English as a Medium of Instruction in Italian Universities: Linguistic Policies, Pedagogical Implications*

Sandra Campagna, Virginia Pulcini

Abstract
Academic prestige in Europe is now linked to the promotion of the so-called *international university*, an educational environment whose image largely relies on an *English-only* policy. Although the accomplishment (and perception) of these English-mediated settings might vary, *international universities* are often identified as ELF contexts. Whilst this paradigm may apply to multilingual settings, the claims can fall short when English-taught programmes are addressed to quasi-monolingual audiences, a common trait of many Italian *international universities*. In these contexts the adoption of English as a medium of instruction (EMI) risks being merely a *cosmetic* label used to obfuscate dubious political choices under the false pretences of *internationalisation*. This paper provides an updated picture of higher education programmes currently run in English in Italian universities.

Keywords: English medium of instruction; higher education; internationalisation; English-only policy.

1. Introduction

In February 2012 the Rector of the *Politecnico di Milano* announced that all MA and PhD courses would be taught entirely in English as of the academic year 2014-15. This drastic switch to '*English-only*' policies, mainly motivated by the need to respond to the demands of global competition in Higher Education (henceforth HE), raised sharp reactions inside the academic community and

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beyond. Many staff members of the *Politecnico di Milano* signed a petition firmly opposing the Rector's decision. The *Accademia della Crusca*, the historic "custodian" of the Italian language and culture, also challenged the decision with a provocative question: "Is it useful and appropriate to adopt English monolingualism in Italian university courses?"

2. Aims of the paper

This study presents a profile of English-mediated programmes in Italian universities to assess the pervasiveness of English at the tertiary level, with particular attention to issues such as a) whether the English-only approach is generated chiefly by political reasons or whether it incorporates serious reflection on the uses of English in the Italian academic scenario; b) how suitable the *English-only* approach actually is, given the predominant linguistic features of Italian institutions and their students and staff. We provide updated information on the specificities of the Italian situation, a setting virtually unexplored so far, in relation to the European scenario to verify the extent to which the Italian context is consonant with the linguistic policies in HE across the continent, which, as we will see, are not at all of one piece.

Our starting hypothesis is that the so-called "two Europes" conspicuously exist not only in terms of the economy but also at the level of educational policies. This divide reveals that despite the attempts to standardise European HE in compliance with the Bologna Process mandate, it is hard to posit homogeneity in linguistic pedagogies across Europe. English-mediated universities are often broadly identified as ELF contexts (Björkman 2011), where English is used for effective communication among speakers who do not share the same L1. ELF has recently become a new, exciting area of research focussing on and describing manifestations of expanding circle English (Jenkins 2007; Seidlhofer 2009, 2011). According to these scholars ELF specifically relates to a new community of practice, i.e. non-native speakers, and their appropriation of English. Here, English is used as "an additionally acquired language system which serves as a common means of communication for speakers of different first languages" (Jenkins 2011: 928).

However, we claim that the ELF paradigm might not necessarily apply to environments where curricular courses held in English address monolingual/quasi-monolingual audiences, a feature which characterises many Italian universities. In these contexts offering entire degree courses taught exclusively in English mainly serves to boost academic prestige and to keep up with the global pressures of internationalisation as shown in the unprecedented decision of the *Politecnico di Milano*. We therefore contend that this provision does not necessarily imply that English actually fulfils a genuine lingua franca role and we think it is appropriate to draw a line between ELF practices and language policies aiming to develop English as an International Language (henceforth EIL) by treating the two communicative modes (often misleadingly confused) as separate paradigms. In our view it is important to distinguish between the ELF "mode of communication" as aptly conceptualised by Seidlhofer and Widdowson (see Cogo 2008), occurring where English enables speakers from different L1 backgrounds to actually negotiate effective strategies for communication in a truly multilingual context (Smit 2010), and the EIL mode occurring in classroom settings where the adoption of the English medium is a top-down imposition. Further, we also claim that for the EIL mode to be successful, it is necessary to adopt *ad hoc* linguistic policies aiming at improving English language proficiency levels. Consistently with this line of thought, in the present study we will be referring to the EIL mode, since we believe that ELF practices are not in tune with many academic contexts in Italy.

The paper is organized as follows: in Section 3 we provide an overview of English-mediated programmes offered by European universities to highlight commonalities and shared concerns; in Section 4 we discuss linguistic policies in Italian HE as a result of the Bologna process to compare the local context with the European scenario. In Section 5 we report quantitative data on the implementation of English-mediated programmes across Italy. This is followed by data analysis and conclusions.

3. English as a medium of instruction in Europe: "two Europes"

The Anglicisation process shaping European universities through the implementation of *English-only* courses has been perceived by

some as a "European paradox" (Phillipson 2006: 72) largely in contrast with the long-hallowed EU tradition of preserving linguistic and cultural diversity through the adoption of multilingual policies. Interestingly, on the other hand, this very same process has been viewed by others as a specific European dynamic "in part due to the internationalisation of the student population in many universities, encouraged by European Union (EU) policies and by ever larger numbers of students from outside the EU attending universities in the Netherlands, Germany or Sweden, to name just three popular study destinations". (Berns 2009: 195)

Whether perceived as a threat or as an opportunity, the *English-only* switch in European universities has been gaining increasing popularity as noted in Smit and Dafouz (2012). Graddol (2006: 74) explains how, for global universities, building academic prestige is strictly correlated with the promotion of an international agenda largely enhancing English as a medium of instruction. This wave of Englishisation in Europe (and outside Europe) is also viewed as "a response to the international marketization of HE" (Coleman 2006: 3). According to Coleman, universities are no longer institutions but brands adopting "customercentric" strategies designed to attract international students. This phrase refers not only to incoming students through organised mobility exchanges, but especially to independent 'fee-paying' individuals. Eloquent in this regard is the concept of *entrepreneurial university* (Mautner 2005; Campagna 2008).

Promoting internationalisation through English-medium courses is a recurrent, consolidated practice across Europe[1] strongly encouraged by the standardisation protocol borne out by the so-called Bologna Process[2]. However, we wish to point out that the popular academic destinations combining a truly *international* profile with access to English as a medium of instruction (henceforth EMI[3]) tend to be located in Northern Europe (see Berns 2009) rather

[1] According to Graddol (2006: 77) offering courses taught through the medium of English to attract international students is now common practice also in Asia, where countries like Singapore and Malaysia have distinguished themselves by becoming *education hubs*.

[2] As well as attempting to harmonise university programmes and curricula across Europe, the Bologna Process, which began in 1999 when the Bologna Declaration was signed, has also fostered the implementation of EMI policies in education (Smit and Dafouz 2012).

[3] Researchers use a variety of acronyms for English as a medium of instruction:

than in the Mediterranean countries[4]. We also argue that this divide reflects unequal levels of language proficiency as a consequence of different linguistic policies adopted at the national level. This corroborates our main claim that sounder EIL policies (rather than ELF policies) are needed to level off these differences across Europe and to harmonise opportunities in the global job market.

More specifically, in Northern European countries, English is a routine, fairly ordinary communicative medium largely fostered by early exposure to the language outside the classroom; this is not so in Mediterranean countries where exposure to English outside the school environment is still limited. We wish to stress that in these regions EIL and *English-only* courses are quite often perceived as a fake, a put-on and ultimately an extra hurdle, rather than as a provision meant to facilitate communication. (Doiz *et al*. 2011)

The beneficial effect of early exposure to English outside the school context is highlighted in a cross-cultural study by Berns and de Bot (2008) who compare the relationship between early exposure to English and linguistic proficiency across four European countries. They explain that the Dutch are exposed to English much earlier at school, and have more opportunities to listen to spoken English through cinema and television than French, German, Italian and Spanish citizens. The positive effect of intensive contact with English does not apply to Dutch students only. Erling and Bartlett (2006) describe a similar scenario concerning students enrolled in English-mediated courses offered by the Freie Universität Berlin (FUB). Results of a questionnaire administered to a sample of FUB students show that English plays a significant part in these students' lives both inside and outside the classroom[5] so that their linguistic proficiency is very high by the time they access university.

EMI (English as a medium of instruction) and ICL (Integrating Content and Language) are both largely used as regards tertiary education. EMI's research focus is instruction, ICL is more specifically used for describing classroom discursive practices in the teaching/learning process (Smit and Dafouz 2012).

[4] We are here referring to general trends, but do not underestimate the great differences that exist between Mediterranean countries in terms of historical, political, cultural and educational realities. On the situation in Spain see also Fortanet-Gómez (2012); for France see Taillefer (2013).

[5] For example, they fluently read in English, use English when they travel outside Germany, socialise in English also in their leisure time.

The pivotal role played by Nordic universities in implementing EMI programmes is confirmed in other studies which reveal a general trend to activate English-mediated programmes in HE especially at MA level and mainly in scientific disciplines whose course literature has traditionally been published in English (Hyrkstedt and Kalaja 1998; Coleman 2006; Erling and Bartlett 2006; Airey and Linder 2008; Ljosland 2011). The main reasons for implementing EMI programmes in Northern European universities can be summarised as follows:

1) boosting the institution's reputation;
2) fostering student mobility;
3) attracting foreign students from other continents (e.g., African and Asian countries) for financial and academic reasons;
4) preparing students to compete on the global job market;
5) offering high quality textbooks and resources in English;
6) for ideological reasons.

The last category interestingly involves attaching English-only programmes to subjects reputed to carry high *educational* value, as if switching to English implied prioritising specially valuable content. A case in point is the study presented in Ljosland (2011) regarding the decision made by the Industrial Ecology Department at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology in Trondheim to activate all its MA courses in English[6], to promote sustainability and ecological values. Linking EMI to cutting-edge educational values might be a future trend; however, the general trend over the last twenty years has been to activate English-mediated programmes in the following disciplinary areas: Economics, Business Administration and Management, Science, Engineering, Medicine and IT. As specified in many studies (see Airey and Linder 2008), these are mainly scientific subjects where the majority of the literature has been published in English. Finally, it is worth stressing with Coleman (2006: 4) that "Foreign language learning *in itself* [our emphasis] is NOT the reason why institutions adopt English-medium teaching", a feature that also characterises the CLIL agenda[7].

[6] An extreme application of EMI: English is used in all course-related activities.

[7] CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) aims at integrating subject matter with language learning, while the main focus of EFL (English as a foreign language) is reaching proficiency in the target language (Smit and Dafouz 2012).

Despite the popularity of EMI programmes in Northern European universities, there are emerging perplexities about the *English-only* agenda. First of all, although a number of Nordic studies have examined the extent to which EMI is used at tertiary level, very few such studies deal with disciplinary learning in a second language (Airey and Linder 2008) and this is seen as a major pedagogical drawback.

Second, studies measuring EMI perceptions (for example, Ljosland 2011) indicate mixed feelings on the part of students and lecturers, who nourish concerns about underperforming in a language other than their mother tongue. Third, a key concern among many Nordic scholars regards fears of *domain loss*[8] especially related to scientific terminology which is at risk of becoming entirely *Englishised*, a process that would as a consequence considerably impoverish Nordic national languages. Rather than advocating a strict application of the *English-only* formula, this complex scenario, then, seems to us more inclined to favour policies pursuing bilingual literacies especially in disciplinary contexts where *domain loss* is a serious risk. This attitude is in fact encapsulated in the concept of *parallel language use,*[9] largely rooted in Nordic countries, reflecting a general orientation in official educational policies across the Scandinavian peninsula to guarantee the dual use of English and of the national language in HE contexts.

4. Constructing the *international university*: English as a medium of instruction in Italy

Since the Second World War, there has been an extraordinary increase in the spread of English everywhere in Europe. Some of the indicators of the popularity of English are its influence on the vocabularies of European languages, especially in the scientific and technical fields but also in the general language, and the growing

[8] Fears of *domain loss* emerged clearly during the Conference: *English in Europe: Debates and Discourses* at the University of Sheffield in April 2012. This Conference is part of *The English in Europe (EiE)* project which investigates the position of English in today's Europe by hosting five conferences in contrasting European regions.

[9] The application of *parallel language use* is under scrutiny for its assumed lack of clear pedagogical aims (Airey and Linder 2008; Bolton and Kuteeva 2012).

number of EFL students (Furiassi *et al.* 2012). Although attitudes to the dominance of Anglo-American culture and language vary from country to country, Italy is one of those nations where English is considered an opportunity rather than a threat. According to the Eurobarometer survey (2012)[10] on "Europeans and their languages", for example, 70% of Italians indicate English as the most important language for their personal development (only 11% indicate French, the second most popular language) and 84% indicate English as the most important language for their children's future (14% choose French). This decline of French in favour of English in Italian education began in the 1960s (Pulcini 2002).

Over the last twenty years, several educational reforms have come into force in Italy, with specific focus on the field of foreign languages. In 1990 a Ministerial Decree introduced one foreign language in elementary schools but although other foreign languages are sometimes available, in actual fact the great majority of parents choose English for their children. Another major reform (*Legge Moratti 53/2003*), implemented from 2010-2011, has brought substantial innovations to the Italian secondary school system, upgrading English with the status of compulsory subject for technical and vocational schools (*istituti tecnici e professionali*). At the same time, the CLIL approach was introduced for two modern languages from the third and fourth year respectively in language-oriented high schools (*licei linguistici*) and in the fifth year for other types of secondary schools. Again English is at the forefront as far as preferences are concerned. Data on the ongoing implementation of this reform is striking: theoretically the workload in the same foreign language (usually English), starting from elementary to high school amounts to 1,192 hours,[11] which should lead to a B2 proficiency level according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). Whether this goal can be reached will be verified in the next few years. At the moment, the level of English proficiency among Italians is not very high in comparison with other Europeans. This is confirmed again by the Special Eurobarometer Report 386: "Europeans and their languages", which shows that only

[10] http://ec.europa.eu/languages/documents/eurobarometer/e386-factsheets-it_en.pdf, last accessed April 12, 2013.

[11] Data presented in the Symposium "New Frontiers in Teaching and Learning English" held at the University of Verona on 15 February 2013.

34% of Italians declare that they can speak English "well enough to be able to have a conversation". This places Italy in a better position than, for instance, Spain (22%), Portugal (27%) and Romania (31%), but worse off than other countries such as France (39%), Greece (51%), Germany (56%), and definitely a long way behind Finland (70%), Denmark (86%), Sweden (86%) and the Netherlands (90%)[12].

Since 1999, the term *internationalisation* (Teichler 2009) has indeed become a buzzword in Italian higher education. As in other European contexts, a close connection exists between globalisation, internationalisation and the spread of English. The importance of EMI is stressed in a report[13] issued by the Conference of Italian University Rectors (CRUI)[14] in 2012, where it is stated that the provision of English-medium programmes is one of the key strategies to promote internationalisation in the Italian tertiary level. The main reason given is that the increase of student mobility, a key objective for the next decade, is facilitated by courses that are accessible from a linguistic point of view. For CRUI, accessibility clearly coincides with the use of English, "the most widespread vehicular language". The CRUI report further explains:

> The use of English fulfils a twofold objective: to make the Italian university more attractive to foreign students but also to prepare and train Italian students to open up to the labour market and/or the scientific world at international level. Let us keep in mind, in fact, that especially for scientific research the English language is, at least for the time being, the passport to making oneself eligible for or known by an international scientific community[15].

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[12] http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_386_en.pdf, last accessed April 12, 2013.

[13] http://www.crui.it/HomePage.aspx?ref=2094, last accessed April 12, 2013.

[14] An association of Italian state and private universities with a co-ordinating and consulting role in the university system, it operates as a link between the academic world and the Italian Parliament and Ministry of Education. www.crui.it/english/

[15] Original text: "L'offerta in inglese assolve ad un duplice obiettivo: rendere più attraente l'Università italiana agli studenti stranieri, ma anche preparare e formare gli studenti italiani ad un'apertura verso il mondo lavorativo e/o scientifico a livello internazionale. Non dimentichiamo, infatti, che soprattutto per la ricerca scientifica, la lingua inglese rimane, almeno per il momento, il passaporto per proporsi e farsi conoscere dalla comunità scientifica internazionale."

Italy has 95 higher education institutions, of which 61 are State universities and polytechnics, 17 non-State universities and 11 'distance education' universities. Italy hosts some of the most ancient and prestigious universities in Europe: the University of Bologna founded in 1088, the University of Naples "Federico II" in 1224, the University of Rome "La Sapienza" in 1303, the University of Florence in 1321 and the University of Turin in 1404 (Solly 2010). Yet, Italian universities do not fare well in World University rankings,[16] with only Milan, Trieste, Bologna, Trento and Turin featuring among the top 300.

The study of English as an academic discipline began in the early 20th century, as the first university chairs of English were established in 1918. Originally elitist in outlook, after the 1968 student movement, the Italian tertiary education system has dramatically changed: liberalisation of admission and comparatively low fees have opened up access to any student with a secondary school certificate. Thus some universities now have huge student populations reaching in 2012, for example, as many as 64,314 students at the University of Turin and about 106,371 at Rome's "La Sapienza", which is known for being Europe's largest university[17].

Internationalisation has taken place rather slowly in Italy and the turn towards English as a medium of instruction, which started in the 1990s, is only in its early stages. Italian universities, however, are increasingly adopting measures to align themselves with the European trend. The ground-breaking 1999 Bologna Agreement, a crucial turning point for the harmonisation process of tertiary education in the European Union currently referred to as the Bologna Process, definitely gave Italian higher education a strong push towards internationalisation. However, despite a subsequent reform of the university system (*Legge Gelmini 240/2010*) again stressing internationalisation, the number of *international* students enrolled in Italian universities is only about 4%[18]. It is worth noting that in Northern Europe English-medium teaching began much

[16] www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/world-university-rankings/2012-13/world-ranking, last accessed April 12, 2013.

[17] Official data taken from http://osservatorio.cineca.it/php5/home.php, last accessed April 12, 2013.

[18] http://anagrafe.miur.it, last accessed April 12, 2013.

earlier: according to Coleman (2006) in the Netherlands and Sweden, EMI already appeared in the 1950s, whilst in Finland, Hungary and Norway it began in the 1980s. Unsurprisingly, Italy is lagging from 10 to 40 years behind these countries.

Research on EMI in Italian higher education is still limited but some quantitative and qualitative data is already available. The most comprehensive survey to date, offering an overview of the Italian situation, was conducted by Costa and Coleman (2013), who submitted a national questionnaire to all Italian universities. Only 50% of them responded, and the most interesting results are:

– EMI programmes are more numerous in the subject areas of Economics and Engineering;
– EMI programmes are most frequent at MA level, followed by Doctoral and Bachelor levels (this is contradicted by our data which shows that the number of PhD courses is now higher);
– The three principal reasons for introducing EMI programmes are, in order of importance: a) *to improve the international profile of the academic institution*, b) *to attract foreign students*, c) *to prepare Italian students for the global market*. Interestingly, only a small percentage of informants mention *the improvement of English language proficiency*, which confirms our claim that decision-makers pay very little attention to the language component of this mode of instruction;
– Great differences exist between Italian universities in the North, Centre and South in terms of number of programmes offered, of international links and funding. All Italian private universities in the North have international links, while Southern universities (whether private or public) declare they have none;
– 90% of lecturers in these programmes are Italian native speakers.

The great majority of universities provide no training for this new way of teaching, which, in fact is still anchored to the traditional formal lecture. Half of the sample state that exams are carried out in English, while the rest use both English and Italian and about 20% use only Italian;

– The implementation of EMI programmes may be problematic because of lecturers' (30%) and students' (31%) inadequate level of English language competence. Apparently some lecturers are reluctant to choose this mode of teaching or may be 'forced' to do so by the university. However, similar complaints are also heard

in Nordic countries where competence in English is considerably higher. (Ljosland 2011; Bolton and Kuteeva 2012).

To conclude, although this data is only preliminary and based on a small sample of Italian universities, it addresses some crucial issues posed by the provision of EMI programmes in higher education, i.e. institutional policies, attitudes, and pedagogical implications.

5. The Italian case: Data and Discussion

The aim of this section is to map the extent and nature of higher education programmes taught entirely in English in Italy. The data presented here is taken from a report provided by the CRUI (Conference of Italian University Rectors) in the academic year 2011-2012,[19] based on Italian universities which are CRUI members, i.e. 80 universities, 66 of which are public and 14 private. These include nearly all higher education institutions in Italy, leaving out only a few. The CRUI survey aims at quantifying the number, type and disciplinary area of English-medium programmes offered by Italian universities in 2011-2012. The list given by the universities was posted on the CRUI website just before the enrolment of foreign students started, in order to guide international students in their choice. Table 1 shows the number of EMI programmes offered by Italian universities. Northern institutions are the ones which provide the highest number, with Milan in leading position with 128 programmes in 3 public and 4 private universities, twice as many as Turin (1 state university and 1 *Politecnico*)[20]. The next top universities include Bologna (1 university), Rome (4 public and 4 private universities), Pisa (3 universities), Venice (2 universities), Siena (2 universities), Padua (1 university) and Trieste (2 universities). In the centre and south of Italy fewer programmes are offered, which confirms that internationalisation is taking place more slowly in these areas. Among the southern institutions Lecce (1 university), Naples (4 public and 1 private universities) and L'Aquila (1 university) perform better in the number of EMI programmes.

[19] http://www.fondazionecrui.it/Documents/courses_english.pdf, last accessed April 12, 2013.

[20] In Italy, *Politecnico* designates the School of Engineering.

TABLE 1
EMI programmes: number and geographical distribution

Milan	128	Lecce	18	Bergamo	6	Castellanza (Varese)	3
Turin	62	Bolzano	16	Ancona	5	Cagliari	2
Bologna	56	Camerino	16	Messina	5	Ferrara	2
Rome	54	Naples	14	Palermo	5	Macerata	2
Pisa	37	Pavia	13	Lucca	4	Vercelli	2
Venice	35	Genoa	12	Udine	4	Bari	1
Siena	34	L'Aquila	9	Cassino	3	Enna	1
Padua	31	Brescia	8	Catania	3	Perugia	1
Trieste	29	Florence	8	Parma	3	Teramo	1
Trento	24	Modena	7	Salerno	3	Verona	1
							671

FIGURE 1
EMI programmes according to degree type

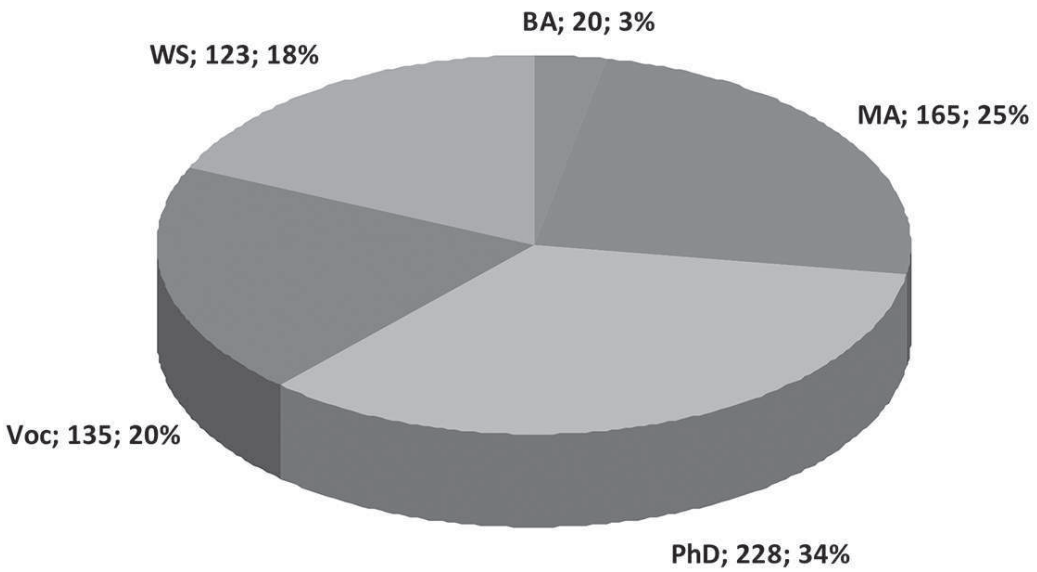

Fig. 1 shows the number and percentage of EMI programmes according to the type of degree. Third cycle university degree (PhDs) are the majority of all-English programmes (34%), followed by MAs

(25%), vocationally-oriented (20%)[21], winter and summer courses (18%) and BAs (3%). Winter/summer courses offer short, full-time programmes on specific areas, e.g. "Topics in Italian Renaissance Art" at the University "Ca Foscari" in Venice.

FIGURE 2
Number of HEIs offering EMI programmes

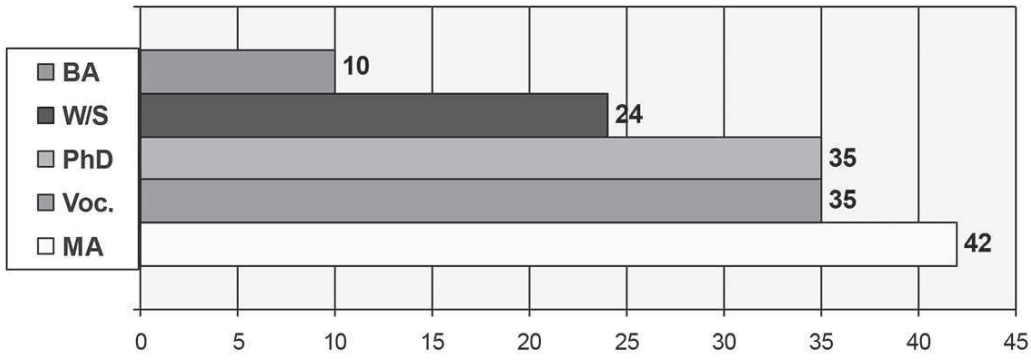

Fig. 2 shows the number of Italian higher education institutions where EMI programmes (at least one) were offered in the year 2011-2012, according to the degree cycle. About half of Italian universities (42) run programmes leading up to MA degrees, followed by vocationally-oriented and PhD programmes (35 universities). Just over one quarter of the institutions considered offer winter or summer courses and very few (10 out of 80) have English-medium BA degrees.

Finally, in Table 2 the number and percentage of EMI programmes is listed according to the 14 official scientific and disciplinary sectors into which academic subjects are grouped in the Italian tertiary education system. Data is in line with the European trend, as Economics and Engineering are the primary educational fields

[21] Besides MA degrees, Italian tertiary education programmes also include vocationally and professionally-oriented programmes, called *Master*. These are short courses (1year) which can be taken after a BA or an MA degree to further knowledge, know-how or skills required in the job market.

that give solid foundations and training to access top managerial and entrepreneurial careers. Other scientific areas ranking among the top favourite choices are Social and Political Science, Medicine, Mathematics and IT, Physics, Chemistry and Biology.

TABLE 2
Distribution of EMI programmes by disciplinary area (CRUI 2012)

Disciplinary areas	Tot.	%	BA	MA	PhD	Voc.	W/S
EEconomics and Statistics	140	20.86	8	49	32	33	18
InIndustrial Engineering and IT_	111	16.54	7	44	31	23	6
InInterdisciplinary Studies	77	11.48		4	48	21	4
CiCivil Engineering and Architecture	60	8.94	3	14	22	11	10
S Social and Political Science	40	5.96		5	13	15	7
MMedicine	39	5.81		5	14	11	9
MMaths and IT	36	5.37	1	13	11	1	10
L Law	33	4.92			2	9	22
P Philology/Literature/Arts	28	4.17		4	8	1	15
P Physics	24	3.58		8	14		2
C Chemistry	22	3.28		6	10	2	4
BiBiology	21	3.13	1	6	9		5
AAgriculture & Veterinary Science	16	2.38		4	5	5	2
Earth Science	12	1.79		1	2	2	7
HHistory/Philosophy/Pedagogy/ Psychology tory/Philosophy/ Pedagogy/Psychology	12	1.79		2	7	1	2
	671		20	165	228	135	123

It is worth pointing out that no BA and MA and few PhD programmes are offered in the field of Law, perhaps owing to the specificity of this area to local contexts and different legal and academic systems. However, quite a few winter/summer courses are available in this professional field which, in turn, may be explained by the need to explore specific thematic areas. Finally, only a few programmes in Philology/Literature/Arts are offered, especially winter/summer courses, while little interest seems to be attached to English-taught programmes in History/Philosophy/Pedagogy/Psychology. In short,

the humanities are the least international disciplinary areas, as they are perhaps intrinsically anchored to historically-rooted cultural traditions.

6. Conclusions

This study has addressed the ongoing debate on the pervasiveness of English as a medium of instruction in European Higher Education with specific reference to the Italian context, an area which has only just begun to be investigated, with only one previous large-scale study published so far on EMI in Italy (Costa and Coleman 2013). We have provided detailed data to verify the extent of English-mediated programmes in Italian universities and discussed the implications of national linguistic policies strongly promoting this *Englishisation* process. Our results on the current Italian scenario show that English-taught programmes in Italian universities share many features with other European institutions in compliance with the harmonisation policies fostered by the Bologna Process. These common traits regard, firstly, the reasons for implementing EMI, which mainly respond to the global pressures of internationalisation. Secondly, in line with recent developments in Europe, EMI is on the increase in Italy, despite the slow start especially in comparison with Nordic countries. Thirdly, the local data analysed registers common European concerns mainly reflected in the fear of *domain loss* in the native language due to the dominance of English, particularly in scientific domains and the risk of *under-performing* in classroom-related activities due to delivery through the English language medium. However, we wish to stress that, despite the commonalities with the European HE context, the Italian situation features a specific problem concerning inadequate levels of communicative competence in English irrespective of the high number of tuition hours delivered to students before they access university. In this respect this data confirms the "*two Europes*" hypothesis, partially contradicting the claims of the homogenisation agenda introduced with the Bologna Process. In the light of these results we believe it would be most appropriate to implement *ad hoc* linguistic/educational pedagogies aiming at improving EIL proficiency levels through content teaching. This would frame a *genuine* ICLHE (Integrating Content and Language in Higher Education) context, instead of the *cosmetic* travesty of internationalisation mandates, which is how EMI policies are often perceived. Further, we wish to

call attention again to the Nordic vision of *parallel language use*, a concept currently under discussion in Scandinavian countries. As Northern European countries have a longer tradition of EMI, it is definitely useful to consider their experience of bilingual education before switching drastically to the *English-only* strategy.

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