EVALUATION OF READING PRACTICES FOR CHILD EDUCATION
IN ITALY

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. The situation of reading in Italy

The data on books production and reading habits in Italy provided by ISTAT (National Institute of Statistics)[1] for 2018 show a country where reading is not so widespread, unfortunately confirming the general trend already detected in the previous years. Although in 2018 a slight growth in publishing production is registered, the readers' national percentage is unvaried in substance. In 2018 the number of book readers remains essentially stable, if compared to the previous year. Since the year 2000, when the share of readers was 38.6%, the trend has been increasing up to the maximum in 2010 (46.8%) and then decreasing again until returning, in 2016, at the 2001 level (40.6%), stable until 2018. Anyway, the highest share of readers still continues to be represented by young people (54,5% of teen-age readers 15-17 years old), especially by girls aged 11 to 19 (over 60% have read at least one book in the year). The positive reading trend of children and young people is also proved by the general tendencies performed by the whole children's publishing sector. Including educational and school publications, indeed, children's publishing is still recording significant growth levels: 29.2% of new titles and + 31.2% for print runs in 2017 and + 9% in 2018. Children and young people confirm their interest on the world of Books as they represent also the main libraries' visitors: in 2018, the 15.3% of the population aged 3 and over has been in the library at least once in the year (it is about 8 million 650 thousand people). This habit is more common among children and young people between 6 and 24 years (38.5% between 6 and 14 years, 35.3% between 15 and 19, 36.1% between 20 and 24 years).

One of the most significant elements impacting on children/young people reading habits, is the role of the family. As emerged within the ISTAT report – indeed - the 74,9% of readers under 18 have reading parents and only the 36.2% of those who don't have. It contributes to underline the strong connections between family environment

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[1] *"Production and Reading of books In Italy, Year 2018"*, Istat 03 Dec. 2019, reporting the data collected within two different investigations: "Survey on books production" and sample survey on families reading habits "Aspects of daily life". https://www.istat.it/it/files/2019/12/Report-Produzione-lettura-libri-2018.pdf

and the reading attitude shown by children and young people. Family is the trigger of children's passion for reading, they are encouraged to read and get passionate about it, following their parents' example and even asking for some advice for the texts. Considering their own key role, indeed, several projects on reading education for parents and families have been developed at national level, and they have been converted in stable and effective practices over the time. These actions are aimed to make parents aware of their own role as active agent for children socialization with the books and of how to become significant reading education promoter. At the same time, these actions are aimed to make known and widespread within the families the several benefits (cognitive, developmental, social etc.) connected with this activity for their children. Among the most representative there are the "*Nati per Leggere*" project[2], pedagogical and cultural initiative promoted by the joint action of the Italian Library Association, the Pediatric Cultural Association - ONLUS and the Center for Child Health - ONLUS, with the aim to promote the "reading aloud" for children aged between 6 months and 6 years", and the initiative "*GenitoriPiù.*"[3], realized in Partnership by the Ministry of Health, the Italian Federation of doctors and paediatricians and UNICEF. The latter one is aimed to new parents and families for the health promotion of their babies, including indications also on reading education. As for the peculiar regional initiatives focused on Reading Education, starting from the educative year 2019/2020, the Tuscany Region launched the "*Leggere Forte!*"[4] project.

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[2] "**Nati per Leggere**": http://www.natiperleggere.it/
Started in 1999, the "*Nati per leggere*" project aims to promote reading aptitude in the child population, offering children aged between 6 months and 6 years (therefore, not only before the acquisition of real reading skills, but also before language development) fruitful occasions of listening to readings performed aloud by parents or teachers within strong affective or emotional relationships with the child. The main goal of the activities held within "*Nati per Leggere*" is to encourage children to perceive the book as *medium* (instrument), and crossroads of intense affective and existential experiences.

[3] "**GenitoriPiù: prendiamoci cura della loro vita**": https://www.genitoripiu.it/
Started from a pilot experience realized by the "Regione Veneto", the initiative was extended at national level. To date, "*GenitoriPiù*" is a national health promotion program with the aim to support the ability of future and new parents to have a conscious and effective impact on their lifestyles, so that they can take care of the development of their child (even before the conception). The Program promotes 8 synergic actions for children health, and it is extraordinary that that, close to breastfeeding, the relevance of vaccinations, and other proper and healthy behaviors, there is the Reading Education, as fundamental recommendation.

[4] "**LEGGERE FORTE!**" www.regione.toscana.it/leggereforte
It is a multi-year action structured as a real educational policy focused on reading education. It aims to make the reading aloud (done by teachers and educators) a structural practice within the entire Tuscan educational system to support the children and young people in achieving school success and personal awareness. At the same time, the "Leggere Forte!" aims to produce greater awareness in families on the relevance of this practice in the home. The

The initiative aims to promote the reading aloud from the 0-6 Services till the secondary cycle of education and it is promoted by the Tuscany Region, the University of Perugia, the Ministry of Education through the URS (School Regional Administration Office), INDIRE (National Institute of Documentation, Innovation for Educational Research) and the CEPELL (Ministry of Cultural Heritage and related Activities - Center for books and reading).

Despite the positive data on young readers, the key role played by families for reading education and the several interventions aimed to its promotion, in 2018 one in ten families still has no book at home and - even where is a home library - the number of books available is very limited: 31% of families have no more than 25 books and 64% have maximum 100 titles. This trend is substantially unvaried for almost 20 years and it highlights how the socio-economic conditions impact on Italians' reading habits (the educational level - often linked to the socio-economic status - is still a determining element: the 73.6% of readers are graduates, the 46.7% high school graduates and only 26.5% of those with at most a primary school degree are reading books).

If compared with the relevance of the family environment, the School seems to play a secondary role in encouraging young people to have a healthy passion, such as literature and to deal with books: within the educational context reading is substantially perceived by the users as a study commitment (especially by teen-agers). The publishers *in primis* (38.4%) are the first who wish for a renewal/improvement of the school policies on reading education[5] (not only for didactic purposes) as effective mean to affect the general modest predisposition to reading in Italy.

Concerning the gender variable, ISTAT reports a significant gap between women and men: in 2018 the percentage of the first ones is 46.2% and of the seconds is 34.7%.

From the geographical, reading is much more widespread in the Northern regions (e.g the 49.4% of people living in the North-West read at least one book), while in the South the share of readers drops to 26.7%. The Islands present a very differentiated realities

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intervention develops three macro actions: training for operators (educators, teachers), the reading activity in schools, the data collection to measure the achieved results.

[5] Among the most recent school policies for students (18 years old), Italian Government activated the "Bonus Cultura", a personal voucher of €500,00 to be spent by young people in books and different cultural activities and products (theatre, concerts, museums, artistic exhibitions, etc.). It is managed by MIUR (Italian Ministry of Education) by the web portal 18App (https://www.18app.italia.it/#!/)
If properly used, the "Bonus Cultura" constituted a good tool to promote also reading education. Such policies helped/supported young people in experimenting and dealing with reading. It is wished that this measure should be flanked be further supporting schemes aimed to children (and families) with age-tailored educational proposals.

(Sicily, 24.9%; Sardinia, 44.7%). The same geographical variance is registered also on the digital reading practice and on the access to books in digital format, that are much more diffused in the North-Central Italy than in the South. In the last years, the digital publishing products are gradually spreading also in Italy. In 2018, around 4 million 800 thousand people said they had read e-books and/or books online (8.4% of the population aged 6 years and over, equal to 20.6% of readers). The reading of digital books (exclusive or complementary to that of paper books) is more widespread among young readers, aged 15-34, and it gradually reduces in the next age stages (until disappearing within the over-75). Conversely, the exclusive reading of paper books is more widespread among children up to 10 years and within the over-44.

1.2. General overview on National Legislation

Although in Italy the current legislative position is outlining in an educational integrated 0-6 System to be entirely cared by the national Ministry of Education, some significant differences are still present within this general inclusive educational age range[6].

To date the 0-3 Services (public and private crèches and nurseries) are still administratively and regulatory managed by the individual Regions and their educational programs are designed autonomously, according to the regional or local institutional indications. These regional thematic leanings are formulated within the main coordination frame of the Ministry of Education, to ensure the general uniformity and harmonization of contents for 0-3 Services at national level.

On the other side, since its definite establishment in 1968, the Preschool[7] (aimed at the 3-6 age group) is directly ruled by the Ministry of Education (MIUR) and it constitutes the first official step (although not mandatory) of children educational path at national level. Preschool is closely correlated with the Primary School. The educational and didactic pre-scholar programs are anchored to the national curriculum centrally issued by the Ministry of Education, both for the Preschool and for the first cycle of education (including Primary School and First Grade Secondary School). Therefore, public and private preschools have to respect these ministerial prescriptions in designing their own educational activities, even in the context of school autonomy. This first step on the educational pathway "*contributes to education and emotional, psychomotor, cognitive,*

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6 See Law L.107/2015 and its subsequent implementing decrees, with special regard to the N. 65/2017.
7MIUR – Ministry of Education about Preschool https://www.miur.gov.it/web/guest/scuola-dell-infanzia

moral, religious and social development of children. It stimulates the relational potential, autonomy, creativity, learning, and it aims to ensure effective equality of opportunities in Education. Respecting the parents' educational role, the Preschool contributes to the integral training of children and - in its didactic and pedagogical autonomy and unity - realizes the educational continuity with Primary School" (Law Num. 53, 23 March 2003, art. 2).

The national curriculum for Preschool (and for the First Cycle of Education, including also Primary School) is prescribed by the D.M. 254 of 16/11/2012 and subsequent legislative integrations, especially due to the innovations foreseen by the EU Council Recommendation on *Key Competences for Lifelong Learning*[8] (2018/C 189/01). The ministerial prescriptions for Childhood Education identify *five different "field of experience"* as mandatory base to design and structure the educative activities for Preschool children, combining the main educational goals (and contents) for the 3-6 age range with the Key Competences Framework defined by the European Parliament and the Council. The fields of experience defined by the Ministerial Decree are: 1) Oneself and the Other; 2) Body and movement; 3) Images, sounds, colors; **4) Speeches and words;** 5) Knowledge of the world.

In particular, the field "Speeches and words" focuses the educational area related to the acquisition of the ***Literacy*** competence (including ***emergent literacy***), as it is assumed by the European reference horizon outlined by the Key Competence Framework. According to the definition provided by the Framework, indeed, Literacy competence "*is the ability to identify, understand, express, create, and interpret concepts, feelings, facts and opinions in both oral and written forms, using visual, sound/audio and digital materials across disciplines and contexts. It implies the ability to communicate and connect effectively with others, in an appropriate and creative way. Development of literacy forms the basis for further learning and further linguistic interaction.*

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[8] **COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION of 22 May 2018 on Key competences for Lifelong Learning**
Key competences are those which all individuals need for personal fulfilment and development, employability, social inclusion, sustainable lifestyle, successful life in peaceful societies, health-conscious life management and active citizenship. They are developed in a lifelong learning perspective, from early childhood throughout adult life, and through formal, non-formal and informal learning in all contexts, including family, school, workplace, neighbourhood and other communities. The key competences are all considered equally important; each of them contributes to a successful life in society. Competences can be applied in many different contexts and in a variety of combinations. They overlap and interlock; aspects essential to one domain will support competence in another. The Reference Framework sets out **eight key competences**: **1. Literacy competence**, 2. Multilingual competence, 3. Mathematical competence and competence in science, technology and engineering, 4. Digital competence, 5. Personal, social and learning to learn competence, 6. Citizenship competence, 7. Entrepreneurship competence, 8. Cultural awareness and expression competence.

Depending on the context, literacy competence can be developed in the mother tongue, the language of schooling and/or the official language in a country or region".

The D.M. 254 of 16/11/2012 also highlights the relevance of the School-Family relationship as main goal to be pursued to ensure effective educational purposes and children's developmental outcomes. The School's action, indeed, is carried out in collaboration with the family (art. 30 of the Constitution), respecting the mutual different educational roles as well as with the other social formations where each personality takes place. According to the Ministerial dispositions, the Childhood Education activities are aimed to pursue the harmonic and integral development of the child, being aware of the relations linking Culture, School and Person in the general frame outlined by the Italian Constitution and by the European tradition and culture. Also, the knowledge acquisition has to observe individual differences and to provide for the active involvement of students (children) and families themselves.

Here below an example on how the key competence of Literacy could be declined in Childhood Education activities in Italy.

CHILDHOOD EDUCATION - 3-6 (The Italian "Scuola dell'Infanzia")

EU KEY COMPETENCE: 1- LITERACY
COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION of 22 May 2018
(2018/C 189/01)

FIELD: Speeches and Words
"I Discorsi e le Parole"

Educational Goals

SPECIFIC COMPETENCES	SKILLS*	KNOWLEDGE *	SIGNIFICANT ACTIVITIES PROPOSED TO CHILDREN
Master the expressive tools and manage the interaction through verbal communication in various fields of experience Understand various/different types of texts read by others. Reflect on the language and on its operating rules	● To Interact with others, showing confidence in communication skills, asking questions, expressing feelings and needs, communicating actions and events; ● To listen and understand other people's speeches. ● To autonomously take part in group speeches. ● To use an appropriate linguistic repertoire with correct use of nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs. ● To analyze and comment on figures of growing complexity. ● To formulate sentences of complete meaning. ● To summarize in own words a short story tale ● To express feelings and moods. ● To describe and tell personal events, stories, tales and situations. ● Inventing stories and tales Formulate hypotheses on the contents of the read texts, on the written language and experiment the first forms of communication through writing, also using technologies. ● Reproduce and compare scriptures. ● Using metalanguage: searching for assonances and rhymes, semantic similarities.	• Main structures of the Italian language • Basic elements of language functions • Basic lexicon for managing simple oral communications • Essential principles of organization of speech • Main logical connectors • Variable parts of speech and elements **Knowledge and rules are exclusively acquired through daily communicative use and reflection stimulated by the Teacher**	• Inventing a story, illustrating it and dramatizing it • Starting from a text read by the teacher, the child summarizes it in a series of illustrated sequences; reformulates it and/or dramatizes it • The child verbally reconstructs e.g. game's phases, experiences and illustrates their sequences. • He builds short and simple rhymes. • Starting from a story narrated or read by the adult, he reconstructs the protagonists' actions. By a group discussion he identifies the feelings they experienced in the story and hypothesizes what caused them. • Starting from a happened event, a narrated or read fact, he expresses simple evaluations on the different protagonists' behaviors, making simple arguments. **Preferably, the teacher should adopt a ludic approach to lead children in discovering the written language.**

(*) EU Key Competences are defined as a combination of **knowledge**, **skills** and **attitudes**, where: *knowledge* is composed of the facts and figures, concepts, ideas and theories which are already established and support the understanding of a certain area or subject; *skills* are defined as the ability and capacity to carry out processes and use the existing knowledge to achieve results; *attitudes* describe the disposition and mind-sets to act or react to ideas, persons or situations.

CHILDHOOD EDUCATION - 3-6 (The Italian "Scuola dell'Infanzia")			
EU KEY COMPETENCE: 1- LITERACY *COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION of 22 May 2018* *(2018/C 189/01)*			
FIELD: Speeches and Words *"I Discorsi e le Parole"*			
Mastery Levels			
1° (3 years)	2° (3-4 years)	3° (4-5 years)	4° (5-6 years)
• The child expresses himself by signs, words, phrases, minimum statements on his needs, feelings, requests placed "here and now"; He names known objects. • If supported by tailored questions made by the teacher, he tells experiences and stories but without defined temporal references • He performs elementary instructions related to immediate actions: e.g taking a named and indicated object; getting up; going towards a known and nearby place, etc. • He interacts through words, phrases, notes and actions • He can listen tales and stories understanding their related general meaning, and showing interest and active participation	• The child expresses himself by understandable minimum sentences; He can tell his own past and experiences according to teacher's questions, correctly placing over time the closest ones. • He performs instructions clearly expressed by the teacher, adopting very simple sentences and well-structured and precise tasks. • He listens narratives or readings from adults and, according to the teacher's questions, he can identify the text's general topics and some essential explicit information. The child also asks questions about the story and the characters.	• The child expresses himself through the language with short and simple sentences, but correctly structured. • He can tell his own past and experiences in an understandable way, correctly placing over time the closest ones and using the teacher's guidance questions; • The child expresses his own feelings, moods, needs; He performs simple instructions given by adults or peers (classmates) • He can illustrate a short story in sequences and dramatize it together with his classmates; Starting from the sequences also he can briefly reconstruct the story. • He recites poems, songs, nursery rhymes. The child makes up words and hypothesizes the meaning of the still unknown words.	• The child uses the Italian language, enriches and specifies his vocabulary, understands words and speeches and makes assumptions about meanings. • He expresses his own emotions, feelings and arguments and communicates them to the others by using the verbal language according to different communication situations; He interacts with peers in games and at work by exchanging information, opinions, making agreements and designing activities and situations. • He experiences rhymes, nursery rhymes, dramatizations; The child also invents new words and looks for similarities and analogies between sounds and meanings. • He listens and understands narratives, tells and invents stories, asks and offers explanations and is able to use language to plan activities and to define rules.

| 1° (3 years)	2° (3-4 years)	3° (4-5 years)	4° (5-6 years)
	• The child expresses his own feelings, moods and needs in an understandable way and he interacts with peers by exchanging info and intentions on games, other ludic activities and/or specific tasks	• He listens to the teacher's narrations or readings, being able to refer their main topics and the related most important explicit information. He can roughly refer the listened story, even if with some logical and temporal incongruities in the sentences. He can also make assumptions about the narrative progress. • The child starts to approach the written language, distinguishing the letters' symbols from the numbers and copying his name.	• The child is able to reflect on the language, discovering different languages; he recognizes and experiences the languages' plurality and measures himself with creativity and fantasy potentialities. • He approaches the written language, explores and experiences the first forms of communication through writing, also meeting digital technologies and new media.

Concerning in particular the **Literacy Competence**, the involved essential knowledge, skills and attitudes related to this competence are related to the knowledge of reading and writing and a sound understanding of written information and thus requires an individual to have knowledge of vocabulary, functional grammar and the functions of language. It includes an awareness of the main types of verbal interaction, a range of literary and non-literary texts, and the main features of different styles and registers of language. Individuals should have the skills to communicate both orally and in writing in a variety of situations and to monitor and adapt their own communication to the requirements of the situation (…) A positive attitude towards literacy involves a disposition to critical and constructive dialogue, (….) and an interest in interaction with others. This implies an awareness of the impact of language on others and a need to understand and use language in a positive and socially responsible manner.

1.3. Socio-demographic data of Child Education Teachers

The sample for the READ-COM's research in Italy is constituted by 180 teachers working in public and private preschools of two Tuscany's provinces, that of Florence, including Florence Municipality and its metropolitan area, and that of Arezzo, with Terranuova Bracciolini Municipality and Valdarno area. Almost the totality of the sample is represented by women (97,8%). Since in Italy the qualification status to access the teaching profession (both for Childhood Education and Primary Education) is ruled by the Law, all the participants have the requested titles, according to the legislative evolution in time. Therefore, they have the "*Magistrale*" or Socio-Psycho-Pedagogical High School Diplomas, achieved within the school year 2001-2002 (D.I. 10 March 1997) or Childhood & Primary Education Degree-"*Scienze della Formazione Primaria*" (Law N. 169, 30 October 2008, Art. 6). Additionally, it is interesting to note that among the highest (and latest) level of qualifications mentioned by teachers (8,9%) there are specific Post-Degree qualifications and academic specializations on support schemes for special needs children in different areas. According to the detected answers on the type of centre where the participating teachers are located, the most indicated is represented by the public school (63,9%), in the urban setting (23,3%). The centres located in rural areas are the 7,8%. The achieved range on the other options (*private school; school sponsored by a public voucher system; bilingual; educational compensation*) related to this item are equal or inferior to 1%.

The **participants' age spectrum** presents a prevalence of more mature teachers: 33,30% From 36 to 45 years old; 31,10% From 46 to 55 years old; 16,7% more than 55 years old; 15,6% From 26 to 35 years old; 3,3% Less than 26 years old.
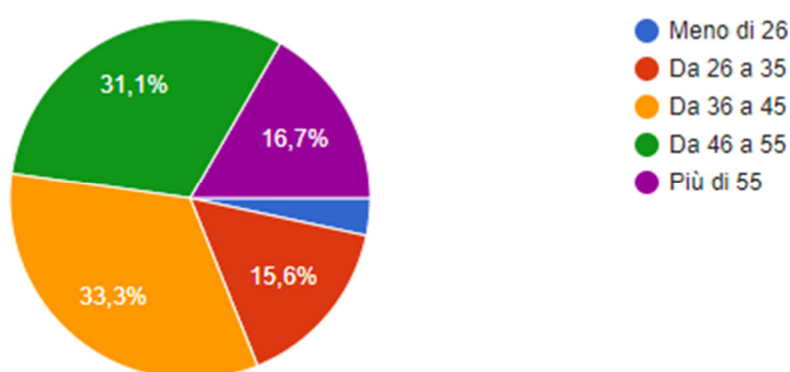
*Tab.1 – Participants' Age distribution*

Concerning the **years of teaching service** in schools the sample shows:

21,1% From 0 to 5 years; 18,9% From 6 to 10 years; 23,30% From 11 to 15 years; 16,7 % From 16 to 20 years; 20 % From 21 to 25 years. As for the **peculiar experience done by the teachers' sample within the Childhood Education**, it is included in a range from the minimum of 1 year of experience to the maximum of 37 year of experience in the educational area focused by the questionnaire
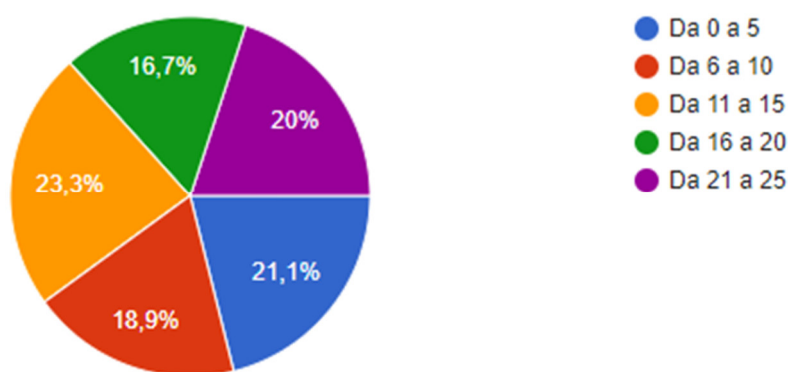
Tab.2 – Years of teaching services

The **teachers' training** has been explored considering the number of actions on linguistic competence in which they participated in the last 5 years: the majority attended between 1 and 3 (63,3%) training actions, the 14,4% took part between 4 and 6 actions and 7,8% more than 6 actions. The teachers who didn't attend any training are 14,4%.
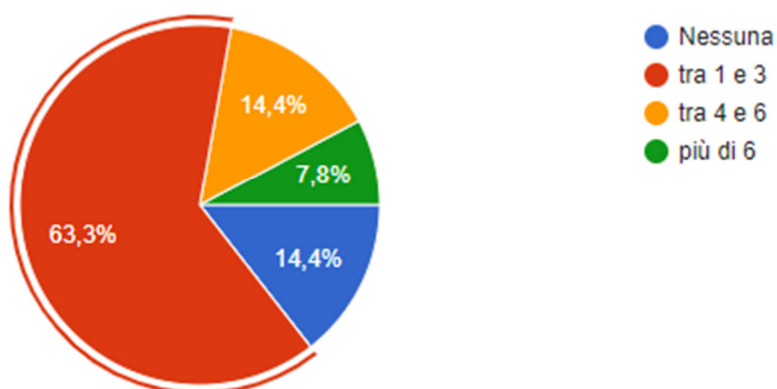
*Tab.3 – Teachers' Training in the last 5 years on linguistic competence*

Next, concerning their specializations, the 66,6% of the sample didn't answered to the question "If they are tutor", but among those who declare to cover this role, the indicated activities were tutor for new-employed, for children with special needs, for sport extra-curricular activities. The 14,4% of the professionals constituting the whole sample is represented by support teachers (e.g for orthophrenic support and/or psychophysical support for children with hearing or vision diseases).

1.4. General overview on Teachers' reading educational practices

According to the peculiar developmental and growing needs of children within Childhood Education, **the most adopted methods** by the participant teachers are represented by the *Phonological Awareness* (40%) and by the *Mixed one* (36,7%), since both these methods well meet the peculiar requirements of the emerging literacy process. At this educational stage, indeed, teachers are used to propose pre-graphic and pre-phonetic activities to introduce children to written words. A significant percentage is constituted also by the *Constructivism* (11,10%). The other methods result less applied (*Global* 6,7%; *Phonic* 3,3%), whereas, method as the *Alphabetic* and the *Syllabic* ones are really residual. It is due to the fact that these latter methodologies are more suitable for the specific learning outcomes related to literacy acquisition to be pursued in the next educational stage (Primary Education). For the learning of "reading" the **most used type of text** results the *Expository* (62,20%), followed by the *Literary* (22,2%). The use of *Prescriptive* and the *Informative* texts show little percentages (respectively 8,9% and 6,7%), whereas no teacher mentioned the Enumerative text. To conduct their educational activities and encourage the reading experience among children, **teachers mainly use** books brought from home (71,1%), books and educational materials from classroom or school library (52,2%) and reading text books (40%) (teachers could indicate more than one option). Considering the focused children age spectrum (3-6), teachers mentioned also other interesting type of texts and strategies to approach the babies to reading education or to the storytelling such as drawings, illustrated books, narrative boxes, audiobooks, invention of stories, puppets dramatizations and *Kamishibai* Theatre[9].

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9 **Kamishibai** (Japanese: 紙芝居, "paper play") is a form of Japanese street theatre and storytelling that was popular during the Depression of the 1930s and the post-war period in Japan until the advent of television during
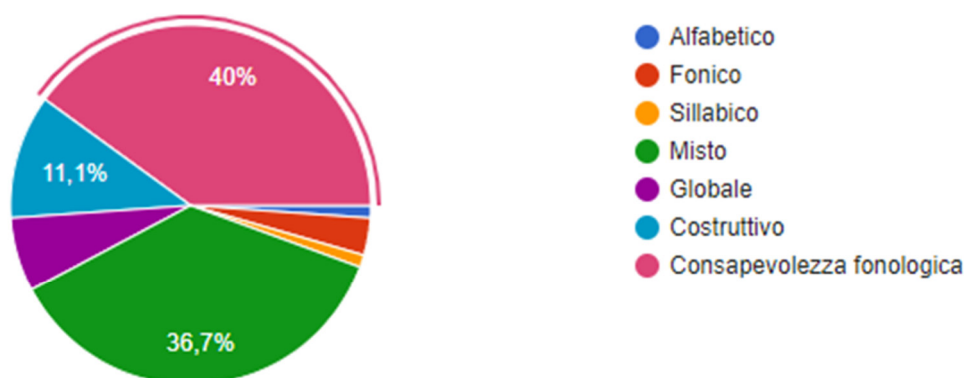
Tab.4 – Investigated Adopted Methods within Italian Childhood Education
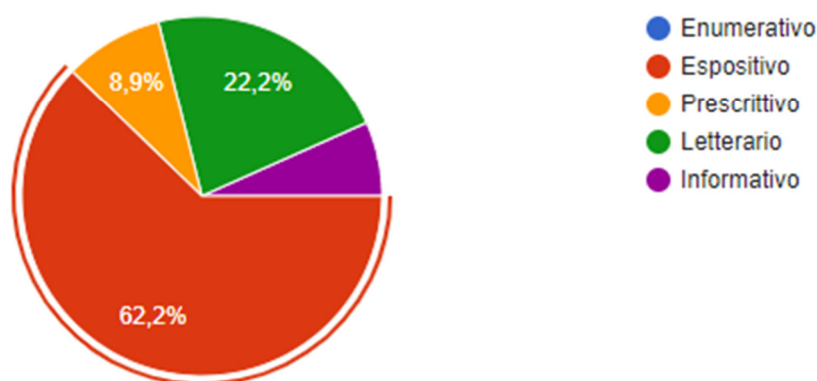
Tab.5 – Investigated Adopted Text types for reading learning

Regarding the **practical difficulties found by the participant teachers**, they are mainly linked to the way of raising the taste of reading (37,8%), followed by the oral and written comprehension showed/developed by children (32,2% for written comprehension and 25,6% for oral comprehension), and by the aspects related to reading technique (30%). The difficulties emerged especially on written comprehension and on reading techniques should be attributed to the early age of children, who are only starting to approach literacy and reading competences. Both these components - indeed - are part of the knowledge and abilities to be formally acquired and developed within the Primary Education cycle.

the twentieth century. Kamishibai was told by a K*amishibaiya* ("kamishibai narrator") who travelled to street corners with sets of illustrated boards that they placed in a miniature stage-like device and narrated the story by changing each image. Kamishibai has its earliest origins in Japanese Buddhist temples where Buddhist monks from the eighth century onward used *emakimono* ("picture scrolls") as pictorial aids for recounting their history of the monasteries, an early combination of picture and text to convey a story.

Next, the vast majority of teachers (98,9%) indicated that their **schools have specific measures to promote the access to reading** (at school and in family) and to provide a motivating environment that invites children to read in both contexts. Even if there is no large **resort to innovative practices for reading education** (the 66,7% haven't been in centers adopting innovations in this area), the 75,6% of the participants teachers **took part to institutional or Administration projects related to the reading teaching,** underlining the relevance of lifelong training of educative professionals on this peculiar theme.

The situation related to possible **reading methods prescribed by the school** in which teachers worked - or currently work – highlights a substantial equality: the 50% indicated the presence of a prescribed school method, the other 50% no.

1.5. **Socio-demographic data of Families**

The sample for the READ-COM's research in Italy is constituted by 178 families mainly coming from two Tuscany's provinces, that of Florence, including Florence Municipality and its metropolitan area, and that of Arezzo, with Terranuova Bracciolini Municipality and Valdarno area. The sample show essentially biparental families (95,5%) with one or two children with at least one baby in the focused age spectrum (families of 3 children constitute the 7,9% and those of four children the 2,8%). The single parent families are a small percentage of the whole sample (4,5%). The participant families have children enrolled in local Preschools (and in schools of other educational levels, if they have more than one child with different ages), and they are mainly Italians. This latter info is also confirmed by the **detected nationalities** (95,50% Italian fathers; 96,62% Italian Mothers) and by the **percentage of languages spoken** by the participant parents: only the 5,6% of the sample has a different mother tongue (Spanish, Arabic, Indian) from that of the country where they live. The wide majority obviously can speak (98,9%) and write (96,6%) in Italian. In the families where one or both parents are not Italian, at home they speak also other languages from the official that children use at school (e.g. Spanish, Arabic, English, other), but the cases detected constitute a very low percentage (6,7%). The known foreign languages (other than Italian as mother tongue and/or as official language at school) are represented mainly by English and French with prevalence of basic and intermediate levels of proficiency. The

additional nationalities to the Italian showed by the involved parents are: Spanish, Indian, Maroccan, Tunisian, Dominican and Peruvian.

Mothers' Nationality		%	Fathers' Nationality		%
Italian	*172*	*96,6*	*Italian*	*170*	*95,5*
Spanish	*1*	*0,6*	*Peruvian*	*2*	*1,1*
Tunisian	*3*	*1,7*	*Indian*	*1*	*0,6*
Peruvian	*2*	*1,1*	*Moroccan*	*2*	*1,1*
			Dominican	*3*	*1,7*

Next, the sample of families is characterized by a medium-high **level of education**, which is also reflected by the observed **employment status** (the percentage of families with unemployed is very low: only the 2,4% of fathers are unemployed and the 7,8% of the mothers).
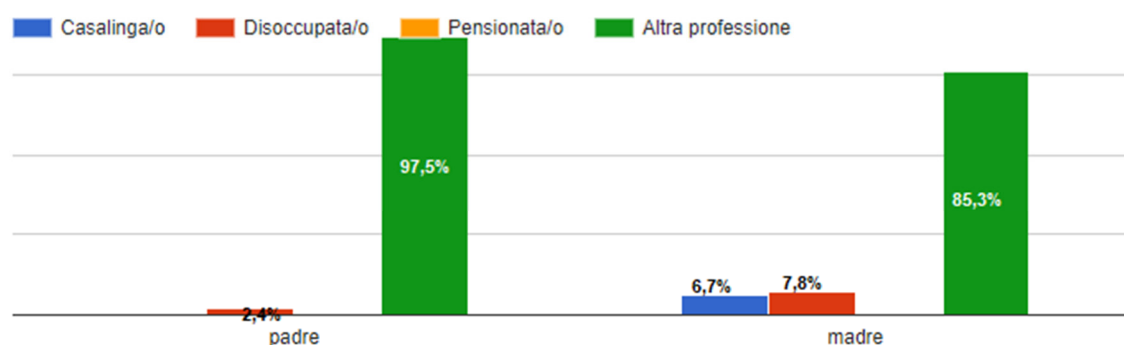
Tab.6 – Parents' Employment Status

Despite the questionnaires have been massively circulated among the families belonging to partners' local networks (including e.g. preschools, social cooperatives working in early education, parents' associations, etc.), the collected feedback showed a greater participation of those with stable socio-economic conditions and with a good level of education, that - probably - makes them more interested and aware of topics such as reading education. Fragile families with more precarious economic conditions or with migrant backgrounds participated less in the survey. This low level of participation of such category was more likely affected by the lack of direct contact with the school and teachers during the lock-down phase (when the survey action has been mainly carried out), who could have played a key role as intermediary in reaching them as well as in making them more aware about the research's focus and items. We should add also that this specific category is used to take part little to the different kind of School's social activities. The main

reasons limiting their participation generally are connected with linguistic obstacles or working commitments.

Tab.7 – Fathers' Educational Status   *Mothers' Educational Status*
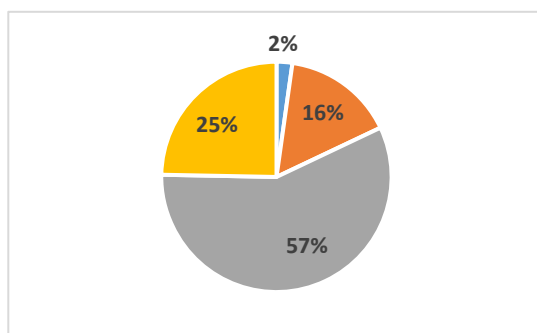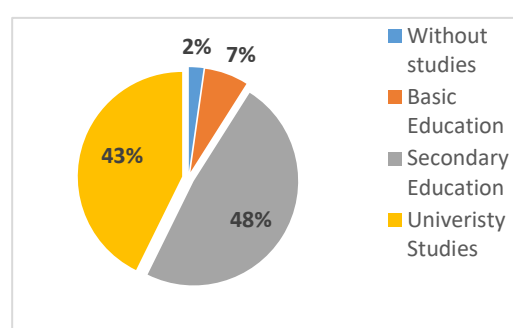
Concerning **the reading preferences**, the majority of the participant families (86,5%) opt for the paper format, while those who choose preferably the electronic one, show a marked preference for the mobile phone (41,6%), followed by tablets (20,2%) and computer (19,10%). Only the 1,1% mentioned other devices such as, for example, the smart TV. Reading in family is essentially conceived as something of pleasant related to leisure and recreational time: among the motivations to read the 69,6% - indeed – indicate fun, while professional or study purposes connected to this practice are indicated respectively by the 14,6% and by the 5,6% of the sample. It is interesting that the 10,10% of families read for home activities such as instructions, recipes, etc.

2. TEACHING METHODOLOGY IN READING LEARNING

Reading is a fundamental aspect of childhood as it plays a key role in the whole process of children's development, entailing several benefits as literacy acquisition, language learning, World's discovering, imagination, creativity and – above all - personal and inner growth. Reading, indeed, is not aimed only to make children literate (although it constitutes its main scope), but it is also a means that allows them to understand and to interpret the surrounding phenomena. For that reason, it is important that the educational institutions take care and promote the reading education since the early childhood stages, introducing children to books and to the emergent literacy practices. Within Childhood Education, knowledge and literacy rules are exclusively acquired through daily communicative use and reflection stimulated by the teacher, who

preferably adopts a ludic approach to lead children in discovering the written language. Preschool's pupils approach the emerging literacy through peculiar pre-graphic and pre-phonetic activities proposed by the teachers and they begin to move close to the written words mainly by games. They are introduced to reading mostly to develop cognitive and immaginative skills through the use of images, pictures, game-books and reading aloud of short stories (even dramatized by the teacher). This way, children start their path of familiarization and confidence with the object "book": they become able to choose a book, handle it, leaf through its pages, indicate and maybe nominate objects, pictures and situations in a sort of preliminary form of "reading". In this process, the role of the adult is well described by the "*scaffolder*" of J. Bruner as the teacher does not impose, does not "teach", does not direct, but supervises, guides discreetly, proactively supports children in their learning evolution. The pre-literacy skills acquired within Childhood Education make children able to recognize ("read") some words, when those show some known letters and elements. However, at this stage, the child still doesn't have specific orthographic and/or phonologic competences on what is reading (Logographic state, U. Frith 1985): these more complex skills will be later systematically developed within Primary Education stage, whose teaching-learning programs are closely connected to those of Childhood Education, thanks to the Ministerial dispositions[10]. As concerns a general overview on the most widespread teaching methodologies in the Italian school (but mainly related to Primary Education stage), the most used one is generally represented by the **phono-syllabic**, based on grapheme's decoding and on the related phoneme's association. This method resulted the most appropriated and with the most effective outcomes in daily teaching practices, also according to the fact that, in the Italian language, we have the correspondence between grapheme and phoneme, and the transition of grapheme-phoneme association results simpler than in other languages (e.g in English or French). Ten years ago, also in Italy was introduced the **global method**, based on the visual identification of the whole word, but it has been gradually adopted only as alternative to perform **mixed methodologies (**that are adopted by many teachers). It should be noted that the global method is recognized by MIUR's guidelines as not suitable for students with DSA (learning

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[10] Within Primary School, the child learns to discriminate the various letters and is able to carry out the grapheme-phoneme conversion, becoming able to read (through the phonological way) also the words he does not know. As last step of learning, the child learns the regularities of his language, the grapheme-phoneme conversion mechanism becomes more difficult and he becomes capable to read complex sounds (syllables) making reading faster (U. Frith 1985).

disabilities), because it can delay learning to read (Ministerial guidelines 2011, Law 170/2010)[11].

Concerning the **educational continuity from the Childhood Education stage and the Primary School**, the data emerged highlight substantially strong connections between the two educative stages. The teachers of the last Preschool's course and those of the first course of Primary – indeed - are used to design projects and curricular materials based on lines of joint actions (78,3%), they share each other objectives, work, methodologies and resources, routines and evaluation strategies (88,3%) and they plan periodic meetings throughout the course, to unify criteria and actions between both stages (74,4%). Additionally, focusing the specific educational practices linked to reading education promotion and teaching, it emerged that teachers exchange reading experiences of some levels with others (77,8%) and carry out activities shared between the pupils (students) of both levels such as reading sponsorship, classroom visits, sharing recess or assemblies in class (67,2%). Despite this, among the observations released by the participant teachers, there is the expectation/wishes to further enhance the quality of pedagogical and didactic connections between Childhood and Primary Education, strengthening the vertical and horizontal curriculum especially related to reading education. At the Primary School the "reading education" tends to be assimilated only to literacy acquisition and perfection with a strong performative character, gradually losing all those affective, emotional and developmental benefits (both social and individual) related to this practice. Moreover, reading activities in school, intended as real reading education to promote long lasting effects also on the pleasure to read, should be increased and improved to meet the needs of each child.

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11 *"Insegnamento della lettura: metodo fono-sillabico e metodo globale"* G. Guardavilla, April 2019, Article from the digital magazine for teaching staff "Dire, Fare, Insegnare"
https://www.direfareinsegnare.education/didattica/insegnamento-della-lettura-metodo-fono-sillabico-e-metodo-globale/

2.1 TEACHING METHODOLOGIES

Before analyzing the actions that teachers are used to adopt and if they are more oriented to a specific methodology to introduce children to the written words, we should remember that at this educational stage - in Italy – the pupils are gradually approached to the reading experience and to the acquisition of emerging literacy skills. The Preschool indeed represents a context where the book - and therefore the reading - "*is enlivened by the reading aloud, so as to pass the stories from the reader (the teacher) to the listeners (the children). Thanks to the words and gestures of the teacher, reading comes alive, becoming one of the most pleasant and engaging 'games' for children, activating in them a positive transformation of growth and developmen*t"[12]. In the general frame of Childhood Education, the whole educational process - including also all those aspects connected to the reading – are mainly lived in an emotional and affective dimension, as it physiologically characterizes the relationship between children and their caregivers (the teachers).

Starting from these premises, teachers propose to children several and different activities linked to the reading and to its pleasure as well as to the discovering of the "object-book" and of the written words. If we look at the detailed results on the adopted methods by teachers, we can appreciate that they confirm the general trends reported in the paragraph 1.4 on the preferred reading educational practices. Teachers mainly use *phonological awareness*, *mixed method*, *constructive methodology,* and *phone method*, while methods more oriented to the concrete acquisition of literacy competence (as the *Alphabetic* and the *Syllabic*) are less adopted. Anyway, it has to be underlined that in all the applied methodologies prevail playful aspects or elements that transversally can be connected to a ludic dimension and/or to a holistic approach to the child, as they are fully respondent to the main features of the Childhood Education. All teachers indeed promote communicative abilities (active listening, empathy, dialogue, assertiveness, argumentation), use meaningful words for children (such as their own name, personal tastes (96,7%) and propose activities to make them playing with sounds, letters and words. For example, they ask to pupils to isolate and manipulate the initial and / or final sound of a word (83.30%), to combine the sound of phonemes with onomatopoeia, gestures and / or kinesthetics (77,7%) and to mix syllables to create words and then

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12 E. Freschi: Il piacere delle storie. Per una didattica della lettura nel nido e nella scuola dell'infanzia, Parma, Junior-Spaggiari, 2013, pp. 124-125

sentences (73,3%). According to the ludic approach, teachers also massively use resources such as card games, mobile letters, iconic correspondence (90%), onomatopoeic examples (90%), always proposing situations that favor children creativity. Even the reading aloud and the dramatizations play a key role to lead children through their reading experiences, so teachers often reinforce the intonation of stories, also as the rhythm of the songs (93,3%), proposing playful texts (stories, songs) that pupils can identify and recognize (93,3%). Since from 3 to 6 years old children are still in the *logographic stadium*, where they can globally "read" the words thanks to some already known elements, the teachers are used to show the words and the letters that the pupils can recognize (80%). Also, teachers adopt some strategies of the global method, such as making syllable identification activities in the whole word (80%) or presenting the various words and sentences referred to elements that surround children and are part of their environment and daily routines (86,7%). Even if in the following educational stage – at the Primary School – this method is not supported by the MIUR as effective approach, its main features make it suitable to be adopted within Childhood Education and/or to perform mixed methodologies to introduce children to the emerging literacy. Finally, teachers propose pre-graphic and pre-phonetic activities to introduce children to written words working with graphomotor skills (86,7%) and introduce the linguistic units with meaning (words, phrases) (60%) so children begin by combining consonants with vowels (syllables).

Tab. 8 – Distribution of teachers' reading methods

PART I. READING METHODS	YES	NO
ALPHABETIC METHOD		
01. I follow the alphabetical order for learning to read.	20%	80%
02. Each letter is studied by pronouncing its name.	36,7%	63,3%
03. The teaching-learning process of reading and writing are exercised simultaneously.	36,7%	63,3%
04. Once the student has learned the alphabet, consonants are combined with vowels to make direct syllables first, then inverse and finally, mixed syllables.	40%	60%
05. I combine syllables to create words and then sentences.	73,3%	26,7%
06. To learn letters I use resources such as card games, mobile letters, iconic correspondence ...	90%	10%
PHONE METHOD		
07. I begin by teaching the learning of the vowel sound, then the sounds of the diphthongs (two vowels together) and, finally, the sound of the consonants.	63,3%	36,7%
08. I combine the sound of phonemes with onomatopoeia, gestures and / or kinesthetics.	77,7%	23,3%
09. I combine syllables to create words and then sentences.	63,3%	36,7%
SILLABYC METHOD		
10. I begin by learning the vowels while combining their sound and their spelling.	56,7%	43,3%
11. The students learn to combine the consonants of the alphabet for each of the vowels (ta-te-ti-to-tu…).	70%	30%
12. Students begin their learning with direct syllables, then locked, reverse, and finally, mixed syllables (diphthongs and locks).	30%	70%
13. Students begin by combining consonants with vowels (syllables) and then introduce the linguistic units with meaning (words, phrases...).	60%	40%
14. I carry out activities in which syllables can be added and / or deleted.	73,3%	26,7%
MIXED METHOD		
15. The student learns the letters from a word whose initial is the one being learned (shown in alphabetical order), accompanied by their illustration.	70%	30%
16. To understand the sound of each letter we use onomatopoeic examples (e.g., for the letter "s" we use the sound of the wind "ssss").	90%	10%
17. Students know syllables from the analysis of a word that contains it.	36,7%	63,30%
18. I teach the syllable as a part of the word.	80%	20%
19. I show the words as well as the letters so that the students can recognize words and letters.	80%	20%
GLOBAL METHOD		
20. I present various words and sentences that refer to the elements that surround them and are part of their environment and daily routines.	86,7%	13,3%
21. Start the first contact with the writing of words and phrases, working with them graphomotor skills.	86,7%	13,3%
22. I do syllable identification activities in the whole word.	80%	20%
23. I perform tasks to recognize phonemes isolated from the word.	66,7%	33,3%
24. Reinforce the linguistic field with vocabulary, grammatical structures, word order ...	30%	70%
25. Students identify and recognize playful texts (stories, songs ...).	93,3%	6,7%
26. Reinforce the intonation of stories, even as the rhythm of the songs.	93,3%	6,7%
27. I propose situations that favour student creativity.	100%	0
28. I present texts to help students understand words and sentences, so that they are able to assimilate and understand what they are reading.	60%	40%
29. The tasks of written language are related to the development of oral language.	56,7%	43,3%

CONSTRUCTIVE METHODOLOGY		
30. I use reading in situations of use so that they find their functionality (leisure, learning, news).	80%	20%
31. I use meaningful words for students (their own name, personal tastes ...).	96,7%	3,3%
32. Delivery of the previous knowledge that students have in relation to the meaning and functionality of learning written language.	73,3%	26,7%
33. I work different types of texts, such as enumeration (lists, menus ...), informative (notes, posters ...), literary (poems, songs, stories ...), expository (project dossiers, biographies…), prescriptive (recipes, instructions ...).	60%	40%
34. Development of educational experiences in the classroom through work projects on topics chosen by the students.	73,3%	26,7%
35. Promotion among students of their communicative abilities (active listening, empathy, dialogue, assertiveness, argumentation ...).	100%	0
36. Promotion in students who use different types of language (body, gesture, music, plastic ...).	100%	0
PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS		
37. I play syllables and phonemes counting games (with or without slap).	96,7%	3,3%
38. I propose rhyming games.	100%	0
39. I do activities to learn to differentiate words from pseudo words.	46,7%	53,3%
40. I propose activities in which syllables are counted to learn to discriminate long and short words.	80%	20%
41. I propose activities for students to isolate and manipulate initial and final syllables.	56,7%	43,3%
42. I propose activities for students to isolate and manipulate the initial and / or final sound of a word.	83,30%	16,7%
43. I propose activities for students to pronounce the sound of each phoneme that contains a word.	86,7%	13,3%
44. I carry out activities related to adding, omitting, inverting and changing the order of syllables and phonemes.	56,7%	43,30%
45. I carry out activities in which the position of the phonemes within the words must be distinguished.	50%	50%
46. Students name loudly words that begin, contain or end with a specific syllable.	100%	0
47. Students classify images according to their syllabic structure (number of syllables per word).	40%	60%
48. Students name the word of an image, omitting the Syllable that has been previously indicated (initial, middle or final).	53.3%	46,7%
49. I present words for the students to indicate if they start, contain or end with a given phoneme.	76,7%	23,3%
50. Students segment words into phonemes.	76,7%	23,3%
51. Students compare words that begin and / or end with a specific phoneme.	80%	20%
52. I teach two sentences for students to indicate which word has been added, changed and / or deleted.	46,7%	53,30%

2.2 PSYCHOPEDAGOGICAL PRINCIPLES AND READING LEARNING METHODOLOGY

Exploring the experiences that promote reading learning in relation to the psycho-pedagogical principles and methodology, we can observe some general trends that reflect the results gained on the issues already treated within the previous items on Childhood Education. The ludic and immersive dimension is pursued by all teachers, confirming how it has to be considered fundamental to approach children to the written words and to the reading experience at this educational stage. The whole sample indeed establish dynamics of animation to the reading (change of characters, changes of endings, creation of stories with images), to make children more and more involved and fascinated by this experience, and organizes the classroom following the pupils' needs so as to allow them to easily meet and access the books and the other reading materials. Small bookcases at child's height, open shelves placed in dedicated corners as well as other specific features of the educational settings are fundamental to favor the children reading experience and their familiarization with the books. The peculiar aspect related to the recommendations on logistic organization of the educational spaces in classroom or - in general - at school emerged even within several contributions released by the interviewed key witnesses such as pedagogists, education coordinators, responsible of school libraries or referent of specific school projects focused on reading education.

The relationship between written and oral language still results embryonic at this educational stage, so that teachers only promote some pre-graphic exercises. Despite this, more than half of the participant teachers (66,7%) propose and carry out activities to establish relations between written and oral language.

Tab. 9 – Psychopedagogical principles and reading learning methodology

PART II LEARNING EXPERIENCES THAT PROMOTE READING LEARNING.	YES	NO
PSYCHOPEDAGOGICAL PRINCIPLES AND READING LEARNING METHODOLOGY		
01. I establish relationships between written language and oral language.	66,7%	33,3%
02. I establish dynamics of animation to the reading (change of characters, changes of endings, creation of stories with images ...).	100%	0
03. I organize the classroom according to the needs of students with different learning corners and workshops	100%	0

2.3 ORGANIZATION OF ACTIVITIES (PROGRAMMING OR PLANNING, TIMING, STUDENT GROUPING)

Concerning the planning, timing and student grouping for the reading activities, the wide majority of the teachers' sample prefer to realize them in small groups (90%), while the individual activities (73,3%) as well as those done in large groups (76,7%) result substantially equally applied by more than half of the involved teachers, with a small propensity to those in large group. The 90% of the teachers have a well defined time to be dedicated to the reading activities and learning (approaching), and declare themselves ready and available to modify the classroom programming according to the children needs (93,3%): a flexible didactics, always ready to meet the emerging needs, can ensure a better pursuing of developmental and learning outcomes of children, respecting single diversities, attitudes and personal inclinations. In the activities' planning, the organization of groups based on the children reading levels is few practiced (33,3%). It is due to the fact that - at this educational stage - we cannot speak about real reading levels, but of different degrees of general familiarization with this practice and of emerging literacy acquisition.

Tab. 10 – Organization of Activities

ORGANIZATION OF ACTIVITIES (PROGRAMMING OR PLANNING, TIMING, STUDENT GROUPING)	YES	NO
04. I do reading activities in a large group.	76,7%	23,3%
05. I do reading activities in a small group.	90%	10%
06. I perform reading activities individually.	73,3%	26,7%
07. My students learn to read by following the textbook of an editorial.	13,3%	86,7%
08. Reading activities start from a project, teaching unit and / or centre of interest.	83,3%	13,7%
09. I modify the classroom programming according to the needs of the students throughout the course.	93,3%	6,7%
10. I organize groups taking into account that they have students with different reading levels.	33,3%	66,7%
11. I have between the class routines a stipulated time for learning to read (assembly, corners ...).	90%	10%

2.4 SPACE, MATERIAL AND HUMAN RESOURCES (TYPE, ORGANIZATION, PARTICIPANTS, TYPE OF PARTICIPATION).

As mentioned above, the features of the educational setting play a key role in favoring the reading experience, therefore all teachers declare to have a quiet place letting children to individually dedicate themselves to this activity. We should also take in account that within Childhood Education several moments for "unstructured" educational activities, including the reading individual experience, are contemplated. These activities allow to children to freely choose games, books or other occupations according to their own peculiarities and personal abilities, being encouraged by the teachers to make experiences and develop their personal potential. These moments also constitute fruitful occasions for teachers also to make children aware about polite "reading behaviors" and to promote the correct use of common books and other materials in a wide extension of the meaning of reading education.

Regarding the use of ICTs in the reading educational activities, these are applied only by a small percentage of the teachers' sample, probably due to the early age of the children with who they work with: only the 26,7% use ICTs to create stories and to perform selected internet activities (23,3%), whereas the group of teachers who is used to carry out in class interactive reading activities is a little more numerous (36,7%).

As for the pedagogic internal management, the sharing and coordination of reading activities' within the teaching staff can be considered as stable practice carried out by the 76,7% of the sample as well as the possible enrichment of the programs on reading education thanks to external contributions, as reported by more than half of the participant teachers.

In teachers' opinion, the School-Family relations based on reading education issues highlight well-disposed families to carry out with their child the suggested activities at home (86,7%) and teachers result actively engaged in providing useful information on how to promote reading learning (approaching) at home. Despite the significant attention put by the parents in flanking and supporting their children at home in reading activities, their participation to classroom activities on reading is considerable but less frequent (40%), probably limited by daily work commitments.

Tab. 11 – Resources' organization

| RESOURCES (TYPE, ORGANIZATION, PARTICIPANTS, TYPE OF PARTICIPATION). SPACES, MATERIALS AND HUMANS	YES	NO
12. I count in the classroom with a quiet place dedicated to individual reading (classroom library).	**100%**	**0**
13. I use ICTs to create stories (story Bird, story cubes).	**26,7%**	**73,3%**
14. In class I use various ICT resources to carry out interactive reading activities (internet, whiteboard, book or created material ...).	**36,7%**	**63,3%**
15. I use the digital whiteboard to perform selected internet reading activities (videos, games, children's websites ...).	**23,3%**	**76,7%**
16. Families participate in activities related to reading in the classroom.	**40%**	**60%**
17. I provide information to families to promote reading learning at home (workshops, quarterly meetings, tutoring, family school ...).	**60%**	**40%**
18. Families carry out with their child at home suggested reading activities in the classroom.	**86,7%**	**13,3%**
19. I coordinate with other teachers to schedule and / or carry out activities with our students about reading.	**76,7%**	**23,3%**
20. In my classroom, other agents of the educational centre or other professionals participate in actions that favour the reading learning of my students.	**60%**	**40%**

2.5 EVALUATION

According to the National Indications for the Italian Preschool's *curriculum* the evaluation activity "*respond to a formative function that recognizes, accompanies, describes and documents growth processes, avoids classifying and judging children's performance as it should be oriented to explore and encourage the development of all potential of each individual. The evaluation practices are aimed to the steadily improvement of the educational quality*". Within Childhood Education – indeed – evaluating means discovering the different cognitive styles, talents and attitudes of children to encourage and support their process of development and growth. At this educational stage, the evaluation carried out by teachers should consist in the careful and peculiar observation of the children aimed to catch the difference between already mastered skills and new emerging competencies (or that are being consolidated), recalling the proximal development zone of L. Vygotsky. Teachers' didactic practices - including evaluation - should be oriented to encourage, facilitate and sustain ("*scaffolding*") the harmonic cognitive, social and individual development of children, without excessive precocious stimulation. Therefore, the developmental outcomes reached by each child - including those related to the initial acquisition of emerging literacy and to reading experiences - should be observed and understood more than measured. The data emerged from teachers' answers on the evaluation issues reflect this general prospective: the wide majority of the sample, indeed, don't use specific reading test to assess children acquisitions (also because the literacy competence is essentially demanded to the Primary School), while the observation of their learning evolution, including the achievements on reading learning (approaching), are made by more than half of the participant teachers, with special regard to the progressive analysis of the classroom performances (60%). On the other side, always working in a holistic dimension of learning, almost all of the sample (93,3%) propose specific activities aimed to examine the level of oral comprehension and so to stimulate children reflection and their cognitive connections.

Tab. 12 – Resources' organization

EVALUATION	YES	NO
21. I carry out an initial evaluation at the beginning of the school year.	53,3%	46,7%
22. I analyse different moments in the classroom during the course to evaluate the reading learning of my students.	60%	40%
23. I use specific moments during the course to evaluate my students with a reading test.	26,7%	73,3%
24. At the end of a task about reading, students reflect on what they have learned.	93,3%	6,7%

2.6 TYPES OF TEXT

In this subsection, we will reflect the preferences of teachers in relation to the different types of texts they use in their educational activities. According to the results mentioned above on the relevance of the ludic approach and on the frequent applying of educational strategies (and activities) aimed to stimulate children creativity, we can see that all teachers opt for texts such as sayings, songs, riddles, and illustrated albums, followed by stories and legends (93%), and preparation of story books, poems, songs, proverb (86,7%). Among the expositive texts, teachers mainly work on Reviews on biographies, school outings, experiments (83,3%), to directly promote activities starting from the child's own reality and experience, and with dossier of work projects (40%). It is also interesting to note how it is applied the prescriptive text: instructions (86,7%) and rules (90%) represent specific type of texts able to combine the reading approaching with educational purposes useful to help children in leading their social activities (e.g. game and other social situations, and sharing of spaces and objects within the daily routine). According to the early age of children, no texts such as emails and social networks are used.
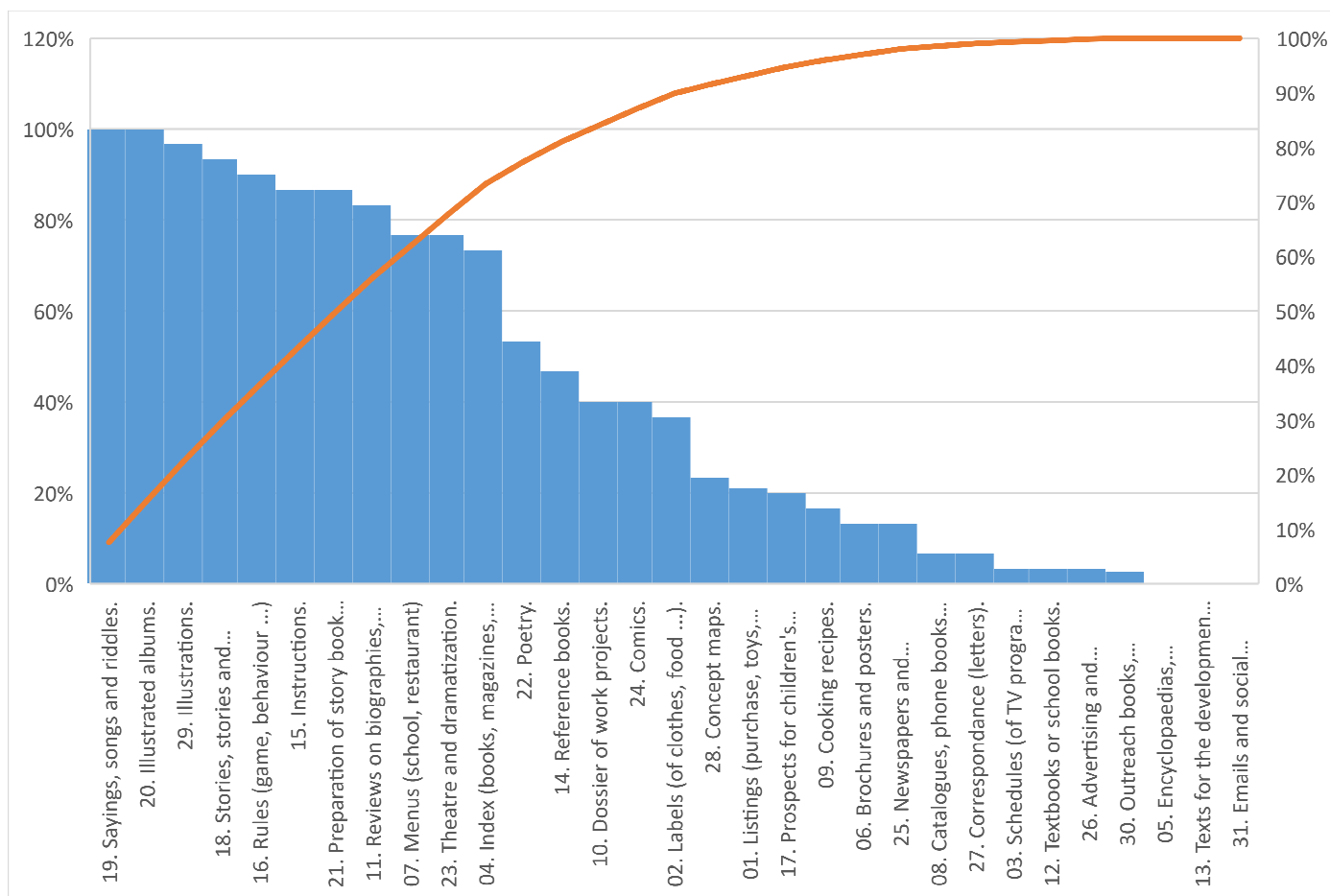
Tab. 13.a – Types of text distribution

Tab. 13.b – Types of text

PART III. TYPE OF TEXT	YES	NO
ENUMERATIVE TEXT		
01. Listings (purchase, toys, class, story titles ...).	23,3%	76,7%
02. Labels (of clothes, food ...).	36,7%	63,3%
03. Schedules (of TV programs, school activities, home ...).	3,3%	96,7%
04. Index (books, magazines, stories ...).	73,3%	26,7%
05. Encyclopaedias, dictionaries, atlas ...	0	100%
06. Brochures and posters.	13,3%	86,7%
07. Menus (school, restaurant)	76,7%	23,3%
08. Catalogues, phone books, agendas ...	6,7%	93,3%
09. Cooking recipes.	16,7%	83,3%
EXPOSITIVE TEXT		
10. Dossier of work projects.	40%	60%
11. Reviews on biographies, school outings, experiments ...	83,3%	13,7%
12. Textbooks or school books.	3,3%	96,7%
13. Texts for the development of an oral exhibition.	0	0
14. Reference books.	46,7%	53,3%
PRESCRIPTIVE TEXT		
15. Instructions.	86,7%	13,3%
16. Rules (game, behaviour ...)	90%	10%
17. Prospects for children's medicines.	20%	80%
LITERARY TEXT		
18. Stories, stories and legends.	93,3%	6,7%
19. Sayings, songs and riddles.	100%	0
20. Illustrated albums.	100%	0
21. Preparation of story books, poems, songs, proverb ...	86,7%	13,3%
22. Poetry.	53.3%	46,7%
23. Theatre and dramatization.	76,7%	23,3%
24. Comics.	40%	60%
INFORMATION TEXT		
25. Newspapers and magazines.	13,3%	86,7%
26. Advertising and propaganda.	3,3%	96,7%
27. Correspondance (letters).	6,7%	93,3%
28. Concept maps.	23,3%	76,6%
29. Illustrations.	96,7%	1,7%
30. Outreach books, brochures ...	2,7%	3,3%
31. Emails and social networks.	0	100%
Others:		

3. THE ROLE OF FAMILIES IN READING LEARNING

The attractiveness and the pleasure of reading not often are a conquest of adulthood, but they usually start to be internalized since the early age and the families' reading habits play a fundamental role in orienting the attitude of children about this practice. The family, as primary agent of socialization, make a sort of "imprinting" on children's reading habits, since it is exactly in the family environment that are offered the first examples of reading experiences. The relevance that parents (and old brothers, if any) give to this activity, if they offer adequate model themselves and allow early encounters with books as well as the sharing of reading moments, where they can read to the babies or with them, contribute to develop the curiosity and the interest towards reading, influencing the future relation of children with this activity.

So, becoming a reader - not in its performative meaning of being literate/competent in literacy, but being *educated* to the reading - is a gradual process starting at home since the early age to be later implemented, enhanced and encouraged by the educational institutions. It is precisely in this dichotomy between educating to read and teaching to read that - in part - the relationships and mutual expectations between school and family are outlined, especially for the educational levels after the Preschool (this element has also emerged recurrently in interviews with some privileged witnesses). In Childhood Education we can observe a closest collaboration between families and School and the family take more active part on several themes, including also reading education, in its meaning of approaching, encouragement and awareness of this practice and its affective and emotional dimension. On the other hand, the general trend shown within the Primary School is that the focus is mainly on the literacy acquisition process and the pedagogical aspects and implications connected with the reading education are smoother, favoring the pure learning dimension.

The participant families resulted to be well disposed to the reading: most of the sample – indeed – think that reading is/should be an important activity in the family (98,3%), so as to believe that dedicating a set time per week to reading at home is advisable (96,6%), as well as having dedicated spaces, such as libraries and/or reading corners, where enjoy this activity (93.3%). The general favorable attitude shown by the families towards reading is also highlighted by the personal pleasure of parents in frequenting libraries and bookstores (80,9%) and in donating a book to a child, that is always considered a good choice (98,9%).

This main inclination is reflected also in the **family-child interaction with reading,** that manifests itself in various ways. Within the family environment – indeed - parents do several activities focused on the reading, especially involving children through games and leisure: they play with children with toys that have the alphabet (91%), they tell or invent stories orally (95,5%), and/ sing songs or recite poems, tongue twisters, riddles (93,2%). Concerning both the reading education and the first approaching to the written words, the vast majority of the participant parents (98,9%) are aware of the importance of teaching to their children the usefulness of this activity, also finding many moments in family daily life to "teach" them how to do it (94,4%) or answering to their questions on the meanings of written words or sentences (98,9%) . It is very interesting that the whole sample considers that helping their own children in learning to read is fundamental.

Families also show a high level of attention to the use of ICTs devices and other media in approaching their children to the written word and reading. Parents underline their leading role in encouraging the correct applying of the readings made with the new technologies such as computer, mobile, television (76,4%) or in selecting or recommending educational programs (TV, mobile, computer) to their children to learn to read (78,7%). Anyway, considering the specific focused age range of children (3-6), it is quite probable that the applying of ICTs does not constitute a remarkable resource to be used/adopted by families in the reading approaching process of their children.

Tab. 14 - Results obtained in the family questionnaires.

Families marked the statements with which they agree:	YES	NO
1. I enjoy when I go to a bookstore or a library.	80,9%	19,1%
2. I usually read the text that appears on the screen when I watch TV.	92,1%	7,9%
3. I read in places in the house where my child can see and / or imitate me.	91%	9%
4. I talk with my child about things we have done.	100%	0
5. Reading should be an important activity in the family.	98,9%	1,1%
6. Reading is essential in daily life.	97,8%	2,2%
7. I pass the pages of an electronic or paper book (cooking, a story ...) with my child.	95,5%	4,5%
8. I usually answer my child when she asks me "what do you put here?"	98,9%	1,1%
9. I read children's books or websites with illustrations with my child so she / he interprets the images.	96,6%	3,4%
10. I watch with my child or children's programs that teach her or him to read (on television or on the Internet).	38,2%	61,8%
11. A book is always a good gift for a girl / boy.	98,9%	1,1%

12. I play with my child with toys that have the alphabet (mats with letters and numbers ...).	**91%**	**9%**
13. Reading is a waste of time.	**0**	**100%**
14. I prefer to check videos on the internet and avoid websites that have a lot of lyrics.	**12,4%**	**87,6%**
15. I read with my child television programming to choose a program (children's, a movie, a contest ...).	**39,9%**	**60,7%**
16. I play with my child to guess or say words that contain a syllable chosen by us.	**47,2%**	**52,8%**
17. It is advisable that the family dedicate a set time per week for reading at home.	**96,6%**	**3,4%**
18. I do with my child some type of activity to be fond of reading.	**88,8%**	**11,20%**
19. I tell or invent stories orally with my child.	**95,5%**	**4,5%**
20. In everyday moments, I read aloud with my child product labels, the logo of well-known brands or traffic signs.	**64%**	**36%**
21. It is recommended that parents teach their children the usefulness of reading.	**98,9%**	**1,1%**
22. I sing with my child songs or recite poems, tongue twisters, riddles.	**93,3%**	**6,7%**
23. There are many moments in family life that can be used to teach our child to read (meals, trips, bedtime…).	**94,4%**	**5,6%**
24. Parents should be interested in helping their children learn to read.	**100%**	**0**
25. It is advisable for the family to select or recommend educational programs (TV, mobile, computer) to their children to learn to read.	**78,7%**	**21,3%**
26. I read aloud (a story, the instruction of a toy, a recipe ...) with my child.	**94,4%**	**5,6%**
27. It is important that homes have a space dedicated to the use and care of a family library.	**93,3%**	**6,7%**
28. I see and / or select with my child books that are in a bookstore or a library.	**79,8%**	**20,2%**
29. I write the shopping list with my child (with icons or with words).	**25,8%**	**71,9%**
30. It is recommended that the family encourages the correct use of the readings made with the new technologies (computer, mobile, television ...).	**76,4%**	**23,6%**
31. I participate in the activities organized by the school to promote reading.	**59,6%**	**40,4%**

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