. J. Runggaldier, “Die paritätische Schule der Ladiner in Südtirol,” in *Politika10, Jahrbuch für Politik, Südtiroler Gesellschaft für Politikwissenschaft*, (Edition Raetia, Bozen, 2010), pp. 477-493 (483-485).

31. G. Rautz, “A Minority within a Minority: the Special Status of the Ladin Valleys,” in: *Tolerance through Law. Self-Governance and Group Rights in South Tyrol*, eds. J. Woelk, F. Palermo, and J. Marko (Martinus Nijhoff, Leiden-Boston, 2008), 279-290 (290).

32. F. Vittur, *Ein Leben, eine Schule. Zur Geschichte der Schule in den ladinischen Ortschaften*, (Institut Pedagogisch Ladin, Bozen, 1994), 63-66.

numbers of hours given in German and Italian (the principle of the quantity of hours distributed during the whole school year is in force). Neither German nor Italian is thus predominant. Additionally, Ladin is taught as language two hours weekly during the years of compulsory education and one hour weekly in upper secondary school. Also in upper secondary school Ladin may be used any time as an assistant language.³³ Additionally, English is introduced as foreign language at the fifth grade of school. As to enrolment, the same principle as in German-and Italian-language schools is in force: free choice of the parents. Everybody can enrol in the Ladin parity schools. Teachers have to know all three languages to be employed in Ladin-language schools and with regard to nursery and primary schools employment is preconditioned by the fact that teachers did declare themselves as affiliated to the Ladin language group.

5. Higher multi-and bilingual education in and for South Tyrol

Recently established institutions in tertiary education follow the principle of multilingualism. This primarily translated in an extensive use of English in addition to German and Italian. In 1992 the research centre European Academy of Bolzano/Bozen has been established as a non-profit private entity aiming at the promotion of applied research and the creation of know-how in sectors of special relevance for South Tyrol. Furthermore, the trilingual (Italian, German and English) Free University of Bolzano/Bozen was founded in 1997 and confers state-recognized qualifications. The university breaks for the first time with the principle of segregated education and opens up—although still to a limited extent—to a new model of education. The foundation of the Free University of Bolzano/Bozen was highly controversial. Some feared that the relationship with the University of Innsbruck could be blurred, others were afraid of an increase of Italian immigration. Generally, the University of Innsbruck has always been considered as the “*Landesuniversität der Tiroler bzw. Südtiroler*” (the university of the Tyrolean people of German mother tongue) because of its cultural-linguistic bond and geographical proximity (120 km from Bolzano/Bozen, and 30 from the Brenner border). In reality, the above mentioned apprehension was in vain as a large number of registered undergraduate and graduate students are from Germany. All this seems to indicate that, albeit slowly and not for the whole population, in South Tyrol “*the collective idea is growing according to which language is no longer simply the symbol of a minority identity and culture but also an element for personal and community enrichment*”.³⁴

33. R. Verra, Die Entwicklung der drei Schulmodelle in Südtirol seit 1945, in: *Istitut Ladin Micurà de Rü* ed., Ladinia XX-XII/2008, pp. 223-260 (248).

34. C. Fraenkel-Haeberle, “Linguistic Rights and the Use of Language,” in: *Tolerance through Law. Self-Governance and Group Rights in South Tyrol*, eds. J. Woelk, F. Palermo, and J. Marko (Martinus Nijhoff, Leiden-Boston, 2008), 259-278.

The Faculty of Education of the Free University of Bolzano/Bozen is characterized by optional multilingualism (even if all faculties of the Free University of Bolzano/Bozen are considered to be multilingual). With regard to the teaching syllabus, German and Italian experts in education sciences cooperate. This is very beneficial for the offered study programmes, which comprise teacher training for all levels, sociology of education, social work and multilingual communication sciences for the public, semi-public and private sector. The programmes concerning teacher training are unique in the German speaking area. In fact, programmes had to be created whose structure did not resemble either courses offered in Germany nor courses offered in Austria. Considering the special education and schooling system in South Tyrol, the degree course in Primary Education is divided into three sections: training of teachers who will work in German-language schools, training of those to be employed in Italian-language schools and training of teachers who will be part of the 'Parity Model of Ladin Schools'. Students have to enrol in one section but all enrolled students have the possibility to take classes also in the respective other sections (optional multilingualism). This regulation provides for detailed programmes and prepares upcoming teachers to respond to the different language needs in South Tyrol due to the different geographical distribution of the language groups. Unlike German speakers, who are more or less present everywhere, Italian-speakers are mostly concentrated in the cities and larger towns and Ladin speakers are in the Gröden and Badia valleys. The migration tendency from the periphery to the centres is also an indicator to be taken into account when assessing the needs for training German-, Italian- and Ladin-language teachers. In practice, considering the school system, students training for German-language schools will have little or no professional use for Italian and vice versa; the same is obviously valid for students training for Ladin-language schools.

With regard to training for legal experts to be employed in the administration apparatus of the education and schooling system in South Tyrol, the Free University of Bolzano/Bozen does not offer a full curriculum. At present, a full curriculum of legal studies is only offered by universities outside of South Tyrol. Both the University of Innsbruck in the Land Tyrol (Austria) and the University of Trento in the neighbouring Autonomous Province of Trento offer a full law curriculum, which, among the degrees offered at the Free University of Bolzano/Bozen opens up for legal professions and competitions in public administration. The Law School in Innsbruck enables students to register for the "*integrated curriculum on Italian law*"³⁵ (partly taught in German and partly in Italian).

35. On the establishment, development and current status of the 'integrated curriculum on Italian law' at the University of Innsbruck (Austria) cf. E. Alber, F. Palermo, "Creating, Studying and Experimenting with Bilingual Law in South Tyrol: Lost in Interpretation?," in: *Bilingual Higher Education in the Legal Context*, ed. X. Arzo (Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, Leiden—Boston, 2012), 287-309 (303-308).

Currently, the existing integrated curriculum in Italian law at the University of Innsbruck offers training for bilingual legal experts and lawyers and is generally considered to be a cornerstone of the identity of the greater area Tyrol.³⁶ The law school of the University of Trento in the Autonomous Province of Trento (55 km from Bolzano/Bozen) offers a program on comparative and transnational law, which is predominantly taught in Italian (some classes are in English).

6. Current trends and prospects—from monolingualism to plurilingualism?

Language, just as every other part of culture, is a dynamic entity that evolves and changes with time. It is not an abstract and artificial artefact, but very specific to the reality (and its changes) it refers to. In South Tyrol, education in the mother tongue has been and still is an essential aspect in relation to minority protection. Except for the Ladin schools, the embracement of monolingualism in the development of the bilingual German-and Italian-language school system is part of the complex autonomy governance guaranteeing rights to the German speaking population. However, for a bilingual governance system to work effectively, bilingual education is necessary. The teaching of the second language (German or Italian) is thus fundamental and obligatory. German and Italian school authorities aim to coordinate their activities and jointly define common objectives for the comprehensive evaluation of the Provincial Education system by convening twice in the course of a school year. However, it seems that the two authorities continue to place differing and sometimes contrasting emphases in the discussion of objectivism, the evaluation of working procedures and results. The attitude of the Ladin schools and their education policy for schooling cannot be compared with those for German and Italian.

Recently, politics and school authorities are faced with the fact that a number of South Tyroleans support a less rigid application of the ethno-linguistic separation in schooling. Especially in urban areas the call for a more integrated system is rapidly increasing up to calls for immersion teaching. Multilingual instruction is increasingly understood as being beneficial to support language proficiency and good career chances in a knowledge-based society. Surveys confirm strong elements of linguistic integration³⁷ between the groups in South Tyrol as well as the desire of a consistent number

36. P. Pernthaler, *Die Identität Tirols in Europa* (Springer, Wien, New York, 2007).

37. The linguistic barometer, published by the Statistics Institute of the Province of Bolzano/Bozen ASTAT in 2006, provides a snapshot view of the opinions expressed regarding the use of language and the linguistic identity of South Tyroleans.

of South Tyroleans to develop an integrated model of language teaching.³⁸

In particular, the Italian school system is intensively calling for measures in language policy and didactics. Recently, Italians have a stronger readiness for learning the German language.³⁹ First attempts of new didactics for language learning (such as partial immersion teaching and team teaching) were rejected by the Provincial Government in the early 1990s. Since 1997 the Provincial Government changed its school policy against such attempts. Resolutions by the Provincial Government provide for guidelines for the instruction and acquisition of German as a second language at Italian-language schools in the life cycle of obligatory education, and for pilot projects promoting a playful contact with German language in nursery schools.⁴⁰ All in all, the Provincial Government did not change the monolingualism principle in education and school policy, but it allowed for additional measures addressing the needs for the single schools. The adoption of Legislative Decree no. 12/2000 (Law on Provincial School Autonomy)⁴¹ provided for more room for manoeuvre. Consequently, several Italian-language schools created plurilingual sections,⁴² in which a certain amount of hours is conducted in both German and Italian as language of instruction (CLIL, Content and Language Integrated Learning, in which pupils learn a subject through the medium of a foreign language).⁴³ CLIL is facilitated by trained teachers whose mother tongue is the same as the so-called vehicular language to ensure effective teaching. In the above referred Italian-language schools the different subjects are only partially taught in German language, in conformity with Art. 19 Second ASt.

Reservations against immersion teaching are being upheld by arguing that a concerted promotion of the first (and minority) language is a fundamental precondition for learning any other language and vital to the development of the German-speaking minority within the Italian state. Therefore, German school authorities actively and successfully support other measures facilitating second

38. For example, the results of the survey conducted by the research institute Apollis on behalf of the weekly South Tyrolean journal *FF* show that 81% of South Tyroleans would welcome a bilingual school policy (16% are against it); this is the opinion not only of 98% Italian-speakers, but also of 73% German-speakers and even of 74% of sympathizers of the SVP, the ruling German ethnic catch-all South Tyrolean Peoples' Party. *FF* Umfrage, "Die Stimmen des Volkes," in *FF* No. 23/2008, 20-31.

39. For long time (especially in pre-1972) policy of the Italian schools was emphasized by an overemphasis on the Italian language.

40. S. Baur, R. Medda-Windischer, "The Educational System in South Tyrol," in: *Tolerance through Law. Self-Governance and Group Rights in South Tyrol*, ed. J. Woelk, F. Palermo, and J. Marko (Leiden-Boston, Martinus Nijhoff, 2008), 235-258 (247-248).

41. Provincial Law on School Autonomy no. 12/2000.

42. For example, the Italian-language primary schools Manzoni, Chini and Longon in the capital city Bolzano/Bozen. For details see Davide Pasquali, "La svolta della scuola' Insegnare," in *Tedesco matematica e storia*, an interview with Prof. Cavagnoli, scientific coordinator of the CLIL projects, in *Alto Adige (Italian-language local daily newspaper)*, (16 January 2011).

43. The introduction of CLIL approaches is regularly applied in the neighbouring Autonomous Province of Trento (predominantly Italian-speaking) in cooperation with the Land Tyrol in Austria.

language learning (school partnerships, projects among twin schools, summer camps etc.).⁴⁴ In the opinion of the school authorities, CLIL is just one possible means to increase the second language knowledge, but not necessarily the best one. In most valleys there is almost no possibility to interact with the Italian-language reality. There the Italian language is not perceived as second language, but as foreign language. The German school authority promotes bilingualism by life-long training for teachers, specific materials for the second language instruction and by ensuring regular possibilities to meet with Italian-speakers. The President of the Province recently affirmed that full immersion teaching—teaching of some subjects as mathematics, history or geography only through the medium of Italian in German schools or German in Italian schools—will not be institutionalized. The schools' tasks are to guarantee mother tongue education and second language teaching. For the latter the schools are enabled to choose the most appropriate methodology.⁴⁵

Generally speaking, bi(multi)lingualism is highly supported by all school authorities because it has become a factor for economic development in and for South Tyrol. In economic terms, South Tyrol is located in a strategic geographic position at the edge of strong economic areas. Thus, knowledge of more languages is a determining factor in and for South Tyrol, also in the private sector. Both, Italian and German language, are required not only in the public sector (ethnic quota system) but also highly desirable in the private sector. The knowledge of languages is a fundamental prerequisite for the South Tyrolean labour market. The second language (German or Italian) but also others (primarily, English) are becoming important for integration into social and professional life. Together with the benefits of territorial autonomy, multilingualism has been decisive for the creation of highly specialized jobs, for the settlement of a large number of modern enterprises and also an increasing scientific research. A survey also shows that multilingual families earn more than monolingual ones. They have more possibilities to compete for good job positions, because of their language proficiency but also because of their ability to understand both the German and Italian socio-economic contexts in all its nuances.⁴⁶

Politics and the school authorities are also faced with the challenge to find proper solutions for the integration of foreign pupils (having neither German nor

44. Davide Pasquali, "La scuola tedesca punta ai gemellaggi," *Alto Adige* (28 January 2011).

45. "Immersionunterricht? Mit mir nie," *Dolomiten* (German-language local daily newspaper), (10 January 2011). The President of the Province, Luis Durnwalder, reacted to a statement made by the Minister in the Provincial Government Christian Tommasini (competent for Italian schooling), who declared the political will to regularly establish bilingual teaching sections in Italian-language primary schools by 2013 (cf. Davide Pasquali, "Sezioni bilingui, la scuola dice sì," in *Alto Adige* (Monday 10 January 2011).

46. ASTAT (Provincial Statistics Institute) "Einkommen, Vermögen und Lebensbedingungen der Haushalte in Südtirol" (2008-2009) 27 - available at < <http://www.provinz.bz.it/astat/de/haushalte-soziales-leben/einkommen-armut.asp> > (30.03.2012).

Italian as first language). In South Tyrol immigration increased significantly in the last two decades. In 1990, the number of non EU-citizens resident in South Tyrol was below 0,1 percent, while at the end of 2010, this percentage raised to 7,8 percent.⁴⁷ This increase is also visible in data⁴⁸ concerning the enrolment of foreign pupils. German-and Italian-language nursery, primary and secondary schools are differently confronted with the need to integrate foreign children or students. The number of enrolled South Tyrolean pupils (Italian citizens) is decreasing in some school grades (Italian-language nursery schools, German-language primary schools and Ladin primary schools, German-language secondary schools), while the number of enrolled foreign pupils increases in all schools. The data also confirms that the number of foreign pupils is particularly on the increase in Italian-language schools. The German-language schools have only recently witnessed the increase of foreign pupils in their classrooms. The increase of enrolment in Italian-language schools may have some impact in the long run on the institutional ethnic governance system, if foreign (and autochthonous) pupils then decide to declare themselves to belong to the Italian-speaking group.⁴⁹ Enrolment of foreign pupils in Italian-language schools in peripheral areas also guarantees the preservation of classes located in mountain areas. They might close without foreign students. As to the enrolment of foreign students, Art. 19 Second ASt also finds application *vis-à-vis* foreign pupils. Accordingly, the parents of foreign pupils can choose to send their child to either attend a German- or Italian-language school. The pupils are obliged to learn both languages, German and Italian. Additionally, English is mostly introduced as first foreign language. To facilitate the integration of foreign pupils, the education and school authorities have elaborated different measures under the terms of the Provincial Law on School Autonomy no. 12/2000. The latter one introduced autonomy in teaching and organization by assigning also further financial autonomy. Schools were now enabled to introduce innovative methods in language teaching and to support their educational offer with facultative courses and specific projects. A broad margin of appreciation is left to the education authorities and schools on how specific linguistic support measures should be arranged. In order to facilitate the integration of foreign pupils in the school system, South Tyrol has introduced the ‘cultural mediator’ institution, which contributes to intercultural understanding and communication between the school, the pupils and the parents; several NGOs are as well active in this field.

In short, South Tyrol’s education and school system is in search for a change in continuity aiming at accommodating the claims for a more integrated society

47. Compare data on <http://www.provinz.bz.it/astat/>. The increasing amount of foreigners in South Tyrol nowadays doubles the amount of the Ladin-speakers challenging some aspects of the institutionalized ethnic governance system.

48. See details in R. Medda-Windischer “Condizione e prospettive d’integrazione degli stranieri,” in *Alto Adige: relazioni sociali, lingua, religione e valori*. Ed. H. Flarer, R. Girardi, F. Grandi, Indagine analitica / *Standbild und Integrationsaussichten der ausländischen Bevölkerung Südtirols*. (Gesellschaftsleben, Sprache, Religion und Werterhaltung, Eurac Research, 2011).

49. Norbert Dall’Ó, *Multikulti über Nacht*, *ff-Südtiroler Wochenmagazin* (26 January 2006), 15.

without scaring away those for whom such a society is not at all desired. The functional division of the school system has not changed recently. It rightly upholds the core principle of mother tongue education as a fundamental minority right but, at the same time, it has to allow spaces for innovative language teaching.

While the impact of plurilingual education on conflict settlement is difficult to measure in absolute terms, its contribution cannot be denied when considering the European context (mobility of workers, European Language Portfolio etc.). An education and school system open to plurilingualism will certainly be increasingly needed also in the legally monolingual space in South Tyrol. The management of a complex and densely regulated autonomy system, transnational and Euro-regional trends as well as the overall Europeanization process require a future-oriented school system, which emphasizes multilingualism as a value—in theory and in practice.

Abstract

The bi(tri)lingual Autonomous Province of Bolzano/Bozen-South Tyrol in Northern Italy successfully accommodates its linguistic groups (69,38% of German speakers, 26,30% of Italian speakers and 4,32% of Ladin speakers) through territorial self-government. The Second Autonomy Statute (1972) regulates the coexistence of South Tyrol's ethno-linguistic groups ('rights). With regard to linguistic rights there is hardly any area of public and to a considerable extent also private life that is not covered by a complex network of norms, guarantees and remedies. The educational system in South Tyrol is based on separation and the principle of mother tongue instruction. The teaching of the second language (German or Italian) is obligatory. A plurilingual system is implemented in the Ladin valleys. Tertiary education in South Tyrol is also based on plurilingualism. Intensive talks about how to reform school policies are on a daily agenda, in order to move towards an integrated model of language learning. All in all, South Tyrol's education system has to be considered through the lens of South Tyrol's history (annexation to Italy in 1919, fascist occupation, First and Second Autonomy Statute). By retracing the development of school governance in South Tyrol, the article attempts to shed light on how South Tyrol's institutional set-up is organized and how it responds to multilingual challenges.

Résumé

La Province autonome bilingue (trilingue) de Bolzano/Bozen-Tyrol du Sud, au nord de l'Italie, est une réussite de vie en commun de ses groupes linguistiques (69,38 % de Germanophones, 26,30 % d'Italophones et 4,32 % parlant ladin), à travers son autonomie territoriale. Le second Statut d'autonomie (1972) organise la coexistence des groupes ethnolinguistiques du Sud-Tyrol. En matière de droits linguistiques, tous les domaines de la vie publique et une partie considérable de ceux de la vie privée sont couverts par un réseau complexe de normes, garanties et recours. Le système éducatif au Sud-Tyrol est fondé sur la séparation et le principe de l'instruction dans la langue maternelle. L'enseignement d'une seconde langue (allemand ou italien) est obligatoire. Un système plurilingue est mis en œuvre dans les vallées ladin. L'éducation supérieure au Sud-Tyrol est fondée également sur le plurilinguisme. Des négociations intensives sur les réformes des politiques éducatives sont présentes en permanence, afin de développer un modèle intégré d'apprentissage des langues. En fait, le système éducatif du Sud-Tyrol doit être envisagé au travers de l'histoire du Sud-Tyrol (annexion à l'Italie en 1919, occupation fasciste, premier et second Statut d'autonomie). En retraçant l'évolution de la politique scolaire au Sud-Tyrol, cet article cherche à mettre en lumière les fondements institutionnels de l'organisation du Tyrol du Sud et comment ils peuvent répondre aux défis du multilinguisme.