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*Wellbeing Languages Migration.*  
*Integrated methods between narrative medicine*  
*and storytelling in a linguistic protocol*  
*(bilingual edition Italian English)*  
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This volume (*Wellbeing Languages Migration. Integrated methods between narrative medicine and storytelling in a linguistic protocol*) is the result of the work of an interdisciplinary group at the University for Foreigners of Siena (Università per Stranieri di Siena). It was created thanks to a three-year European project of the Tuscan Health Ecosystem (THE = Tuscany Health Ecosystem – Spoke 10/5), which is part of the PNRR (National Recovery and Resilience Plan, launched in Italy in 2021). The materials that this volume contains are the result of an applied research in language classes in three reception centres in Tuscany, that is, three secular or Catholic voluntary or semi-voluntary associations. The book is closely linked to an online site that is also open access. The strong cause-and-effect link between the book and the archive is also highlighted by the fact that the online archive bears the same title as the book (*Wellbeing, Languages, Migration*), while the subtitle is different: *Narrative medicine resources and methods for an archive of migratory trauma*.

### **The purpose and audience of this volume**

The materials in the book are constructed both as a way to monitor the condition of wellbeing and/or ill-being of immigrants and as an immersive experience that immigrants themselves can participate in through their stories of migration, through the linguistic ways their bodies tell or silence these stories. The intended audience of this volume is teachers of language classes for immigrants, as well as teachers who teach students who have Italian as a second language (L2 students) in schools. This book can also be useful to healthcare professionals and intercultural mediators who receive and work with immigrants in various contexts. The target audience is not only Italian but international. Being bilingual, the volume therefore opens up an important bridge to the English-speaking world.

### **The structure of the book**

The book is divided into two parts. In the first part, Tiziana de Rogatis and Andreina Sgaglione present, in two separate essays each with an accompanying bibliography, the methods and materials we developed for A2- and B1-level classes. These two contributions then introduce the materials themselves, together with a guide for each. In the second part, Alberica Bazzoni presents the methods and materials she developed in the storytelling workshops, together with a separate bibliography. The materials are followed by the statements of four immigrant women who participated in the workshops as well as those of two cultural mediators who supported them during some phases of the project.

### **The link between wellbeing, languages, and migration**

In the context of migration, the first aspect of wellbeing is linguistic. As has been highlighted by Indian American writer Jhumpa Lahiri, the inspiration for several

metaphors in our classroom materials, «When you live without your own language, you feel weightless and, at the same time, overloaded. You breathe a different kind of air, at a different altitude. You are always aware of the difference» (Lahiri 2016: 96-97). Linguistic wellbeing in the context of migration therefore requires first and foremost that we speak of languages in the plural, that is, that we identify the point of encounter between these languages and do not remove – as is almost always the case – the existence of native languages and their enormous affective value. Languages should be viewed as a middle ground: a cognitive and expressive space for immigrants, within which one can encounter their native language(s) or the mother tongue of their country of origin, the adopted language of their host country, the different bodily modes connected to these languages, and the expressive repertoire of other communicative and/or creative languages of each individual. From the point of view of our study, wellbeing is an extremely dynamic quality, because in the context of migration it is linked to stories of metamorphosis, to stories of people on the move. From this perspective, another dynamic feature of wellbeing enhanced by migration is therefore the transformative nature of change, understood as a process of growth articulated over time (Heshmati *et al.* 2024: 3), a process that is first and foremost linguistic. The dynamic wellbeing generated by language learning is therefore comparable to happiness. From a neurocognitive point of view, both can be defined as a set of skills. Located in particularly flexible areas of the brain, these skills work in synergy to transform and improve that same cerebral habitat through their practice (Davidson/Schuyler 2015: 101). The term “protocol” used in the subtitle of this book is meant to evoke a linguistic procedure for wellbeing. The participants received the activities we proposed with great enthusiasm and expressed their desire that the programme not come to an end. They often stated in various ways that they felt deeply gratified, recognised and welcomed. We received similar feedback from the teachers of those same classes, who often audited and assisted with the lessons; they too expressed their desire to continue the experience. The reactions of the participants in the storytelling classes and workshops included in this volume testify to the fact that enthusiasm for these materials has its own specific quality. These reactions show that the materials we propose do not simply monitor wellbeing; they produce it. Through the choral framework of a class, the materials activate the neurocognitive mechanisms of awareness and empathy, which are the brightest stars in the interconnected universe of wellbeing (Davidson/Schuyler 2015: 95).

### **Methodology**

The methodology of the volume is at the same time heterogeneous and cohesive, because if on the one hand it takes categories and themes from different disciplines, on the other it aggregates them through the filter of narrative medicine, that is, the discipline that allows us to «recognize, absorb, interpret and be moved by the stories of illness» (Charon 2006: VII). We have interpreted Charon’s concept of illness in the broad sense of migratory suffering, of the vulnerability of being uprooted: it is the «subjective experience» of ill-being, which according to narrative medicine is the potential precursor to actual illness (Consensus Conference 2015: 13). Through narrative medicine and the intense empathic filter of its stories, we have taken up

themes and points of view from studies on trauma, health literacy, ethno-psychology, ethno-psychiatry, anthropology, intercultural mediation, sociology, feminism, gender issues, and multicultural debate. Each of us will briefly explore, in our introductory contribution to one of the two sections of the book, the aspects of these methods that best illustrate the materials included in that section.