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## English in Italy: Linguistic, Educational and Professional Challenges

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# ENGLISH IN ITALY

*Linguistic, Educational and Professional Challenges*

*edited by*  
Cecilia Boggio  
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INTRODUCTION:  
OUTLOOK ON THE ROLE OF ENGLISH  
IN 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY ITALY

Cecilia Boggio, Alessandra Molino

The present volume stems from the homonymous research project *English in Italy: Linguistic, Educational and Professional Challenges* funded by the Compagnia di San Paolo (Progetti di ricerca di Ateneo 2012, University of Torino, March 2013 – February 2016)<sup>1</sup>, and coordinated by Professor Virginia Pulcini. The project assesses the influence of the English language on areas of major social and cultural growth in 21st century Italy. More specifically, the focus was on the impact of English on general and specialised discourse, the role of English in language mediation practices in professional and educational settings, the educational and cultural implications of the spread of English-medium Instruction (EMI) in Italian universities and, finally, the contact of English and Italian in ‘new’ migratory contexts. The need for such an investigation comes from the well-known fact that the linguistic and cultural influence of English represents a complex, challenging and controversial phenomenon in contemporary Italy, Europe and worldwide.

The volume highlights results of this three-year research endeavour offering an authoritative and accessible introduction to the main issues in the four research areas of the project. The book is organised in thematic sections, each including chapters that lay the theoretical foundations of the relevant research field as well as chapters that illustrate different methodological approaches and discuss the implications of findings for both educational and professional practices.

**Part 1 – English in contemporary Italian**

The first section of this collection focuses on English lexical borrowings in Italian in both general-purpose language and specialised registers. The

1. The website of the project is available at: <https://englishinitaly.wordpress.com/>; the Compagnia di San Paolo's website is available at: <http://www.compagniadisanpaolo.it/eng>.

opening chapter by Virginia Pulcini, “Anglicisms in Italian: Moving on into the third millennium”, reviews recent English-induced loanwords in the Italian language by analysing the latest electronic editions of dictionaries such as the *Grande dizionario italiano dell’uso* (De Mauro, 2nd ed. 2007), *lo Zingarelli 2017* (2016) and *il Devoto-Oli. Vocabolario della lingua italiana 2017* (2016). Pulcini specifically focuses on the areas of lexis that have been more influenced by the English-speaking world from 2001 to 2016 concluding that the semantic fields most affected by English loans in recent years are IT, economy and sport.

In “Pragmatic borrowing: Phraseological Anglicisms in Italian” Cristiano Furiassi analyses the use of English lexical units larger than a word or a compound, such as (*and*) *the winner is...*, *business is business* and *gimme five*, which signal speaker attitude. He concentrates in particular on the language of the most important Italian newspapers and, using lexicographic resources and the web-based corpus *itTenTen*, he shows that the influence of English extends beyond the borrowing of single lexical items to include phraseological Anglicisms, especially from the fields of music, film and television.

The last chapter in this section, Cecilia Boggio’s “‘Pensi che un *bond* sia un agente segreto?’ English as a lingua-not-so-franca in Italian financial communication”, reports and interprets data collected through a survey conducted with a sample of potential beginning investors as well as a small corpus of financial terms from the *EduCare* financial glossary. Boggio focuses on the role played by the English lexis in Italian financial communication and concludes that the large number of Anglicisms creates a ‘language barrier’ for ordinary and prospective financial consumers that may prevent them from investing their money.

## Part 2 – English in translation and interpreting

The three articles included in this section deal with the role of English in linguistic and cultural mediation, that is, in helping people to communicate effectively with one another when they speak different languages. Vincenza Minutella’s “Direct Anglicisms in dubbing in Italy: State of the art” explores dubbing, i.e., the replacement of source (original) language dialogue tracks by target language dialogue tracks. By comparing English and Italian titles and dialogues of selected films and TV series, Minutella investigates the influence of the language of Anglo-American audiovisual products on dubbed Italian, trying to assess its degree of Anglicisation as well as the functions performed by frequently used Anglicisms, such as *okay*, *wow* and *yo*.

Stefania Taviano’s chapter, “ELF and translation/interpreting in Italy”, moves the focus of the section to the translation and interpreting industry, considering the implications of the spread of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) for the training of professional translators and interpreters. By analysing examples of authentic teaching materials and activities, Taviano illustrates how to raise students’ awareness on issues such as the unconventional nature of texts written by non-native speakers of English in ELF contexts.

In “Benefits and drawbacks of English as a Lingua Franca and as a working language: The case of conferences mediated by simultaneous interpreters”, Claudio Bendazzoli focuses on the interpreting industry, specifically on simultaneous interpreting at international conferences in Italy. After providing an overview of the main challenges and opportunities of the global spread of English for professional simultaneous interpreters, Bendazzoli analyses a conference mediated by two professional simultaneous interpreters taken from the *Directionality in Simultaneous Interpreting Corpus* (DIRSI-C). He points out the benefits and drawbacks of English used as a working language and as a lingua franca by native and non-native speakers, examining important aspects of floor and information management such as speaking time and rate of delivery.

## Part 3 – English-medium Instruction in higher education

This section is devoted to the increasing adoption of English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) in BA and MA degree programmes in Italian universities. Sandra Campagna’s chapter, “English-mediated Instruction in Italian universities: A cuckoo nest scenario?”, provides an overview of current research on EMI in Italy and then examines the European context. Campagna pays particular attention to the threats and opportunities of the use of English in higher education as well as the policies adopted in northern European countries, such as that of *Parallel Language Use* in Denmark. She finally compares two studies on EMI teaching practices in Italy and Sweden to show how the interaction between local language and English may differ depending on the context.

As the title of Francesca Costa and Cristina Mariotti’s chapter suggests, “Students’ profiles and their reception of English-medium Instruction in Italian universities”, an important issue in the field of EMI is to understand how students perceive English-taught courses. The author’s focus is on a specific university setting in northern Italy, where students from different fields of study were administered a questionnaire to collect their perceptions on issues such as their interest in foreign language learning, their attitudes

towards native and non-native English-speaking lecturers, and the differences between learning subject contents in their mother tongue and in English. The results that emerge from this study highlight that, although there is room for improvement in terms of lecturers' linguistic competence and their ability to facilitate learning in English, students think that English-taught courses can lead to equal or better learning of the subject matter compared to Italian-taught courses. Future research will have to demonstrate whether these student perceptions are confirmed by learning outcomes.

In the third chapter of this section, "Repetition and rephrasing in Physical Sciences and Engineering English-medium lectures in Italy", Alessandra Molino explores how the EMI mode may affect second language processing and influence interactional strategies in the classroom. By focusing on repeats, verbatim matches, false starts, self-repairs and reformulations in six lectures delivered in English by Italian lecturers, Molino shows that Italian lecturers produce more single word repeats (e.g., *the the results...*) than is expected in native English. However, they also show audience awareness and monitoring abilities over their speech, particularly trying to improve the correctness and clarity of the message through self-repairs and reformulations.

#### **Part 4 – English in migratory settings**

The fourth and last section of the volume comprises three articles that concentrate on the role of English in contact with immigrants' native languages and urban varieties of Italian in multilingual communities. In the chapter "A multimodal ethnopoetic analysis of sea-voyages in migrants' ELF reports and in ancient narratives translated into ELF: Experiential-linguistic strategies in Responsible Tourism", Maria Grazia Guido, Pietro Luigi Iaia and Lucia Errico aim to 'emotionally promote', or *preMOTE*, the Salento area in Southern Italy, which has been heavily affected by the arrival of migrants in recent years. The study is articulated in three phases dealing with the experiential embodiment and ethnopoetic analysis of African migrants' sea-voyage narratives, the ethnopoetic analysis of ancient-Greek and Latin sea-voyage narratives and the multimodal re-textualisation of those modern and ancient epic journeys in 'promotional' marketing through an audiovisual campaign.

Casting light on the role played by the English language within urban migrant communities, the last two chapters of the volume move the focus to two different areas of Northern Italy affected by migration. Federica Guerini's "English and the Ghanaian diaspora in Northern Italy" deals with a more stable community than the one analysed in the previous chapter:

first generation Ghanaians living in the city of Bergamo. By analysing face to face interactions and drawing data from semi-structured interviews with members of that community, Guerini provides insights into their verbal repertoire and the social value attributed to their different linguistic resources, i.e., Akan, Ghanaian English and Italian. Subsequently, she concentrates on English and investigates the role it plays in inter-ethnic and in-group communication.

The last chapter, Gerardo Mazzaferro's "The relocation of English(es) in migratory contexts: The case of the Filipino community in Turin (Italy)", deals with 'translanguaging practices' and metalinguistic comments on language use, identity and ideologies by first- and second-generation Filipina/o immigrants who reside in the city of Turin. Based on a small-scale random sample of 30 female and male Filipina/o speakers, as well as sociolinguistic questionnaires on aspects such as the informants' biographies, self-reported comments on linguistic competence and the use of language in different domains, Mazzaferro shows that English is commonly employed by both first- and second-generation speakers in their translanguaging practices, functioning as a resource to disclose, mediate and transform complex sociolinguistic realities, ideologies and identities.

By providing an up-to-date overview of the influence of English on Italian, this book aims at raising awareness of the degree to which English permeates the everyday linguistic practices of Italian speakers and the challenges it poses in key cultural and social spheres. Although the volume is focused on the Italian context, it points to broader research implications, thus making this collection a useful point of comparison for international scholars.