

Stqarrija mid-Dipartimenti tal-Malti u d-Dipartiment tal-Ingliz fl-Università ta' Malta u fil-Junior College, l-Istitut tal-Lingwistika u t-Teknologija tal-Lingwa fl-Università ta' Malta, il-Kunsill Nazzjonali tal-Ilsien Malti, l-Akkademja tal-Malti, l-Għaqda tal-Malti Università,...

Ir-riforma fl-edukazzjoni postsekondarja proposta mill-MATSEC saret mingħajr konsultazzjoni wiesgħa biżżejjed. Il-proposta tisħaq li hemm bżonn bidla strutturali sabiex l-istudenti Maltin jiksbu l-ħiliet li jeħtieġu f'soċjetà Maltija li tagħmel parti minn soċjetà Ewropea. Izda din ir-riforma proposta tagħmel bil-maqlub. Tagħlaq minflok tiftaħ. Tibqa' fil-wiċċ minflok ma tapprofondixxi.

Jispikka nuqqas fundamentali. Li liż-żgħażaġħ la tagħtihom l-għarfien kulturali Ewropew u dinji u lanqas il-ħiliet ta' analiżi u espressjoni li jeħtieġu biex jgħixu, jistudjaw u jaħdmu f'Malta, f'Ewropa u f'dinja dejjem aktar kumplessi. Kontra dak li jiġri fl-edukazzjoni ta' studenti tamarhom fil-pajjiżi l-oħrajn tal-kontinent, din ir-riforma (i) iċċaħħad lill-istudenti f'Malta mill-iżvilupp tal-għerf billi tenfasizza kważi esklussivament l-aspett komunikattiv, (ii) timponi fuqhom lingwa barranija tard ħafna fl-edukazzjoni tagħhom, u (iii) b'dan il-mod tnaqqsilhom l-importanza fit-tagħlim xieraq tal-ilsien nazzjonali, il-Malti, u tal-Ingliz, il-lingwa kuffiċjali ta' Malta.

Filwaqt li nifhem l-importanza tal-ħiliet komunikattivi, nemmnu li l-edukazzjoni trid tgħin lill-istudenti jiżviluppaw b'mod kritiku u indipendenti dak li jridu jwasslu permezz ta' lingwa effettiva u fl-istess ħin avvanzata.

Sabiex l-istudenti kollha jtejbu l-ħiliet komunikattivi tagħhom, id-dokument tal-MATSEC qed jipproponi li s-sugġett magħruf bħala Systems of Knowledge jsir Communication and Cultural Skills (CaCS), li fih l-istudenti jitgħallmu l-Malti u l-Ingliz fil-livell komunikattiv biss. Imma mhux jindika fiċ-ċar x'inhu dan il-livell komunikattiv, mgħallem f'kulleggi postsekondarji li joffru tagħlim fil-livell Intermedju jew Avvanzat. Din il-proposta tneħħi l-enfasi fuq il-kitba u fuq l-għarfien tal-Malti u tal-Ingliz bħala lingwi, bil-konsegwenza li l-istudenti se jmissu ma' f'it wisq mill-ħiliet li għarfien serju tal-Malti u l-Ingliz jagħtihom biex jirnexxu fl-istudji tagħhom 'il quddiem u fid-dinja tax-xogħol.

Il-proposta lanqas ma tispeċifika kif l-istudenti se jkunu jistgħu jagħzlu l-Malti u/jew l-Ingliz f'livell Intermedju jew Avvanzat ladarba se jinbidlu l-gruppi li l-istudenti jridu jagħzlu s-sugġetti minn fosthom. Però, jidher ċar li l-MATSEC b'din il-proposta se jnaqqas drastikament l-inċentivi biex l-istudenti jistudjaw dawn il-lingwi fil-livell Intermedju jew Avvanzat.

Dan se jwassal biex:

- i. Minflok ma ssaħħaħ il-Malti u l-Ingliz, kif hemm tassew bżonn, ir-riforma se ddgħajjihom bil-kbir;
- ii. Bosta studenti jiġu mċaħħda mhux biss mill-kitba imma anke mit-tagħlim tal-letteratura taż-żewġ lingwi uffiċjali ta' pajjiżna. Kontra dak li qed jipproponi l-MATSEC, fil-bqija tal-Ewropa l-letteratura hija komponent fundamentali fl-edukazzjoni għax tgħin lill-istudenti fl-iżvilupp analitiku, kreattiv, espressiv u emottiv tagħhom f'dan l-istadju delikat tal-iżvilupp sħiħ tagħhom;

iii. Hafna inqas studenti jitgħallmu l-Malti jew l-Ingliż f'livell xieraq u dan ikompli jfaqqar il-livell tal-Malti u l-Ingliż li huma ż-żewġ lingwi li l-istudenti jeħtieġu l-aktar, mhux biss fl-Università, imma wkoll f'xogħolhom u f'ħajjithom b'mod generali.

Aħna nitolbu lill-MATSEC jirrevedi b'mod għaqli din il-proposta ta' riforma billi jibda konsultazzjoni serja u wiesgħa li twassalna biex noffru lill-istudenti f'pajjiżna edukazzjoni li tagħmilhom ċittadini u ħaddiema Maltin u Ewropej li jilħqu l-milja tagħhom bħala individwi u bħala membri ta' komunità, li kapaċi jaħsbu b'mod indipendenti, u li lesti jikkontribwixxu għall-gid komuni.

Fil-qosor, ir-riforma proposta:

1. saret mingħajr konsultazzjoni mifruxa;
2. se timponi fuq l-istudenti lingwa barranija (il-Franċiż, il-Ġermaniż, l-Ispanjol jew it-Taljan) tard ħafna fl-edukazzjoni tagħhom;
3. se tnaqqas l-importanza fit-tagħlim xieraq taż-żewġ lingwi ewlenin ta' pajjiżna, il-Malti u l-Ingliż, u b'hekk ħafna studenti se jmissu ma' ftit wisq mill-ħiliet li għarfien serju tal-lingwi uffiċjali jagħtihom biex jirnexxu fl-istudji tagħhom 'il quddiem u fid-dinja tax-xogħol;
4. fil-kuntest tar-riformi li saru fit-tagħlim tal-Malti u l-Ingliż fil-livell Ordinarju, se tkompli tfaqqar il-livell tal-Malti u l-Ingliż li huma ż-żewġ lingwi li l-istudenti jeħtieġu l-aktar, mhux biss fl-Università, imma wkoll fuq il-post tax-xogħol u fil-ħajja ingenerali.

Għalhekk, il-proposta għandha tiġi riveduta b'mod għaqli wara konsultazzjoni serja.

Press statement issued by the Departments of Maltese and English at the University of Malta and the Junior College, the Institute of Linguistics and Language Technology at the University of Malta, il-Kunsill Nazzjonali tal-Ilsien Malti, l-Akkademja tal-Malti, l-Għaqda tal-Malti Università...

The postsecondary reform proposed by Matsec did not arise from a proper process of consultation with all stakeholders. The proposal is based on the assumption that a structural change at postsecondary level is needed to allow students in Malta to acquire the skills they need for a society that is both Maltese and European. However, we believe that that, if implemented, this proposal would achieve the opposite. Rather than opening, it imposes limits; rather than depth, it encourages superficiality.

One major weakness stands out. The reform does not give prospective students the opportunity to acquire European cultural knowledge as well as the analytical, critical and expressive skills they need to live, study and work in Malta, in Europe and in a complex global context.

As opposed to the educational experience of students in other European countries, this reform:

- (i) limits the linguistic and literary knowledge that students in Malta can acquire by focusing almost exclusively on communicative skills;
- (ii) imposes a foreign language on them at a very late stage of their education; and
- (iii) in so doing, discourages them from choosing to study their national language, Maltese, and Malta's co-official language, English, in a holistic way.

While we understand the relevance of communicative skills, we believe that our education system should also help students develop more advanced, critical and expressive linguistic skills that are not simply communicative.

Matsec is proposing to change the current Systems of Knowledge subject into a new subject called Communication and Cultural Skills (CaCS), in which students learn how to use Maltese and English in exclusively communicative contexts. The proposal does not make sufficiently clear what level students are expected to achieve through the severely limited exposure they will now have to Maltese and English. This proposal removes the emphasis on writing, on the studying of Maltese and English as languages, and on literature. This means that students will not acquire a range of fundamental skills that a sound knowledge of Malta's official languages would give them and that would help them succeed in their studies and in their careers.

The proposal fails to clearly outline how students may still choose to study Maltese and/or English at Intermediate or Advanced level. However, it is very clear that Matsec is drastically reducing the incentives for students to study one or both of these languages at Intermediate or Advanced level.

This means that:

- i. Rather than improving the knowledge and use of Maltese and English in Malta, this reform weakens the official languages;
- ii. Many students will not acquire crucial writing and reading skills, and they will not be exposed to literature. In the rest of Europe, literature is a key component in the learning of languages because it helps students grow their analytical, critical, creative, expressive, and emotional skills at a crucial stage in their development as individuals;
- iii. Significantly fewer students will study Maltese and English properly, when these two languages are those the vast majority of them need in their tertiary studies, their prospective careers and their life.

We ask Matsec to carefully review this proposal by carrying out proper consultation and by offering a structure that truly helps students in Malta develop as citizens and workers who can prosper as individuals and as members of a community in a Maltese, European and global context, and who can think independently and for the wellbeing of society.

In short, we believe that:

1. There was no proper consultation in the drafting of this proposal.
2. This proposal will impose a foreign language (French, German, Spanish or Italian) very late in the students' educational journey.
3. This will reduce the importance of the learning of Maltese and English in Malta. Many students will thus miss out on a range of skills that are fundamental for their development.
4. In the context of other reforms happening in the teaching and assessment of English and Maltese at secondary level, this proposal will continue to weaken the level of proficiency among students in Malta in the two official languages.

In view of the above, the proposal should be revised after proper consultation.