

Language Interpreting and Cultural Mediation Practices in Chinese in Italian Healthcare Settings: Implications through Conversation Analysis and Qualitative Content Analysis

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The total number of overseas Chinese in Italy accounts for more than 300.000 (ISTAT, 2023), which makes Italy the third most relevant destination for these people in Europe, after the UK and France. Thus, the issue of the exercise of language rights for Chinese-speakers in Italian social settings has gained an increasing importance in media and public discourse in the past few years (Pedone, 2020; Stafutti, 2020; Scibetta, 2022).

The current contribution aims at introducing preliminary results drawn from the Project THE (Tuscany Health Ecosystem) Spoke 3, the main aim of which is to investigate, from different perspectives, foreigners' attitudes towards the Italian public healthcare system, as well as their interactional practices with medical personnel.

The main research questions at the basis of the contribution regard the following points: - Can Chinese-speaking patients and medical personnel effectively communicate, with the support of cultural mediators, in Italian healthcare settings? - To what extent do miscommunication episodes and/or intercultural stereotypes affect interactions between Chinese-speaking patients and medical personnel with the support of cultural mediators?

First, quantitative data about Chinese-speaking patients in the Tuscan public healthcare system and the presence of language interpreting and cultural mediation services dedicated to these people will be provided. Moreover, after having provided results of a quantitative analysis drawing from questionnaires administered to 150 Chinese patients about their attitudes towards the Tuscan healthcare system, a corpus of 10 hours of audio-recordings collected in different structures, involving doctor-patients interactions carried out with the presence of cultural mediators, will be introduced. An analysis of specific excerpts will be proposed through Conversation Analysis (Sacks, Schegloff, Jefferson, 1974) and Qualitative Content Analysis (Cho & Lee, 2014), and coding and labeling processes will be carried out and monitored according to the principles of Chinese Discourse Studies (Shi-xu, 2014).

Interactional patterns (e.g. turn-taking, sociolinguistic registers, illocutionary force and perlocutionary effect of utterances, non-verbal and para-verbal language) and culture-based generalizations and stereotypes occurring in conversations will be particularly investigated, especially in light of the meaning negotiation conducted thanks to the presence of mediators

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