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LINGUISTICA E LETTERARIA

FACOLTÀ DI SCIENZE LINGUISTICHE E LETTERATURE STRANIERE  
UNIVERSITÀ CATTOLICA DEL SACRO CUORE

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SUPPLEMENTO

*Critical Issues in English –  
Medium Instruction at University*

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Edited by Jennifer Valcke, Amanda C. Murphy, Francesca Costa

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## BEYOND THE CLASSROOM: THE IMPACT OF EMI ON A UNIVERSITY'S LINGUISTIC LANDSCAPE

FRANCESCA HELM, FIONA DALZIEL

In this paper we explore the linguistic landscape of an Italian state university. A "Linguistic Landscape" refers to the language visible in public spaces, and to a transdisciplinary approach adopted in language policy studies, often in "arenas of contestation". The EMI context can be considered such an arena; linguistic landscaping offers an exciting new methodological approach, enabling observation of the changing face of universities in their quest for ever-increasing internationalisation.

*Keywords:* English-Medium Instruction (EMI), Linguistic Landscape (LL), language policy, internationalisation

### *Introduction*

In this paper we explore the impact of English-Medium Instruction (EMI) outside the classroom walls by analysing the Linguistic Landscape (LL) of certain spaces in an Italian university. Our original interest in EMI arose out of involvement in a Language Centre project aimed at providing language and methodological support for lecturers teaching their courses in English (see for example Helm and Guarda<sup>1</sup>). As part of the project the Centre organised numerous seminars and round tables, where issues related to internationalisation, the role of English and language policy were discussed at length and in great depth. We thus came into direct contact both with scholars who were keen to promote EMI and those who were extremely concerned about the effects of the process of Englishization on the Italian language and culture (Motta<sup>2</sup>). At the same time, the Language Centre received first-hand knowledge of the continuing complaints of international students studying on English-taught programmes (ETPs) with regard to the lack of support in the English language outside the EMI classroom. A growing interest in EMI led us to explore a number of fields related to multilingualism, including that of Linguistic Landscaping (LL), which we thought could provide a fertile ground for the investigation of these contradictory sides to EMI.

<sup>1</sup> F. Helm – M. Guarda, "Improvisation is not allowed in a second language": A survey of Italian lecturers' concerns about teaching their subjects through English, "Language Learning in Higher Education", 5, 2015, 2, pp. 353-373.

<sup>2</sup> A. Motta, *Nine and a half reasons against the monarchy of English*, in *Sharing Perspectives on English-medium instruction*, K. Ackerley – M. Guarda – F. Helm ed., Peter Lang, Bern 2015, pp. 95-110.

The construct of LL was described by Landry and Bourhis in a landmark article in 1997 as “the visibility and salience of languages on public and commercial signs in a given territory or region”<sup>3</sup>. The definition of linguistic landscape has since been expanded to include a wide variety of signs, such as graffiti, notice boards, placards and also virtual spaces such as websites.

The study of linguistic landscapes is a transdisciplinary approach that has been adopted in the exploration of language policy<sup>4</sup>, and has often been used in “arenas of contestation”<sup>5</sup>. English-Medium Instruction in Italian higher education, especially with regard to the role of the Italian language and the risk of domain loss, has become the object of considerable contestation<sup>6</sup>. This case study investigates the visibility and significance of the English language in some of the physical spaces where EMI is taking place in addition to its use in the virtual spaces which are promoting and describing EMI degree programmes.

We begin the paper by describing the situated context of the study with some descriptive and quantitative data regarding EMI, ETPs and international students. We then provide a review of the literature on linguistic landscaping and its application in different contexts. After describing the data that we have gathered (webpages, photographs and interviews) and how it was analysed for this study, we present the findings and conclude with a discussion of its implications.

## 2. *The Italian context: EMI, an arena of contestation*

The rapid rate at which English-Taught Programmes have been introduced into Italian universities can be considered remarkable in a context where change is notoriously slow<sup>7</sup>. In 2016-2017 according to University<sup>8</sup>, there were 276 ETPs in English offered by 54 different universities, of which 21 were first cycle degrees. This marks a considerable growth since the previous year<sup>9</sup>, but not as great as the 2014-2015 academic year, which saw an increase of over 70%. The introduction of ETPs has been controversial in many European

<sup>3</sup> R. Landry – R.Y. Bourhis, *Linguistic landscape and ethnolinguistic vitality*, “Journal of Language and Social Psychology”, 16, 1997, 1, p. 23.

<sup>4</sup> B. Spolsky, *Prolegomena to a Sociolinguistic Theory of Public Signage*, in *Linguistic Landscape: expanding the scenery*, E. Shohamy – D. Gorter ed., Routledge, New York 2009.

<sup>5</sup> R. Rubdy, *Conflict and exclusion: the linguistic landscape as an arena of contestation*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke 2015.

<sup>6</sup> There have been many reports of this ruling in the press and also on academic websites and journals, as will be further discussed in the following section of this paper.

<sup>7</sup> For European higher education in general see the European Commission's 2013 *Report to the European Commission on Improving the quality of teaching and learning in Europe's higher education institutions*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg 2013, and for Italy in particular, see pages 117-126 of the 2015 study on the Internationalisation of Higher Education requested by the European Parliament prepared by H. De Wit – F. Hunter – F. Howard – E. Egron-Polak [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2015/540370/IPOL\\_STU\(2015\)540370\\_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2015/540370/IPOL_STU(2015)540370_EN.pdf) (last accessed: February 10, 2017).

<sup>8</sup> [http://www.universitaly.it/index.php/cercacorsi/universita?lingua\\_corso=en](http://www.universitaly.it/index.php/cercacorsi/universita?lingua_corso=en) (last accessed: February 10, 2017). The University website provides up to date information on university programmes taught in English.

<sup>9</sup> In 2015-2016, 52 Italian universities were offering a total of 245 ETP courses according to University

countries<sup>10</sup>; in Italian higher education it has also become the object of considerable contestation, as has been well documented<sup>11</sup>. The ongoing case of the Politecnico di Milano, whose 2011 decision to offer all of its Master's degrees and PhD courses entirely in English, continues to be widely discussed in the local, national and international media, in the academic world<sup>12</sup>, by Italy's language academy *Accademia della Crusca*<sup>13</sup> and also at a political and juridical level. The most recent development in this controversy<sup>13</sup> occurred in February 2017, when the Constitutional Court declared that fully taught programmes in English can be introduced only when there is an equivalent degree course in Italian, a decision which has stimulated further debate<sup>14</sup>.

The actions of the Politecnico di Milano have brought the Italian EMI debate to the attention of many within and beyond Italy. In many ways this case is an exception, since the Politecnico is the only public university which has sought to transform all of its Master's degree courses from Italian to English, though it does bring to light a potential risk to the status of Italian in higher education. Most other Italian universities currently have a relatively small – but growing – percentage of their second-cycle degree courses in English<sup>15</sup>, and students enrolled on these courses represent a small minority of the total student population. Wächter and Maiworm<sup>16</sup> consider the number of students enrolled on ETPs as a percentage of the entire European student population and found that in 2013-2014 it was just 1.3% and for Italy it was only 0.5%. As regards the students enrolled on ETPs, the average European percentage of international students is 54%, while for Italy it is 42%; hence there are a considerable number of local students who choose ETPs, partly in the hope of improving their English language skills and employability<sup>17</sup>.

<sup>10</sup> B. Wächter – F. Maiworm ed., *English-Taught Programmes in European Higher Education. The State of Play in 2014*, Lemmens, Bonn 2014.

<sup>11</sup> See for example, V. Pulcini – S. Campagna, *Internationalisation and the EMI controversy in Italian higher education*, in *English-Medium Instruction in European Higher Education*, S. Dimova – A.K. Hultgren – C. Jensen ed., de Gruyter Mouton, Boston/Berlino 2015 (*English in Europe*, 3), pp. 65-88 and F. Santulli, *English in Italian universities: The language policy of PoliMi from theory to practice*, in the same volume, pp. 269-290.

<sup>12</sup> In international publications it has been mentioned in, for example, Dearden's 2014 report for the British Council [https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/e484\\_emi\\_-\\_cover\\_option\\_3\\_final\\_web.pdf](https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/e484_emi_-_cover_option_3_final_web.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> See for example A. Motta, *Nine and a half reasons...*, pp. 95-110, which summarises the arguments made by the Italian Accademia della Crusca in N. Maraschio – D. De Martino, *Fuori l'italiano dall'università? Inglese, internazionalizzazione, politica linguistica*, Editori Laterza, Bari 2013, pp. 22-26.

<sup>14</sup> See discussion, text of the sentence and academics' comments on the blog ROARS (Return on Academic Research) <http://www.roars.it/online/corsi-solo-in-inglese-la-consulta-ribadisce-la-centralita-della-lingua-italiana-e-definisce-i-limiti-dell'insegnamento-in-lingua-straniera/> (last accessed: February 10, 2017) and an article by Michele Gazzola published by the Accademia della Crusca <http://www.accademiadellacrusca.it/it/scaffali-digitali/articolo/per-internazionalizzazione-realmente-plurilingue-universit> (last accessed: February 10, 2017).

<sup>15</sup> Data sources vary on this. In Wächter and Maiworm's 2014 study in Italy this was 2.9% but the percentage has changed since then. In numerical terms their study reported 307 ETPs, but this data contrasts with that found on the University website.

<sup>16</sup> B. Wächter – F. Maiworm ed., *English-Taught Programmes in European Higher Education...*

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

It is interesting to note that Wächter and Maiworm's study reported that while the English proficiency of academic staff teaching in ETPs is generally perceived quite positively across Europe, the proficiency of administrators was reportedly the least impressive among all those involved in ETPs. This should not necessarily be a surprise as the rise of EMI is a relatively new phenomenon. Whilst for academics in some fields, participating in international research groups, conferences and publishing in English may have been a regular part of their job for many years, this is not the case for most administrative staff. English language proficiency has only recently become a key requisite for many administrative jobs, at least in Italy. Wächter and Maiworm write that some program directors reported that administrative staff are not only unprepared to deal with students in English but may also be unwilling to do so, which in the eyes of institutional coordinators of ETPs is one of the most relevant language-related problems. This may, in part, be explained by "the unmet expectation of the mastery of the domestic language by foreign students" (p. 22). Italy, however, is one of the most active countries with regard to offering support and training in the domestic language (68%). This issue, as will be discussed, may have a bearing on the presence of signs in English on university campuses.

### 3. *Linguistic Landscape: literature review*

Linguistic Landscape is a transdisciplinary approach which has aroused the interest not only of applied linguists and sociolinguists, but also researchers with backgrounds in advertising, education, economics, history, media, semiotics, sociology and urban geography. It has been used in research into language contact and change, social protest, tourism and other domains of language use in public life<sup>18</sup>. The most commonly quoted definition is provided by Landry and Bourhis: "The language of public road signs, advertising billboards, street names, place names, commercial shop signs, and public signs on government buildings combines to form the linguistic landscape of a given territory, region, or urban agglomeration"<sup>19</sup>. Using the theoretical framework of (subjective) ethnolinguistic vitality, Landry and Bourhis explored the linguistic landscape experience of a group of francophone secondary education students in Quebec. They concluded that "the linguistic landscape is a sociolinguistic factor distinct from other types of language contacts in multilingual settings," and the linguistic landscape "may constitute the most salient marker of perceived in-group versus out-group vitality"<sup>20</sup>.

Linguistic landscaping is fundamentally concerned with signs, but the definition of these has moved from being "primarily mental and abstract phenomena" to "material forces subject to and reflective of conditions of production [...] and as real social agents"<sup>21</sup>.

<sup>18</sup> For an overview of research on linguistic landscaping see D. Gorter, *Linguistic landscapes in a multilingual world*, "Annual Review of Applied Linguistics", 33, 2013, pp. 190-212.

<sup>19</sup> R. Landry – R.Y. Bourhis, *Linguistic landscape and ethnolinguistic vitality*, pp. 25.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.* p.45.

<sup>21</sup> J. Blommaert – A. Huang, *Semiotic and spatial scope: Towards a materialist semiotics*, "Working Papers in Urban Language & Literacy", Paper 62, 2010.



Backhaus' definition of sign, for example, is "any piece of written text within a spatially definable frame [...] including anything from the small handwritten sticker attached to a lamp-post to huge commercial billboards"<sup>22</sup>. The concept was further extended by Shohamy and Waksman to include "verbal texts, images, objects, placement in time and space as well as human beings"<sup>23</sup>, thus blurring the distinction between private and public, real and virtual, text and image. The interest in and applications of LL as a methodological approach has grown rapidly in the last decade as witnessed by the vast increase in the number of publications in this area. In 2012 Troyer<sup>24</sup> presented an updated bibliography of linguistic landscape publications in English, which included 168 publications, only 12 of which had appeared before 1998, 40 between 1998 and 2006, and 116 between 2007 and 2012<sup>25</sup>. The list has since moved location and become a group library on the website Zotero<sup>26</sup> and at the time of writing includes 14 authored books, 11 edited collections and 349 journal articles. In 2015 a dedicated international journal, *Linguistic Landscape*<sup>27</sup> was launched.

#### 4. *Applications of Linguistic Landscaping*

Linguistic Landscapes are perceived as places of identity construction and representation<sup>28</sup> and can also be considered sites for the propagation of particular ideologies through textual/linguistic/semiotic artifacts. Many of the first linguistic landscape studies were, in fact, carried out in areas where language is a contested issue, such as Belgium or Israel, and also in relation to minority languages – both of which remain key areas of study in linguistic landscaping. Shohamy<sup>29</sup>, for example, depicted the Linguistic Landscape as an arena where language battles take place and where the linguistic landscape items act as the mechanisms of language policies that can perpetuate ideologies resulting in the centrality or the marginality of languages in a society. Like many others, Shohamy concludes that LL does not provide true reflection of the ethnolinguistic diversity of a place, but rather the

<sup>22</sup> P. Backhaus, *Linguistic Landscapes: A Comparative Study of Urban Multilingualism in Tokyo*, Multilingual Matters, Clevedon 2007, p.66.

<sup>23</sup> E. Shohamy – S. Waksman, *Linguistic landscape as an ecological arena: Modalities, meanings, negotiations, education*, in *Linguistic landscape: Expanding the scenery*, E. Shohamy – D. Gorter ed., Routledge, New York 2009, pp. 314.

<sup>24</sup> R. Troyer, *Linguistic landscape: Bibliography of English publications*. [http://www.wou.edu/~troyerr/linguistic\\_landscape\\_biblio.html](http://www.wou.edu/~troyerr/linguistic_landscape_biblio.html) (last accessed February 10, 2017).

<sup>25</sup> As reported in D. Gorter, *Linguistic landscapes in a multilingual world*.

<sup>26</sup> [https://www.zotero.org/groups/linguistic\\_landscape\\_bibliography](https://www.zotero.org/groups/linguistic_landscape_bibliography) (last accessed February 10, 2017).

<sup>27</sup> The journal is published by John Benjamins: <https://benjamins.com/#catalog/journals/ll/main> (last accessed February 10, 2017).

<sup>28</sup> K.J. Taylor-Leech, *Language choice as an index of identity: Linguistic landscape in Dili, Timor-Leste*, "International Journal of Multilingualism", 9, 2012, pp.15-34.

<sup>29</sup> E. Shohamy, *Language policy: hidden agendas and new approaches*, Routledge, London 2006.

status of languages in a given context. It was instead Spolsky<sup>30</sup> who connected the study of public multilingual signage to language policy theory. Linguistic landscapes are part of language practices, one of the three components of Spolsky's theory, which also includes beliefs about language and language management, the latter being the explicit efforts by authorities to modify practices or beliefs. For Scollon and Scollon<sup>31</sup>, on the other hand, the languages on a sign can index the community in which they are used (geopolitical location), or they can symbolise an aspect of the product that is not related to the place where it is located (sociocultural associations). Thus, a sign in English may not index an English-speaking community, but can be used to symbolise foreign taste and manners, modernity, internationalism and/or cosmopolitanism<sup>32</sup>. The spread of English has, indeed, been one of the main themes in LL studies<sup>33</sup> and even when the focus of a study is minority languages, English inevitably emerges in the findings.

### 5. *Sites of linguistic landscape studies*

Most of the work on linguistic landscapes has been carried in urban contexts so as to explore expressions of 'superdiversity', brought about and enhanced by globalisation and increased migration flows; indeed, new terms such as 'linguistic cityscape' and 'multilingual cityscape' have emerged as synonyms of linguistic landscape. Much of this work has focused on shop signs, road signs, advertising billboards, street names, public signs on government buildings<sup>34</sup>. Coluzzi<sup>35</sup>, for example, explored the linguistic landscape of two streets in Italy, one in Milan and the other in Udine, aiming to investigate the presence of the different languages making up the linguistic repertory of the two cities, with a focus on minority languages. Signs in two streets of a similar length were recorded and classified according to the language or languages they were written in. What he found, however, was that of the few multilingual signs that he identified, a very low number included minority languages; the most common second language he identified was English.

The study of linguistic landscapes in semi-public spaces has been identified as a potentially fruitful area for further research<sup>36</sup> for as yet little work has been carried out in such settings. Some studies have been carried out in educational settings, particularly schools, in relation to bilingual education, where the linguistic landscape has been identified as an important space for the celebration of bi- or multilingualism and for

<sup>30</sup> B. Spolsky, *Prolegomena to a Sociolinguistic Theory of Public Signage*, in *Linguistic Landscape: expanding the scenery*, E. Shohamy – D. Gorter ed., Routledge, New York 2009, pp. 25-39.

<sup>31</sup> R. Scollon – S.W. Scollon, *Discourse in Place: Language in the material world*, Routledge, London 2003.

<sup>32</sup> D. Gorter, *Linguistic landscapes in a multilingual world*.

<sup>33</sup> See for example K. Bolton, *World Englishes and linguistic landscapes*, "World Englishes", 31, 2012, 1, pp.30-33.

<sup>34</sup> For an overview, see D. Gorter, *Linguistic landscapes in a multilingual world*.

<sup>35</sup> P. Coluzzi, *The Italian linguistic landscape: The cases of Milan and Udine*, "International Journal of multilingualism", 6, 2009, pp. 298-312.

<sup>36</sup> D. Gorter, *Linguistic landscapes in a multilingual world*.

practices of inclusion<sup>37</sup>. The linguistic landscapes of university spaces have been less widely explored, perhaps because it is only in recent years that language policy in universities has become an area of interest and contestation<sup>38</sup>.

### 6. *Categorisations and language functions of signs*

Signs have been categorised in several different ways. A common preliminary distinction is that between ‘top down’ and ‘bottom-up’ signs, also defined as “official vs. non-official”<sup>39</sup>, “private vs. government”<sup>40</sup> or “private vs. public”<sup>41</sup>, commercial (e.g. shop signs) and transgressive discourses (e.g. graffiti)<sup>42</sup>. Recent technological developments have led to the addition of many new types of signs<sup>43</sup>: electronic flat-panel displays, LED neon lights, foam boards, interactive touch screens, inflatable signage, and scrolling banners.

As regards the main functions of the language found on signs, Landry and Bourhis<sup>44</sup> distinguished primarily between an informational (or instrumental) and a symbolic (or token) function. The former is a means of providing information about the sociolinguistic composition of speech communities in any given area, indicating the language(s) used for communication and the presence or absence of language diversity. The latter, instead, is a reflection of the power, prestige and status of a language, telling us whether it is dominant or subordinate, and thus whether it symbolises the strength or weakness of different groups/communities. The few LL studies that have been carried out in university contexts have explored official, semi-permanent bilingual university campus signs, bottom-up signs and student notice boards, the rules that govern the display of signs, and students’ attitudes towards the signs on campus<sup>45</sup>.

Virtual arenas of language use such as websites have also been identified as linguistic landscapes worthy of study in relation to language policy<sup>46</sup> though in university contexts

<sup>37</sup> O. Garcia – L. Wei, *Translanguaging: Language, bilingualism and education*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke/New York 2014.

<sup>38</sup> See for example R. Phillipson, *English-Only Europe? Challenging Language Policy*, Routledge, London 2003.

<sup>39</sup> P. Backhaus, *Linguistic Landscapes: A Comparative Study of Urban Multilingualism in Tokyo*.

<sup>40</sup> R. Landry – R.Y. Bourhis, *Linguistic landscape and ethnolinguistic vitality*.

<sup>41</sup> E. Shohamy – E. Ben-Rafael – M. Barni, *Linguistic landscape in the city*, Multilingual Matters, Bristol 2010.

<sup>42</sup> R. Scollon – S.W. Scollon, *Discourse in Place: Language in the material world*.

<sup>43</sup> D. Gorter, *Linguistic landscapes in a multilingual world...*

<sup>44</sup> R. Landry – R.Y. Bourhis, *Linguistic landscape and ethnolinguistic vitality*.

<sup>45</sup> See for example: E. Shohamy – M.A. Hazaleh-Mahajneh, *Linguistic landscape as a tool for interpreting language vitality: Arabic as a ‘minority’ language in Israel*, in *Minority languages in the linguistic landscape*, D. Gorter, H.F. Marten, L. Van Mensel ed., Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke 2012, pp. 89-106; J.-J. Wang ed., *Linguistic landscape on campus in Japan – A case study of signs in Kyushu University*, “Intercultural Communication Studies”, XXIV, 2015, pp. 123-144; S. Yavari, *Linguistic Landscape and Language Policies: A Comparative Study of Linköping University and ETH Zurich*, Thesis study available at <https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:574524/FULLTEXT01.pdf> (last accessed February 15, 2017).

<sup>46</sup> H. Kelly-Holmes, *Multilingualism and commercial language practices on the Internet*, “Journal of Sociolinguistics”, 10, 2006, 5, pp. 507-519. See also D. Ivkovic – H. Lotherington, *Multilingualism in*

these have not, as yet, been studied in great depth<sup>47</sup>. Callahan and Herring<sup>48</sup> carried out a longitudinal study on the language ecology of university websites and found that in general the national language is the core language used to communicate with the local population, English is increasingly found to be the first additional language aimed at an international audience (following a Diglossia model<sup>49</sup>) and in some cases use of other secondary languages targeting specific groups is emerging (a tri-level multiglossia model).

## 7. *A Linguistic Landscape Study*

### 7.1 Research questions

This case study reports on the initial stages of a larger, diachronic study the authors have recently embarked on, which aims to explore the changing linguistic landscape of an Italian state university over several years. Our aim is to investigate whether the continuing growth in the number of ETPs and other joint programmes will be mirrored by evolutions in the direction of greater multilingualism in physical spaces. The first step in this study is thus to begin to map the linguistic landscape by gathering and classifying data on the 'current' situation. Our hypothesis is that despite the increase in ETPs, the growing number of international students and the current hyperbole about the spread of English in Italian higher education, which might lead one to expect English to be visible in the landscape, its presence is relatively limited. The specific research questions we sought to answer were:

To what extent is English present in the linguistic landscape of the university (taking into account the website and selected physical spaces)?

What is its function in these signs?

What are stakeholders' attitudes towards the signs on campus?

### 7.2 Methodological approach and data collection

Many studies adopt a predominantly quantitative approach, taking photos of all signs in a given area, and counting the numbers that fall within different categories, such

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*cyberspace: Conceptualising the virtual linguistic landscape*, "International Journal of Multilingualism", 6, 2009, 1, pp. 17-36.

<sup>47</sup> Jenkins carried out a study of university websites in order to explore attitudes towards varieties of English, but this study was not framed as a linguistic landscaping study, nor did the method of analysis adopted reflect LL, see J. Jenkins, *English as a Lingua Franca in the international university*, Routledge, London/New York 2014.

<sup>48</sup> E. Callahan – S. Herring, *Language choice on university websites: Longitudinal trends*, "International Journal of Communication", 6, 2012, pp. 322-355.

<sup>49</sup> The Diglossia model (Dor 2004) is one of the theories advanced in the literature to refer to the global ecology of languages on the Internet whereby both the national language and English are used to market to different audiences and for different purposes. Other theories identified by Callahan & Herring (2012) on the basis of the literature are referred to as "Replacement Theory (eg Phillipson, 1992), the Diversity Theory (eg. Danet & Herring, 2007), the Oligarchy Theory (e.g. Graddol, 1997)".

as multilingual, bilingual or monolingual. Sometimes these studies are comparative, comparing numbers and types of signs in, for example, similar streets in different cities<sup>50</sup> and more recently diachronic, looking at how the linguistic landscape changes over time<sup>51</sup>.

Gorter<sup>52</sup> laments the lack of qualitative analysis of some of the signs, commenting on the prevalence of pure description rather than critical evaluation. He endorses a mixed methods approach, which is increasingly being adopted, combining visual data with ethnographic interviews with sign makers and/or policy makers, or with individuals who 'experience' signs. This latter mixed methods approach has been adopted in this paper.

We have chosen to focus our initial analysis on two different settings within the same university. One of these is the School of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine, which has a campus 10 km from the city; the other is the School of Psychology, now situated in a new university citadel in the city. These schools are the only ones which have first cycle degrees taught through English – the former established one in the current academic year, 2017-2018, and the latter 2 years ago. Both schools also have second-cycle ETPs. The aim of the present study is not to compare the two settings, but rather to gather data from each with a view to shedding light on the presence of English in two different areas of the university landscape where EMI has a strong presence.

Our study begins with analysis of the virtual LL of these two schools, because this is the first LL that international students come into contact with. The main marketing channel for universities seeking to attract international students is indeed their websites<sup>53</sup> and these provide information about ETPs and admissions in English. The methodology adopted for the analysis of the virtual site draws on the work of Kelly-Holmes, who has brought together virtual ethnography and linguistic landscape analysis<sup>54</sup>. The 'journey' through the university websites in order to find information about ETPs in the two schools was recorded by the researchers with field notes and screenshots, and is described in the first part of the findings.

Subsequently, the physical LL was explored by the authors, who visited the sites of the two schools in March and April 2017. Equipped with cameras, they took photos of the signs they saw (both bilingual and monolingual), and subsequently classified them into different types, basing their classification on research previously carried out in the field, but adding types of signs that are specific to higher education contexts. After taking over 150 photographs the authors felt they had identified the different sign 'types' as no new categories emerged and all the multilingual signs in the two areas had been photographed. The study does not include a systematic inventory of all the observable signs in the two university areas, but rather a classification of all the sign types in these two university

<sup>50</sup> For example Coluzzi's study *The Italian linguistic landscape: The cases of Milan and Udine*.

<sup>51</sup> See, for example, A. Pavlenko, *Linguistic landscape of Kyiv, Ukraine: A diachronic study*, in *Linguistic landscape in the city*, E. Shohamy – E. Ben-Rafael – M. Barni eds., Multilingual Matters, Bristol 2010, pp. 133-150.

<sup>52</sup> D. Gorter, *Linguistic landscapes in a multilingual world*.

<sup>53</sup> B. Wächter – F. Maiworm ed., *English-Taught Programmes in European Higher Education*. p. 75.

<sup>54</sup> H. Kelly-Holmes, *Analyzing Language Policies in New Media*, in *Research methods in language policy and planning: A practical guide*, F.M. Hult – D. Cassels Johnson, ed., John Wiley Blackwell, Malden/London 2015, pp. 130-139.

settings, and an inventory of the small number of signs found that included English. A qualitative analysis of these signs was carried out, looking at the functions of English on the signs, the intended audience and their indexicality. In order to answer some of the questions that emerged and to explore attitudes to the linguistic landscape, the authors also interviewed some key stakeholders in the ETPs at the two schools under investigation: two ETP directors, the heads of the departments' library services and some international students.

### 7.3 Findings: the virtual environment

The University's website can be said to follow the Diglossia model as it has pages in Italian and English, which are the only two languages available. These options appear on the top right hand corner of the website through the abbreviations IT and EN. The Italian and English versions of the site have quite different content, clearly targeting different audiences, but both the Homepages provide a link to information about courses and course units held in English, though this is in a more prominent position in the English language version. These are the first of two main entry routes for prospective international students interested in studying at the School of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine or the Psychology.

Figure 1: Homepage: English version (screenshot date 15/3/2017)

UNIVERSITÀ  
DEGLI STUDI  
DI PADOVA

Schools Departments Libraries Contacts IT EN

Search

UNIVERSITY COURSES RESEARCH SERVICES DISCOVERING PADOVA HIGHLIGHTS

**MSCA MaRaThoN**  
Master your Research and Training Needs  
Application deadline: May 2, 2017

**VISITING THE UNIVERSITY**  
Discover the historical heart of the University of Padova

**COURSES AND COURSE UNITS HELD IN ENGLISH**  
For international students and to enhance language skills

**STUDYING IN PADOVA**

- How to apply
- Degree courses completely held in English
- Departments
- Tuition fees, scholarships, tax relief schemes
- Key Academic Dates
- Study support
- Internships and Job Placement
- Students with special needs
- Erasmus and other Exchange Programmes
- International Full Degree Programmes

**TEACHING AND RESEARCH**

- Welcome Desks
- Language courses for Scholars
- Entry procedures, visas and residence permits
- International Mobility - Scholars
- Placopia - Marie Curie Fellowship Programme
- Key Academic Dates
- Research Excellence
- International Research Projects
- Housing and Canteen facilities - Scholars

**BUSINESS AND NETWORKING**

- Research Excellence
- Interaction with work environment
- Funding Research
- Professional and Continuing Education
- Patents
- Spin-offs
- Business Incubator StartCube
- Business Plan Competition Start Cup
- Enterprise Innovation Networks
- University-Business Cooperation Opportunities

**EXCHANGE STUDENTS**  
Erasmus+, Course Catalogue and beyond

**GALILEAN SCHOOL OF HIGHER EDUCATION**  
A School of excellence

**SHORT SPECIALISATION DEGREES OFFERED IN ENGLISH OR OTHER LANGUAGES**

From the English language version of the University's homepage (Figure 1 above) one can access information about "Courses and course units held in English" with the text below explicitly specifying the intended audience "For international students and to enhance language skills". This leads to a list of ETPs organized first by cycle (first cycle and second-cycle degrees) and then by school. Taking Psychological Science, a first-cycle degree course, as an example, clicking on the relevant link opens up a page containing basic information and a brief overview of the course, with links to information on fees and application procedures. These in turn lead to pdf files of documents which have been translated into English. The virtual LL following this route is monolingual English.

Figure 2: Course description for Psychological Science (screenshot date 15/3/2017)

The screenshot shows the website for the University of Padua. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for Schools, Departments, Libraries, Contacts, IT, and EN. A search bar is also present. Below this is a secondary navigation bar with tabs for UNIVERSITY, COURSES, RESEARCH, SERVICES, DISCOVERING PADOVA, and HIGHLIGHTS. The main content area is titled 'Psychological science' and includes the following information:

- First cycle degree - a. y. 2017/18**
- Class:** L-24 - Psychology
- Duration:** 3 years
- Branch:** Padova
- Language:** English
- [Admission](#)

**Brief overview of the course**

**Characteristics and objectives**

Psychological Science is a Bachelor's degree programme that aims to attract foreign students and Italian students that wish to work abroad. This degree programme allows to acquire basic knowledge of all the main sectors of Psychology and of scientific research methods.

**Occupational opportunities**

These graduates can find professional occupations in public or private bodies, in education and in enterprises and organisations of the third sector. Under the supervision of a Psychologist (i.e. with a Master's degree) they can work in services caring for the individual, groups, organisations and communities in promoting health. All these sectors are related to psychometric assessment, psychosocial assistance and development of human resources across the life span.

The sidebar on the left contains a list of courses held in English, including:

- Animal care
- Biotechnologies for food science
- Business administration
- Cognitive neuroscience and clinical neuropsychology
- Data Science
- Economics and finance
- Entrepreneurship and innovation
- Environmental engineering
- Forest science
- Human rights and multi-level

For the School of Agriculture, starting from the first cycle degree course in Animal Care, there is a page similar to that of Psychological Science with basic information and an overview of the course, but there is also a link to a course website which is part of the School's site; this contains further information about the course as well as information and labelled photographs of the Agripolis Campus.



Figure 3: Homepage of the first-cycle degree course in Animal Care (screenshot date 15/3/2017)



The second entry route for international students is directly through the English language versions of the individual schools' webpages – again available by clicking on the EN button in the right-hand corner of the toolbar at the top of the page. Both schools provide introductory videos, a banner with information about international events, information about services such as accommodation, canteens, libraries, language courses, health services, student associations, linking to the English language pages of external websites, such as that of the housing association. One notable feature is the video produced by the School of Psychology, which is plurilingual with subtitles in English, and features students speaking a range of languages, from German to Farsi<sup>55</sup>. As well as the presence of English on the website, the linguistic background and resources of international students are used to index a globalised university environment where students from a range of linguistic backgrounds are welcome.

<sup>55</sup> Link to videos <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=icvVhIq2Y0I> and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ok57K86jTrg> last accessed 20 May 2017.

Figure 4: Homepage of the School of Psychology (screenshot date 15/3/2017)



It is worth highlighting that the content available on both the Schools' English language webpages is different from that available on the Italian pages as it is customised for international students intending to enrol or already enrolled in these ETPs. Less content is available and links tend to lead to less dynamic content (for example pdf files). The use of languages on the site could thus be said to exhibit "limited parallel monolingualism" (Heller 1999), indexing a "two solitudes"<sup>56</sup> model of bilingual education whereby languages live alongside one another but do not appear to interact.

#### 7.4 Findings: the physical environment

The analysis now moves from the virtual to the physical environment. The authors first of all classified the signs they had photographed according to location, beginning with external then internal spaces, and then the different types of signs (see table 1). Signage on the exterior of the sites explored generally consisted of maps, directions and building identification. All of the signs found in this setting were semi-permanent and top-down, that is official signage.

<sup>56</sup> J. Cummins, *Teaching for transfer: Challenging the two solitudes assumption in bilingual education*, in *Encyclopedia of Language and Education 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, vol 5: Bilingual education*, J.Cummins – N.H.Hornberger ed., Springer Science 2008, pp.65-75.

Table 1: A classification of signs

		<i>Location</i>	<i>Sign type and function</i>
Top-down 'Official' Semi-Permanent	EXTERNAL	In campus space Outside buildings On exterior of building	Maps and directions Building identification
		Inside spaces - Interior semi-permanent signs	Building identification Directions Safety signs Wifi hotspots Room/office signs
Bottom-up Temporary	INTERNAL	Department and Course Noticeboards - paper signs Electronic flat-panel display Exhibitions	Paper signs Information about courses, timetables, theses, exams Instructions Services Advertisements (for other MA courses, for conferences)
		Library noticeboards and walls, doors -Library	Paper signs Opening times, services available
		Staff doors	Advertisements - for courses, conferences, publications Information for students
		Student noticeboards Walls	Advertisements for books, lessons, rooms to rent posted by students; Adverts for services by businesses and associations (language schools, NGOs...)

Inside the buildings there was a wider range of sign types, from semi-permanent signs such as those indicating directions, rooms, safety notices, wifi, to more ephemeral paper notices and information provided on electronic flat-panel displays. Paper notices ranged from official notices on university headed paper to student and commercial advertisements found on the various noticeboards. The distinction between top-down and bottom-up signs that is

commonly used in LL research in urban contexts is somewhat less clear-cut in this university environment. Whilst paper signs posted by students on noticeboards are clearly bottom-up, the temporary signs posted by professors outside of official noticeboards, for example on their doors, were more difficult to categorise for they could be seen to reflect individual initiative rather than top-down, institutional policy.

The few signs we photographed with languages other than Italian on them were then classified according to the visibility of the languages present on them. The following typologies were identified: predominantly Italian, by which we mean those in which Italian was the main language but a few words of English added; bilingual English and Italian signs in which both languages were used to equal degrees; and finally monolingual English signs. No languages other than English were identified. The table below shows the numbers for each type of sign we found.

Table 2: Status of languages other than Italian in signs

	<i>Predominantly Italian</i>	<i>Monolingual English</i>	<i>Bilingual English - Italian</i>
<b>Agriculture</b>			
External	8		
Internal			
Semi-permanent			16
Internal temporary	2	8	
<b>Psychology</b>			
External			
Internal			
Semi-permanent	2		
Internal temporary	3	7	2

### External signs

#### Top-down, public signage

We will begin our discussion of the physical linguistic landscape by looking at different categories of top down signs, beginning with those that are of a more permanent nature, that is those that are not printed on paper, but those that are specifically made by sign-makers on metal, plastic or other hard-wearing materials. By virtue of being external, these are the most public signs of all those studied.

#### Directions/Maps/Names of buildings

As mentioned above, we explored the sites of two schools, Psychology and Agriculture (Agripolis Campus). In the city of Padua, Psychology is in an area called *Cittadelladellostudente*, a 'mini-campus' inaugurated in 2015<sup>57</sup> which comprises various buildings besides the main building

<sup>57</sup> <http://www.unipd.it/ilbo/inaugurata-cittadella-studente> The Psychology buildings however were there previously.

for students enrolled in ETPs at the School of Psychology, for example the Language Centre, a student residence, a building with conference rooms and professors' offices.

Outside the Psychology buildings at the *Cittadella dello Studente* there were not many signs, just those marking building names and functions, all of which were monolingual Italian. In the main central square of the Cittadella, there is at yet very little signage, but at the time of writing plans are being made to install bilingual (English and Italian) sign throughout the area<sup>58</sup>.

On the other hand, the School of Agriculture and Veterinary Science is on a campus outside the city, known as *Agripolis*. It is a much larger area than the *Cittadella dello Studente*, and has more public signage in the outside area. The two sign types found were a map of the area and directions. These were classified either as monolingual Italian or predominantly Italian. The map of the area was classified as predominantly Italian because it included a few words in English, namely the wording 'You are here' which appears below the Italian *Voi Siete Qui*, supported through visuals and the term 'teaching rooms'. See figure 6 below.

Figure 5: Map of Agripolis campus



It is interesting that 'teaching rooms' is the only English expression found on the signs giving directions. It appears on the same level and after the Italian words *Aule e Laboratori* which literally mean classrooms and labs. Perhaps because the literal translation would have been too long for the sign, the shorter version 'Teaching Rooms' was selected. What is

<sup>58</sup> Information provided by two interviewees.

particularly striking though is that the indication above it, *Aula Magna* (Auditorium) is not translated, but it is supported by a visual icon, as is the word *Portineria* (reception) which appears at the bottom of the sign, which is supported by the internationally recognisable letter/symbol 'i' to indicate an information point. However, this information point is for couriers, not for international students, as confirmed in interviews with stakeholders. Other icons were used in the directions, perhaps as an alternative to translation, for example a coffee cup to indicate bar, and knife and fork for the *mensa* (canteen). It is interesting that the photograph of the campus which appears on the website (see Figure 6 below) contains more bilingual labels than the campus itself.

Figure 6: photograph of the Agripolis campus published on the School website.



The decisions as regards the public signage are made by the *Polo Multifunzionale*, a body concerned with the functioning of certain university areas. The course director that we interviewed had not been consulted about the signage, and was not able to inform us as to why “Teaching Rooms” were the only English words included on the signs.

Figure 7: photograph of directions on the Agripolis campus.



### Internal signs

#### Top-down, semi-permanent signs

In the interiors of the two areas that we explored, the semi-permanent signage which regarded directions, room names, safety notices (such as not to use the lift in case of fire, or No Smoking) were almost all monolingual Italian, as can be seen in the sign on the left in figure 8 below. Some of the signs have visual icons which support understanding. This would appear to confirm what one of the interviewees remarked, namely that the physical landscape, even when related to safety and security features, has rarely been addressed as an issue, even by those actively promoting EMI (see below).

Figure 8: Safety notice about lift and Wi-fi hot spot at Psychology



There are some English words, such as “wi-fi” and “hot spot” which have come to be used in Italian more often than the Italian equivalent and tend to be used on signs, as in the sign above. However, the sign is characterised as predominantly Italian as the syntax and other words appear in Italian.

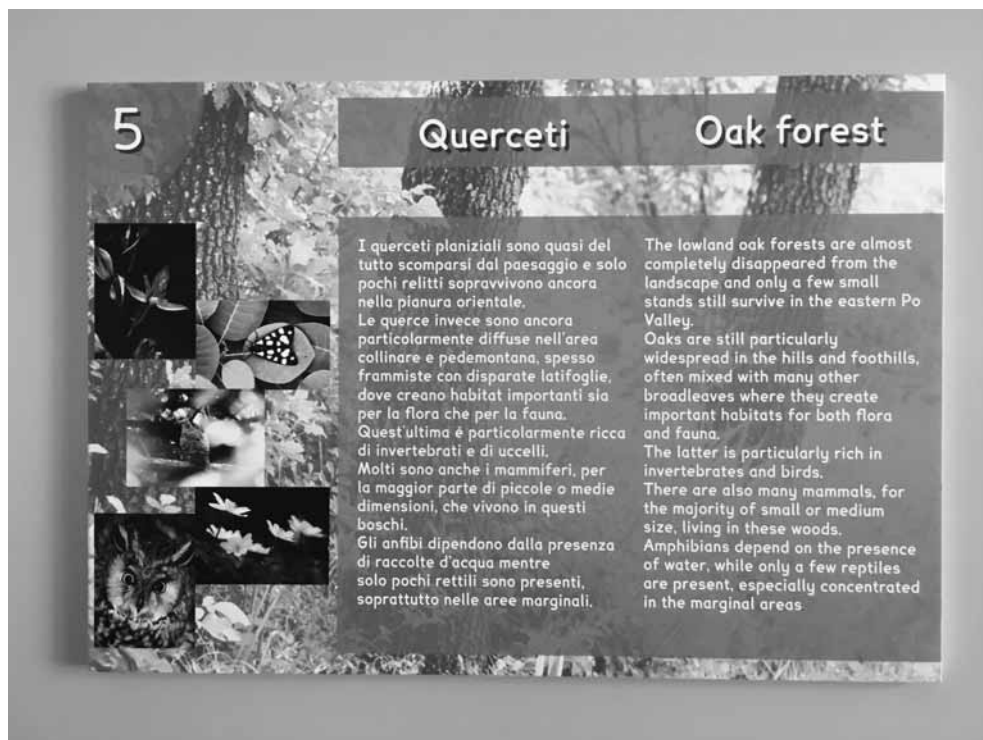
#### A bilingual exhibition space

The majority of bilingual semi-permanent signs found were part of permanent exhibitions, which had been set up by university lecturers, in the Agriculture building. Two out of the various permanent exhibitions were completely bilingual, with Italian and English versions of the same text appearing side by side together with photographs. Figure 9 was one of a series of panels displayed in the Agriculture building. One of the interviewees reported that this was part of an exhibition that had been created several years ago but was recently reworked by a researcher who added English translations. The original Italian text appears on the left, the dominant position (if we consider that Latin script is read from left to right), and the English translation on the right, and the fonts are of equal size. The bilingual texts in this exhibition space can be seen to serve a didactic function as they provide authentic



educational and linguistic input for both Italian students and international students<sup>59</sup>. They also index the environment as a bilingual learning space<sup>60</sup>, serving both local needs and the international student community. Like the signs in bilingual schools, these were the initiative of a university lecturer rather than the administration.

Figure 9: Permanent exhibition on display with bilingual signs appearing side by side.



### Bilingual temporary paper signs

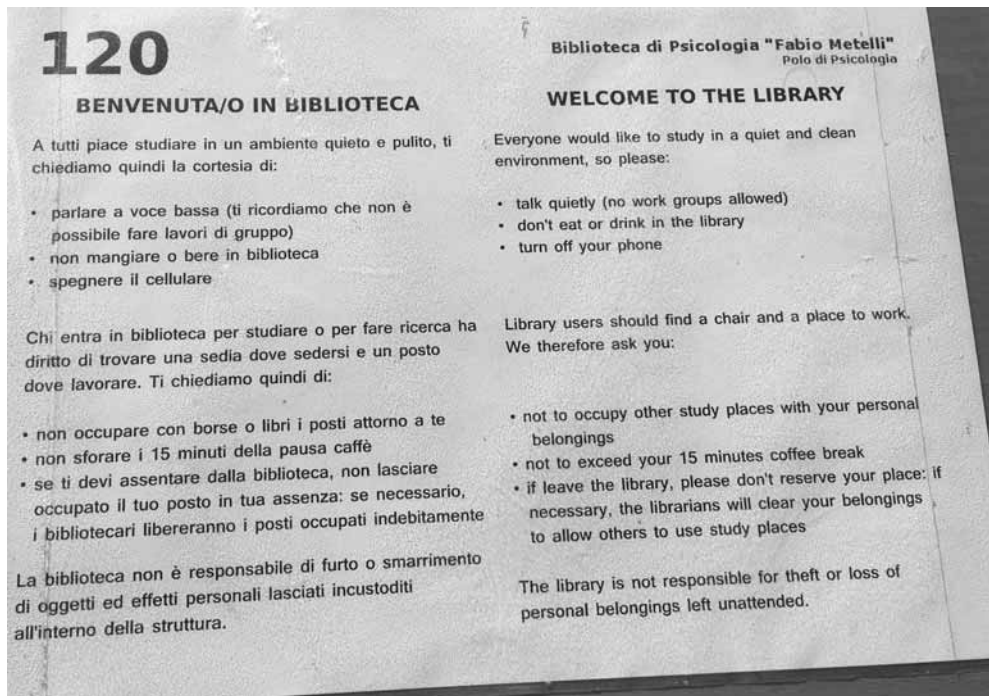
As well as the exhibition at the Agripolis campus, two more examples of truly bilingual signs were found on the two sites, although in both cases the Schools themselves were not responsible for their presence. In the Psychology Library, run by central library services, a bilingual sign recently appeared (December 2016) on individual desks in the study area, giving instructions about regulations for the use of these desks (see Figure 10). Once again the two languages appear alongside one another, in the same size of font, with Italian on the left hand side.

<sup>59</sup> O. Garcia – L. Wei, *Translanguaging: Language, bilingualism and education*.

<sup>60</sup> R. Dressler, *Signgeist: promoting bilingualism through the linguistic landscape of school signage*, "International Journal of Multilingualism", 12, 2015, 1, 128-145.

Previously no such signs had existed, and the head of the Psychology Library informed the authors that they were part of a campaign to encourage respect for fellow library users. The choice to include English was taken by the organising committee of the library in question, not the central library board; given the high number of international students using the library, it was deemed appropriate to give them equal access to information. Despite the regulatory nature of the notice, its aim, the head of library informed the authors, was that of including international students into the community of library users, and hence the initial word "Welcome". This sign was experienced positively by one of the student informants who reported that she felt that the library was one of the few places where her presence as an international student was acknowledged by the university.

Figure 10: Notice on individual desk in Psychology Library.



A similar case was found in the Agripolis canteen, where menus and dishes of the day are available both in English and Italian, not appearing side by side, but on different sheets of paper. Unlike the example above, which was the initiative not of the central library services but the library of Psychology, this bilingual choice was part of a university-wide policy on the part of ESU (l'Azienda Regionale per il Diritto allo Studio Universitario - Regional company for the Right to University Education), the body responsible for accommodation

and canteen services to the university. In fact the entire website of ESU<sup>61</sup> is available in 4 languages: Italian, English, Spanish and Chinese.

### Electronic flat panel displays (top-down signs)

The department of psychology has an electronic notice board which provides information about the timetable and alternates this with other institutional websites which provide information, as can be seen in the picture below. These have been classified as predominantly Italian as almost all of the information is provided in Italian. Some English words do appear at the level of headings: Home, Help me, Newsletter, Business Analysis but their presence is not to index information in English for the information provided below these headings is in Italian. English here has a very superficial, symbolic function, indexing globalisation and the spread of English terminology, but it is not being used to provide information or to address international students.

Figure 11: Electronic flat panel display in Psychology building.



<sup>61</sup> <http://www.esupd.gov.it/it/chi-siamo> (last accessed: February 10, 2017)

### Temporary monolingual signs

The linguistic landscape of both areas observed is also characterised by temporary paper signs posted on various types of official notice boards around the interiors of the buildings and on the doors of some professors. Though the size of text on these signs is often very small, and does not have as strong a visual impact as the semi-permanent signs, we have nonetheless considered these as part of the linguistic landscape. Most of these signs have been posted by institutional staff members; several different functions were identified, such as providing information about courses, exams, thesis writing, opportunities for placements and study abroad. The vast majority of these signs were monolingual Italian only, and equivalent signs in English were not available. There were, however, several monolingual English paper signs which were those advertising courses (summer/winter schools, second cycle degrees), international conferences or guest lectures (see figure 12). These appeared on the school notice boards and on the doors of some of the professors and ETP course directors, with the symbolic function of indexing internationalisation.

Figure 12: Publicity for a seminar at Agripolis.



### 7.5 Some conclusions

To return to our research question regarding the extent to which is English present in the linguistic landscape of the university, we can conclude that in the two physical spaces we explored English is currently barely visible. Despite the fact that several ETPs exist in these spaces and are attended by international students, the presence of English on permanent or semi-permanent external and internal signs is almost non-existent. There are, however, some bilingual or monolingual English temporary paper signs with informative functions and two semi-permanent exhibitions with bilingual signs which index a bilingual learning space. There are several factors which could possibly explain the low visibility of English, which do not appear to be related to the conflicts around the role of English in Italian higher education, but rather to a lack of attention and/or awareness to the symbolic and informative function of signs.

First of all, one could argue that the university offices responsible for signage have little to do with internationalisation and ETPs. The fact that the only signs with English appear in interior spaces of the two buildings we explored were almost all the result of initiatives coming from university lecturers could be indicative of the bottom-up push towards EMI at this institution<sup>62</sup>. And yet, the interviews with stakeholders (see below) would appear to indicate that the primary concern of those involved in EMI at the university is still that of language skills (firstly of the lecturers and then of the administrative staff). It might be of relevance to highlight here that the increase in ETPs has been relatively recent and there is, as yet, no written official university language policy, as there is in many other universities actively promoting EMI. In future, if such a document were to be produced, it would address the role of the native language and culture, in this case Italian, alongside English and other languages. This would ideally focus on the needs of international students (and visiting lecturers) and include the provision of multilingual signage.

### 7.6 Interviews with stakeholders

What interviews with students have revealed is that they are aware of the linguistic landscape in the spaces surrounding them for it impacts their experience of the university. Several of them reported having difficulties due to not understanding signs in Italian, particularly when they first arrived, and this leads to disorientation and frustration. Whilst most of them acknowledge the importance of learning Italian, and indeed enrol on Italian courses, they report that when they see signs which have English on them they feel 'comfortable', 'happy', 'more at home' and 'valued and important for the university'. Though students find strategies such as Google Translate to understand the signs, and may ask peers for directions and translations, what the student remarks highlight is the symbolic value of the presence of languages in the LL of a university<sup>63</sup>. English is not their first

<sup>62</sup> K. Ackerley – M. Guarda – F. Helm ed., *Sharing Perspectives on English-medium instruction*.

<sup>63</sup> E. Shohamy – M.A. Hazaleh-Mahajneh, *Linguistic landscape as a tool for interpreting language vitality: Arabic as a 'minority' language in Israel* in *Minority languages in the linguistic landscape*, D. Gorter, H.F. Marten, L. Van Mensel ed., Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke 2012, pp. 89-107; The context of this study however is quite

language, and though they may eventually understand the meaning of the Italian signs, the presence of a language they are familiar with, even in signs of a regulatory nature, not only facilitates their understanding, but offers symbolic acknowledgement of their presence as international students at the university and can foster a sense of belonging, rather than a sense of belonging to an invisible 'out-group'.

Interviews with course directors revealed that the linguistic landscape is on the whole not something to which they have paid specific attention. This is not because of a lack of desire to welcome international students, which is indeed keenly felt and demonstrated by the immense efforts it has taken on the part of individual professors to set up ETPs and to improve their lecturing skills in English<sup>64</sup>. Along with these didactic issues, more immediate concerns have, understandably, been enrolment procedures and other bureaucratic tasks, such as that of providing translations of all the documentation that students will need to refer to, from admission to course/assessment descriptions. Semi-permanent signage such as maps and directions is not their responsibility as it falls under the remit of central or campus administration, yet our interviews led them to the realisation that this too was an important issue which they could in future pursue more actively.

### 8. *Discussion and considerations*

The small-scale, exploratory nature of this study clearly limits the implications of its findings, but it does, we believe, point to some issues which are worth reflecting upon as regards university language policy. One of the first significant results is the stark contrast between the LL in the university's virtual space, where prospective students find a range of information at their disposal in English, and the university's physical space, where the presence of English (or any other language) is minimal. Clearly, much attention has been paid to the English language on the university's website, the most public and wide-reaching of all of the university's linguistic landscapes and considered an essential part of the university's international marketing strategy. The symbolic value of English here is used to index an international university. On the basis of this initial contact with the university's environment, though the English version of the website provides less dynamic information than the Italian site, international student expectations could be quite high, expecting to find physical spaces reflecting an international learning environment. Yet, the findings of the analysis of physical spaces, albeit based on an exploration of a limited scale, point to a mismatch between the virtual and physical spaces, with hardly any bilingual or English signage on the campuses investigated. As the interviews with international students revealed, this can lead to frustration and disappointment once they have reached the physical

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different since it regards the presence of Arabic on a university campus in Haifa, where one fifth of the students are Arabic speakers, in a country where, the authors write, due to a historic chain of events and a strong national language policy to create a collective national Jewish identity, Arabic has been deliberately marginalized and 'minoritized'.

<sup>64</sup> See, for example K. Ackerley – M. Guarda – F. Helm ed., *Sharing Perspectives on English-medium instruction*, Peter Lang, Bern 2015.

environment. The largely monolingual Italian university space causes disorientation amongst international students looking for a functional use of English in what the virtual space presented to them as an ‘international’ environment. It might also give the impression that the university is spending more time and effort on attracting prospective students than on catering for those who actually enrol, thus principally following a market-driven internationalisation policy.

One could of course argue that incoming international students should acquire at least a basic knowledge of Italian, and thus that translating these signs is not necessary or even desirable. We would certainly agree that learning the local language is an imperative, as it makes life outside lessons easier and more enriching, offering opportunities for intercultural contact and providing access to local and national knowledges. Indeed, there are provisions for learning Italian at the University Language Centre<sup>65</sup> which, although originally aimed at Erasmus and other exchange students, are attracting more and more international students enrolled in ETPs every year. Yet bearing in mind the students’ comments, and also the literature<sup>66</sup>, it is worth remembering the symbolic value of language, in this case English, which could serve to acknowledge the presence of international students. What may appear as a trivial and unnecessary change to the linguistic environment, such as bilingual notices pasted to library desks, indexes a welcoming rather than a daunting environment for international students.

A further, perhaps more important point to be made is that since the university actively recruits international students and places no Italian language requirement for admission<sup>67</sup>, it has an ethical responsibility to make its learning spaces accessible to international students as well as to local students. The limited visibility of English and its less dominant position in relation to Italian in the physical space could be seen as representing a paradoxical finding of this study in relation to other LL research. In this particular context, English, rather than occupying its usual hegemonic, imperialist position, symbolically represents and addresses what could be considered a minority student group, in numerical terms. By making this point we are not arguing in favour of internationalisation tout court, or that all information be provided in English, but rather highlighting the accountability of institutions. Making the physical space as accessible as the online space would be a step in the right direction towards catering for the needs of this minority group. Yet addressing the linguistic landscape alone, that is providing signs in both Italian and English, could be misleading as it would lead students to assume that they would find English-speaking staff in all administrative offices – which may or may not be the case. This implies that attention

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<sup>65</sup> The University of Padova Language Centre provides Italian language courses for international students and staff.

<sup>66</sup> O. Garcia – L. Wei, *Translanguaging: Language, bilingualism and education*.

<sup>67</sup> There is not, as yet, a written document outlining a university-wide language policy, but recruitment procedures and admission requirements for ETPs are a reflection of an implicit language policy. Whilst English language competence is a requirement for admission to ETPs, no reference is made to competence in Italian, and the registration process can be completed monolingually, using English alone, as can the admission test.

to the linguistic landscape should be accompanied by language development opportunities for staff who have contact with international students and lecturers.

Other considerations which have emerged from this study regard the types of bilingualism represented in the signs we have found in the virtual and physical linguistic landscapes that we explored. Those with the presence of two languages side by side, as found in the bilingual exhibitions in the Agriculture faculty or the library signs, should be welcomed as this input provides learning opportunities for both local and international students and promotes a language rich environment. Indeed, adding more languages, and more bilingual or multilingual exhibitions would further enrich the environment. Monolingual English signs on the other hand could be seen as embodying the ideology of parallel monolingualisms, the 'two solitudes' assumption<sup>68</sup> and subtractive bilingualism. This ideology could be divisive, separating not only languages but also communities within and outside the university. Providing information about talks and events only in the secondary language can be seen as targeting certain student groups, which entails excluding or ignoring others. EMI programmes may be seen as increasing elitism and potentially leading to social rupture<sup>69</sup> both within and outside universities. It has been suggested that students who choose ETPs are from higher social strata in society<sup>70</sup>; in Italy, as elsewhere, the rise of EMI has been criticised for leading to an increased gap between the bilingual intellectual classes and the rest of the population, between universities and the communities that finance them<sup>71</sup>. Ideologies and practices of subtractive bilingualism could be more likely to advance these tendencies and create further tensions. The creation of a bilingual environment, on the other hand, can support the development of multiple languages and literacies of all the students and create a more inclusive environment. Clearly the linguistic landscape alone is not sufficient, but it may represent an important symbolic step in the right direction.

<sup>68</sup> J. Cummins, *Teaching for transfer: Challenging the two solitudes assumption in bilingual education*.

<sup>69</sup> P.G. Altbach, *Globalisation and the university: Myths and realities in an unequal world*, "Tertiary Education and Management" 10, 2004, pp. 3-25.

<sup>70</sup> K. Lueg – R. Lueg, *Why do Students Choose English as a Medium of Instruction? A Bourdieusian Perspective on the Study Strategies of Non-Native English Speakers*, "Academy of Management Learning and Education", 14, 2015, 1, pp. 5-30.

<sup>71</sup> A. Motta, *Nine and a half reasons against the monarchy of English*.



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