

*Integration of migrants, from language
proficiency to knowledge of society:
the Italian case*

14th EALTA Conference
*Language testing and assessment
Its role in mobility and social integration*

1-3 June 2017

Sabrina MACHETTI Lorenzo ROCCA

The Italian context

- ✓ Before 2012: KoS content is offered by Italian language teachers in non-compulsory language courses and without formal assessment
- ✓ Since 2012: KoS tests are officially introduced in Italy (Integration Agreement)

KoS and language

- ✓ KoS has been linked to knowledge of Italian at A2 level: migrants who lack documentation - confirming that they meet the requirements of the Integration Agreement - must take a test to assess their proficiency in the Italian language and KoS
- ✓ Considering the characteristics of migrants and their level of proficiency in Italian (usually very basic), the guidelines specify that the test must be oral
- ✓ The guidelines also specify that the test should be designed by the teachers involved in adult education centers and administered by adopting specific strategies

KoS test content

SECTION A: BASIC PRINCIPLES OF THE ITALIAN CONSTITUTION AND THE ORGANIZATION AND MODE OF OPERATION OF PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS IN ITALY

Basic principles of the Constitution

The form of government in Italy: the Republic

Guarantee of fundamental human rights and duties of solidarity

Equal social dignity and equality before the law

Right to work

Freedom of religion

Legal status of foreigners

The Italian flag

Organization and mode of operation of public institutions in Italy:

Authority and power of the state government

Regions, provinces and municipalities: local government

KoS test content

SECTION B: LIVING IN ITALY, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE FIELDS OF HEALTH, SCHOOL, SOCIAL SERVICES, LABOUR AND TAX OBLIGATIONS

Health: the right to the health

School

Social services: the integrated system of interventions and social services

Work: the right to the work and labor rights

Tax liabilities

KoS test content

SECTION C

Rights and duties of foreigners living in Italy

Rights and obligations attached to living in Italy

The reciprocal rights and duties of married people

Duties of parents towards their children according to the Italian legal system, also with reference to schooling

Principal local projects that support the integration of foreigners and relevant regulations concerning health and safety at work

KoS test specifications

- ✓ A spoken test, conducted one-to-one: each candidate interacts with a test administrator and a second test administrator plays the role of observer (usually the test administrators are Italian language teachers)
- ✓ The test lasts for a minimum of 7 and a maximum of 10 minutes, including the attribution of a level of proficiency
- ✓ The test is divided in 2 parts: a presentation of the candidate, conducted by the test administrator; on the basis of three different inputs (one for each of the three sections listed above), a spoken interaction between the candidate and the test administrator

KoS test specifications

- ✓ The brief presentation is conducted using a series of open-ended questions in order to introduce the candidate
- ✓ All the inputs of the spoken tests refer to the personal experience of the candidate, without generalizations or cultural, conceptual or speculative abstractions
- ✓ In any case, the linguistic formulation of the inputs should be related to the A2 level of proficiency in Italian
- ✓ The test must be an interview and not an interrogation, and the test administrator can use a variety of different inputs, such as pictures or objects, aimed at facilitating the oral interaction
- ✓ The test administrator should establish a relaxed mood, maintain a highly cooperative attitude, and speak clearly and with an accent not far removed from standard Italian.

KoS test: score descriptors

High

The test is carried out in an appropriate way; the candidate interacts with fluency and rarely requires the test administrator to repeat; he/she gives appropriate answers even if in a short form and with some hesitation; he/she uses a basic lexical repertoire and simple structures, even if his/her speaking includes some lexical and morphosyntactic errors and intonation and pronunciation are in some cases influenced by his/her L1

-

KoS test: score descriptors

Good

The test is carried out in an appropriate way; the candidate interacts but sometimes requires help from the test administrator; he/she gives appropriate answers even if in a short form and with some hesitation; he/she uses a basic lexical repertoire and simple structures, even if his/her speaking presents some lexical and morphosyntactic errors and intonation and pronunciation are influenced by his/her L1

KoS test: score descriptors

Sufficient

The test is carried out in a way that is not quite appropriate; the candidate interacts with some difficulty but is nevertheless able to orient him/herself to the issues addressed; he/she often requires the examiner to repeat; he/she does not always give appropriate answers; he/she uses a basic lexical repertoire and simple structures, though his/her speaking presents some lexical and morphosyntactic errors and intonation and pronunciation are strongly influenced by his/her L1.

Achieving at least a *Sufficient* level in KoS also entails the achievement of A2 level in spoken Italian

KoS test preparation: UnistraPG & UnistraSI materials (Ministero dell'Interno 2015)

- ✓ The project carried out in 2015 and 2016 was started to satisfy the needs of migrants whether or not they are attending a KoS course and/or an Italian language course (Machetti and Rocca 2015)
- ✓ The aim was to design didactic materials in KoS that would be linguistically appropriate and easily accessible

KoS test preparation: UnistraPG & UnistraSI materials (Ministero dell'Interno 2015)

Two kinds of material:

- ✓ a guide to the KoS test, addressed to migrants and intended to present, in a clear and concise manner, the Agreement's aims and illustrate the characteristics of the test (content, duration, assessment criteria etc.);
- ✓ a series of video-materials (accompanied by a text in five languages – English, French, Spanish, Arabic and Chinese) that illustrate the KoS contents. The 24 video-materials (one hour in total) are designed on the basis of the KoS contents; their purpose is to support migrants and their teachers as they prepare for the KoS test.

KoS test: critical issues

- ✓ What's about the impact of the KoS test?
- ✓ Is the KoS test exclusively instrumental?
- ✓ The choice of level A2 for the language test required for long-term residence and the construct of the KoS test: is this choice ethical?
- ✓ Is a test aimed at assessing both proficiency in Italian and KoS valid and reliable?

Thank you for your attention!

machetti@unistrasi.it
lorenzo_rocca@libero.it