

2021 ECSPM
ONLINE SYMPOSIUM

MULTILINGUALISM
IN HIGHER EDUCATION
IN EUROPE

28-29 June 2021

*Languages and the
academy in Italian
universities and
multilingualism at the
UNISTRASI in Siena*

Plurilingual and pluricultural country



Italian language policy in the educational field

goal of Italianization

without building the **educational conditions** to achieve it (teacher training, educational objectives, quality standards, pedagogical and epistemological issues, assessment),

but mainly adopting a **normative monolingual paradigm**, with no consideration of other varieties, languages or semiotics (De Mauro 2006)

Consequences at **social level**

Low literacy in **Italian language** (PIAAC and other surveys)

Low competence in **foreign languages** - in practice, only English is offered continuously at school (Eurostat, INVALSI 2019, Eurydice 2020)

Stigmatization of **dialects** even though they are still present in everyday use (ISTAT, 2012)

Minority languages only protected on paper, and only with non-structural measures

Languages of recent immigration are ignored

No structural support to immigrants for learning **Italian L2**

Consequences in **HE**

Long-standing tradition of **monolingualism**

Language teachers training aimed at perpetuating a **monolingual paradigm in education**

EXPLICIT LANGUAGE POLICIES IN HE EDUCATION IN ITALY

EMI

2010 reform of the University system - spread of EMI forced by linking it to research assessment and funding allocation

Very controversial choice

2012 Politecnico of Milan: Master's and PhD courses to be taught in English starting in 2014.

2013 appeal to the Administrative Tribunal (TAR) against this decision won by a group of professors

2017 Constitutional Court (and 2018 the Council of State) decision



parallel language use of Italian and English: any educational programme offered in English, or any other foreign language, must be offered to students in Italian.

EXPLICIT LANGUAGE POLICIES IN HE EDUCATION IN ITALY EMI

Academic debate - two opposing positions

supporters of EMI for the internationalization of the university system

supporters of use of Italian language (Accademia della Crusca 2012, Marazzini 2018)

Actual experiences

After 2010, EMI widespread in many universities, first in Northern and private ones, then also in the South (albeit to a lesser extent) and in public universities, with a continuous increase (from 74% to 85% from 2012 to 2017).



EXPLICIT LANGUAGE POLICIES IN HE EDUCATION IN ITALY

EMI

Studies in four thematic areas (Mastellotto and Zanin 2021)

Institutional policies: Anderson 2019; Brogginì and Costa 2017; Campagna 2017, 2015; Costa 2016; Pulcini 2015; Pulcini and Campagna 2015; Bendazzoli 2015; Santulli 2015; Campagna and Pulcini 2014; Costa and Coleman 2013; and the CRUI studies 2012, 2018, 2019, and focused on post-graduate students 2016, 2019 (<https://www.crui.it/corsi-in-lingua-inglese.html>); Borsetto 2021; Mastellotto and Zanin 2021

Lecturers: Long 2017, 2018; Guarda and Helm 2016; Costa 2013, 2017, 2016, 2012a,b; Helm and Guarda, 2015; Bendazzoli 2015; Campagna 2016; Pulcini and Campagna 2015; Costa and Mariotti 2017b, 2020; Brogginì and Murphy 2017; Bowles 2017; Gotti 2015; Molino 2017, 2015, 2018; Francomacaro 2011; Guarda and Helm 2017; Mariotti 2012; Picciuolo ad Johnson 2020; Veronesi 2009; Quick 2021; Polli 2021; Mair 2021

Students: Doiz, Costa, Lasagabaster, Mariotti 2019; Ackerley 2017; Clark 2017; Costa and Mariotti 2017a, 2017b, 2020; Argondizzo and Laugier 2004; Ricci Garotti 2009; Ackerley 2017; Clark 2017; Degano and Zuaro 2019; Prior 2021; Bagni 2021; Dalziel 2021

Outcomes Costa and Mariotti, 2017a, 2017c

EXPLICIT LANGUAGE POLICIES IN HE EDUCATION IN ITALY

EMI - IMPACT

Universities have implemented EMI courses mainly to **improve their international profile and attract foreign students** (Costa and Coleman, 2013; Brogginì and Costa, 2017)

The presence of foreign students in programmes taught in Italian is low. They are around 3% for three-year courses, 2.7% for single-cycle degrees, 3.4% in master's degrees. The proportion of foreign nationals enrolled in EMI courses is on average 6.5% at three-year level (twice as many as those enrolled in Italian courses), 15.3% in single-cycle degrees (5/6 times more) and 24.3% in master's degrees (7 times more). These figures call for reflection because the numbers are **low anyway**.

As Fabio Ruggè (delegate of CRUI in 2018) affirms:

“The usefulness of providing courses in English is only found when these training programmes are effectively internationalised. A class cannot be defined as such if it does not have at least 25% international students. With more than 3/4 of a class composed of Italian speakers, the use of English in the course tends to be reduced and perceived as artificial” (CRUI, 2018)

EXPLICIT LANGUAGE POLICIES IN HE EDUCATION IN ITALY - MULTILINGUALISM

Case studies of explicit language policies on multilingualism, contained in regulations and other acts of the universities

MULTILINGUAL INSTRUCTION

Bozen University

fully trilingual model of education, with courses offered in three languages (German, Italian, and English) across faculties and degree programmes; in the Faculty of Education, a fourth language, Ladin, a Romance language with official status in the Dolomite region, is also part of teacher education (see also Zanin, 2018)

a context where multilingualism is present at social level, in Trentino Alto Adige Region where minority languages live with Italian language

EXPLICIT LANGUAGE POLICIES IN HE EDUCATION IN ITALY - MULTILINGUALISM

USE OF LANGUAGES

University of Padova

June 2020 position relative to the use and choice of languages within the University

“The University is committed to its accountability for a democratic, fair, non-discriminatory, and an inclusive vision that is capable of promoting exchanges and relations at various levels, including that of intercultural communication. Therefore, multilingualism, multiculturalism, and high linguistic quality are essential for both national and international activities, interactions, and exchanges”

But only two languages are explicitly mentioned English and Italian

**English as the undisputed dominant
vehicle of global communication**

**Italian as a complete (?),
equal and inclusive language**



EXPLICIT LANGUAGE POLICIES IN HE EDUCATION IN ITALY - MULTILINGUALISM

USE OF LANGUAGES

Italian seems to be the language to be defended in the University

«Italian must maintain and strengthen its cultural and social role and remain the **protagonist in all areas of its country's life.**

A linguistic policy that enhances Italian, in the context of global multilingualism, can be invested under three fundamental actions.

First, by **teaching the national language to those arriving in Italy** as a demonstration as a channel to citizenship.

Second, by **strengthening ties within local Italian communities and Italians living abroad.**

And third, through **the global spread of Italian as a cultural tool.**

However, we must remember that successful language policies begin with the liveliness and the ability to renew itself and that the protection and 'care' of the Italian language depends on its daily use»



EXPLICIT LANGUAGE POLICIES IN HE EDUCATION IN ITALY - MULTILINGUALISM

LANGUAGE EDUCATION IN ADDITION TO DISCIPLINARY SKILLS

University of Bologna

2017 the Board of Directors approved the setting up of a **University Language Policy Coordination Unit**

Aim: designing lines of development in the field of languages and implementation of policies through the Centro Linguistico di Ateneo – CLA

providing students with a solid language education in transversal skills, in addition to disciplinary skills. These include basic skills in European and non-European languages (Arabic, Chinese, Hindi, Romanian, Russian), skills that are increasingly in demand in the globalised market (ULCAM project)

EXPLICIT LANGUAGE POLICIES IN HE EDUCATION IN ITALY - MULTILINGUALISM

MULTILINGUALISM AS A MISSION IN AN INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

Università per Stranieri di Siena

Statute- Art. 2.

1. The University for Foreigners of Siena is an **international university** open to **foreign and Italian students** vocated in the study of the Italian language and culture and of their interaction with **other languages and cultures**. It promotes and encourages the international dimension of research and training, **the processes of dialogue and mediation between people with different languages and cultures, with the aim of fostering the civil and peaceful coexistence, mutual recognition and respect.**
2. The University is therefore committed to the **promotion of multilingualism and multiculturalism**, following the recommendation of Eu institutions.
3. In this perspective, it operates in the field of the promotion of the Italian language and culture in the world and of other other languages and cultures in Italy.

EXPLICIT LANGUAGE POLICIES IN HE EDUCATION IN ITALY - MULTILINGUALISM

MULTILINGUALISM AS A MISSION IN AN INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

Università per Stranieri di Siena

BACHELOR'S DEGREE IN TEACHING ITALIAN

BACHELOR'S DEGREE IN LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL MEDIATION

MASTER'S DEGREE IN LINGUISTICS AND INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

MASTER'S DEGREE IN PUBLISHING, TEACHING AND TOURISM PROMOTION

Languages

European languages: English, French, German, Spanish, Portuguese, Catalan

non-European languages: Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Russian and Korean

to become a professional in the educational, tourism, translation, economics, legal and sociological fields.

Linguistic Centre CLUSS

Courses of **Italian as a foreign language**

More than 7000 students every year

Research Centres

focused on languages and education

EXPLICIT LANGUAGE POLICIES IN HE EDUCATION IN ITALY - MULTILINGUALISM

MULTILINGUALISM AS A MISSION IN AN INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

Università per Stranieri di Siena

Why study at the University for Foreigners of Siena?

- Because it is an **international university** with **students from all over the world**.
- Because it provides a **supportive environment for learning Italian and other languages**.
- Because it **promotes the international mobility** of students.
- Because it is committed to providing scholarships for foreign students.
- Because it is committed to providing placements abroad for students on degree courses.
- Because it is located not only in a safe city but also in one rich in culture.

EXPLICIT LANGUAGE POLICIES IN HE EDUCATION IN ITALY - MULTILINGUALISM

MULTILINGUALISM AS A MISSION IN AN INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

Università per Stranieri di Siena

Activities

Linguistic Tandem

offers foreign students studying Italian and Italian students studying foreign languages the opportunity to practise the language being studied in pairs with native speakers and allows, through periodic meetings, to create spaces for communication by promoting awareness of the heterogeneity of the university community

EXPLICIT LANGUAGE POLICIES IN HE EDUCATION IN ITALY - MULTILINGUALISM

MULTILINGUALISM AS A MISSION IN AN INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

Potentiality

1) A contextual reality to overcome monolingualism and the dominance of EMI

In recent studies, also in Italy (Mastellotto, Zanin 2021), in addition to traditional themes such as «quality standards, pedagogical and epistemological issues, assessment, students' views and syllabus design» emerges

“the ongoing scientific interest in the connection between **CLIL, ICLHE, EMI, and Internationalisation in/of higher education**” (p.12).

The terminological oscillation in recent studies between two terms: EMI (English-Medium Instruction) and ICLHE (Integrating Content and Language in Higher Education) **goes beyond a simple question of nomenclature, but underline emerging approaches and actual experiences, such as transnational education, use of translanguaging, multilingualism**

EXPLICIT LANGUAGE POLICIES IN HE EDUCATION IN ITALY - MULTILINGUALISM

MULTILINGUALISM AS A MISSION IN AN INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

2) A paradigm shift in language education – language teachers training (Dendrinou, 2018)

«moving away from the monolingual paradigm in education, and recognising that semiotics is at the centre of all subject areas»

«a language pedagogy oriented toward developing in learners the competence to operate at the border between a number of languages, manoeuvring their way through communicative events»

«rethinking literacy, rethinking multilingualism and rethinking mother tongue»