



# Glocal Perspectives on EMI Students: Italy and Beyond

**November 10th, 2025  
from 14:00 to 18:30**  
Ca' Bernardo – sala B  
Dorsoduro 3199, Venezia

**Seminar programme**

# Glocal Perspectives on EMI Students: Italy and Beyond

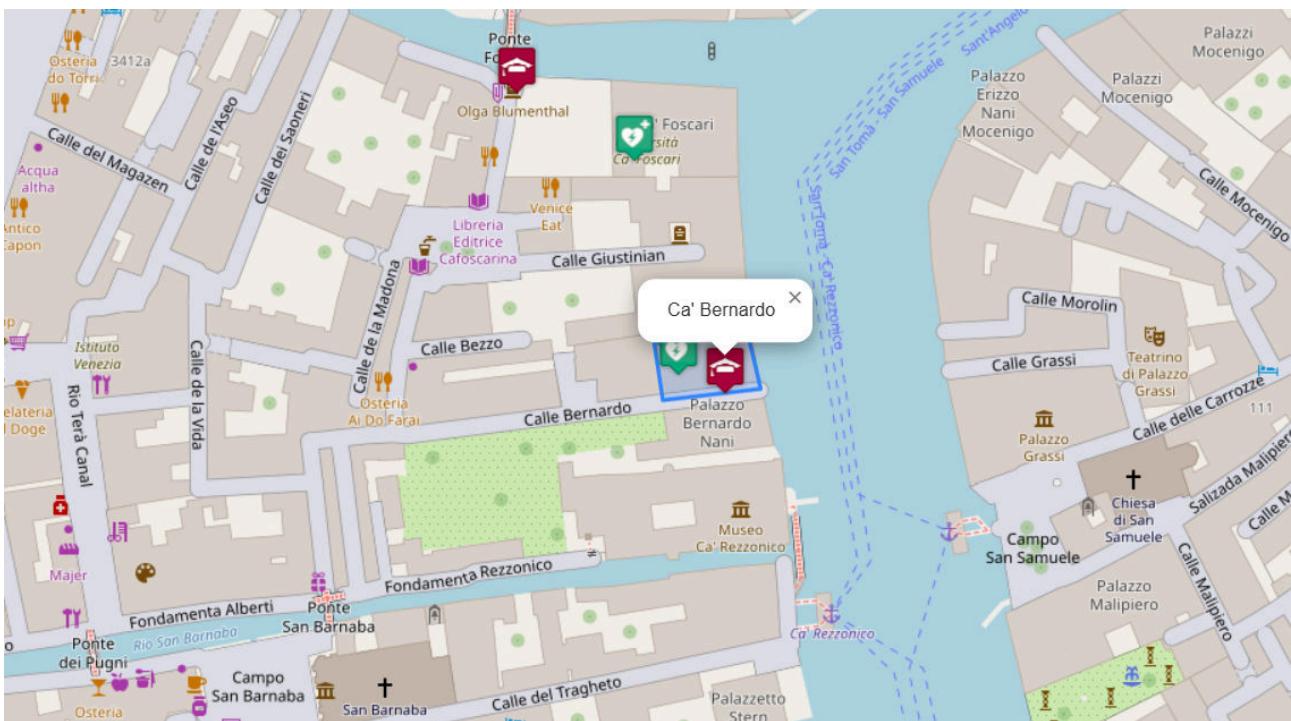
date: November 10th, 2025

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location: Venezia, Ca' Bernardo – sala B

Seminar programme

# Conference location



Ca' Bernardo

Calle Bernardo, Dorsoduro 3199, 30123 Venezia

## Accessible Route to Ca' Bernardo (20 Minutes)

1. **Take the Vaporetto** (water bus) to the **San Basilio** stop.
  - **From Ferrovia (train station):** Line 2 (Scalzi B dock)
  - **From Piazzale Roma:** Line 2 (S. Chiara E dock) or Line 6 (Parisi C dock)
  - **From Tronchetto:** Line 2 (Tronchetto DX dock)
2. **From the San Basilio stop**, take **Calle del Vento** straight into **Campo San Basilio** (also called Campo San Basegio).
3. Continue straight along the waterfront (**Fondamenta San Basilio**), which becomes **Fondamenta San Sebastiano**.
4. At the end of the Fondamenta, turn **right** onto **Fondamenta del Soccorso** and continue to **Campo dei Carmini** (where you'll see the church).
5. Take **Calle della Scuola** to reach **Campo Santa Margherita**.
6. Cross the campo, keeping the central building on your **left**. Continue straight until you reach **Rio Tera' Canal**.
7. Turn **left** onto **Calle de Mezo dea Vida**.
8. At the end of this calle, turn **left**, then immediately **right** onto **Calle della Madonna**.
9. Follow this to **Campiello degli Squellini**.
10. Turn **right** onto **Calle Capeler**.
11. At the end of Calle Capeler, turn **left** onto **Calle Bernardo**.
12. The entrance to **Ca' Bernardo** will be on your **left** as you walk down the street.

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## Programme Overview

14:00 Welcome and Opening Remarks

14:15 Sarah Hopkyns (University of St Andrews) and Kay Gallagher (Emirates College of Advance Education) - The EME Phenomenon: Perspectives from Global Leaders of English Language Education

14:35 Stefania Cicillini (University of Torino) online - From policy to practice: what EMI means for students' language improvement

14:55 Katherine Ackerley and Fiona Clare Dalziel (University of Padova) - Memorisation or dialogic co-construction of knowledge: Students' views of local assessment practices in EMI

15:15 Anna Dillon (University of Ljubljana) and Geraldine Chell (University of Turku) - Academic writing retreats for multilingual graduate students: insights from Finland and the UAE

15:35-16:00 coffee break

16:00 Elena Borsetto (University of Verona) - Global EMI practices through local student experiences: a needs analysis of first-year students in the medical field

16:20 Marcella Menegale (Ca' Foscari University of Venice) - Students' perceptions on intercultural competence development in English-Medium Instruction

16:40 Olivia Mair (Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore) - Living and learning in English-medium Education in Italy. International students' experiences in their first few months.

17:00 Round table with EMI students

17:20 Closing remarks

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# Speakers



**Katherine Ackerley** is Associate Professor of English language and translation at the University of Padua. She was previously vice-director of the University Language Centre, where she was involved in the organisation of support for EMI lecturers. Her research interests include EMI, applied corpus linguistics, and learner corpora.



**Elena Borsetto** holds a PhD in Educational Linguistics from Ca' Foscari University of Venice, with a study focused on EMI in higher education. Currently a post-doctoral researcher at the University of Verona, she also works as a teacher trainer and English lecturer.



**Geraldine Chell** has taught academic English in higher education contexts in the UK, the UAE and is currently an EAP/ESP teacher and a doctoral researcher at the University of Turku, Finland. Her research interests include genre knowledge, EMEMUS and writing retreats.



**Stefania Cicillini** is Adjunct Professor in English Language and Linguistics at the University of Torino, in the departments of Foreign Languages, Literatures and Modern Cultures. Her research interests include the internationalisation of higher education, EMI (English-medium instruction), CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning), ICLHE (Integrating Content and Language in Higher Education), and Anglicisms.



**Fiona Clare Dalziel** is Associate Professor of English Language and Translation at the Department of Linguistic and Literary Studies (DiSLL) of the University of Padova, Italy, where she teaches on the BA and MA degree programmes in Modern Languages. From 2013 to 2016, she was the Head of the Padova University Language Centre, where she established the LEAP (Learning English for Academic Purposes) Project, aimed at providing support for lecturers teaching their content courses in English. Her research interests include English Medium Instruction (EMI), translanguaging in the language classroom, and the use of drama in language learning, particularly among adult migrants.



**Anna Dillon** is an Associate Professor of language education. She worked until recently within EMEMUS settings with undergraduate and postgraduate teacher candidates in the UAE for more than 12 years and now works as a research mentor for Masters and PhD students across Europe.



**Kay Gallagher**, Professor of Language Teacher Education at Emirates College for Advanced Education in Abu Dhabi, researches language and teacher education. She has developed and led English-medium teacher education programs across the UAE, Hong Kong, and Ireland. Her latest book, *World Englishes in the Arab Gulf States*, examines the multiple facets of English in that region.



**Sarah Hopkyns**, Assistant Professor of TESOL and International Education at the University of St Andrews, researches language in education, language and identity, and intercultural communication. Sarah has taught in Japan, Canada, UAE, and UK. She is the author of *The Impact of Global English on Cultural Identities in the UAE*.



**Olivia Mair Bunbury** is a research fellow in the Faculty of Language Science and Foreign Literature and former research fellow with the Centre for Higher Education Internationalisation at Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore in Milan. She holds a PhD from the University of Western Australia.



**Marcella Menegale** is Associate Professor in Educational Linguistics at Ca' Foscari University of Venice and Director of the Foreign Language Didactics Laboratory (LADILS). Her research interests are plurilingual approaches (especially CLIL/EMI and intercomprehension) and learner autonomy, with a strong orientation to psychological factors related to language education.

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## Abstracts

### The EME Phenomenon: Perspectives from Global Leaders of English Language Education

Kay Gallagher (Emirates College for Advanced Education) and Sarah Hopkyns (University of St Andrews)

Universities worldwide are increasingly adopting English-medium education (EME), yet students in non-anglophone contexts often face challenges while studying through English. While research on EME has expanded rapidly, most studies focus on learners' and teachers' perspectives, leaving academic leaders' views underexplored. This presentation discusses the insights provided by 46 academic leaders of English language education from 28 countries across Asia, Europe, and the Middle East into the phenomenon of EME in higher education. Findings reveal that neoliberal drivers, such as employability and internationalisation, continue to fuel the expansion of EME, and that there is a widespread perceived need for discipline-specific English language development programs to better support learning and to ensure equity and inclusion for all students in EME settings.

### From policy to practice: what EMI means for students' language improvement

Stefania Cicillini (University of Torino)

Over the last thirty years, the need to internationalize and innovate higher education has led many universities across the world to adopt English as the medium of instruction (EMI) (Macaro, 2018). Previous research has underlined the main reasons to opt for EMI, e.g. enrich the student's learning pathway, improve language skills, and increase employability, but to date, little is known about the role played by EMI in the development of students' language skills. This presentation aims to shed light on the concept of incidental learning and presents the findings of a longitudinal observation of students' perceptions of language improvement.

### References

Cicillini, S. (2025). *The language factor in English-medium instruction (EMI). A longitudinal study of students' language gains*. Carocci.

Costa, F., & Mariotti, C. (Eds.). (2023). *Input in English-medium instruction*. Routledge.

Dearden, J. (2015). *English as a Medium of Instruction: A Growing Global Phenomenon*. British Council

Macaro, E. (2018). *English Medium Instruction: Content and Language in Policy and Practice*. Oxford University Press.

### Memorisation or dialogic co-construction of knowledge: Students' views of local assessment practices in EMI

Katherine Ackerley and Fiona Clare Dalziel (University of Padova)

This paper investigates domestic and international students' views of the role of language in EMI, focusing on the perceived learning outcomes of local assessment procedures. Drawing on both quantitative and qualitative data from a wider research project on EMI assessment at an Italian university, this study considers students' reflections on language-related issues, as well as culture specific discursive expectations (Bowles & Murphy, 2020:19). Emerging themes, including the "narrative co-construction" of knowledge (Bowles, 2017: 196) in oral exams and memorisation in both oral and written exams, reveal the need for further discussion on washback and social impact

in EMI assessment, and the importance of familiarisation with local academic practices in an internationalised university.

## References

Bowles, H. 2017. Immunologically speaking: Oral examinations, ELF and EMI. *Lingue e Linguaggi* 24, 185-201.

Bowles, H. & Murphy, A. 2020. EMI and the Internationalization of Universities: An Overview. In Bowles, H. & Murphy, A. (Eds.) *English-Medium Instruction and the Internationalization of Universities*. Palgrave Macmillan, 1-26.

## Academic writing retreats for multilingual graduate students: insights from Finland and the UAE

Anna Dillon (University of Ljubljana) and Geraldine Chell (University of Turku)

Multilingual graduate students experience challenges in their academic writing, some of which may be addressed by attending EAP courses. This study explores writing retreats as an additional form of support for their development of academic writing skills, particularly in facilitating awareness of genre knowledge. Graduate students studying in Finland and the UAE were invited to participate in multi-day writing retreats, including blocked time and space to engage in writing, various writing rituals, and shared breaks to foster discussion. Findings demonstrate that retreats may provide participants with a space for productive writing, emotional support, and knowledge sharing that enhances their genre knowledge.

## Global EMI practices through local student experiences: a needs analysis of first-year students in the medical field

Elena Borsetto (University of Verona)

The rapid expansion of English-Medium Instruction (EMI) in global higher education makes understanding students' specific language needs essential for effective course design. This study presents a needs analysis conducted with first-year medical students at a public university in Verona, to identify language-related challenges and learning priorities. Questionnaire findings indicate that students perceive receptive skills—particularly the ability to understand complex academic texts and follow lectures—as their most critical need, alongside the accurate use of medical terminology. These insights indicate a need for structured support in terminology acquisition, and contribute to broader discussions on how local student experiences can inform global approaches to EMI.

## Student Voices in Multilingual Classrooms: Perceptions of Intercultural Competence Development in English-Medium Instruction

Marcella Menegale (Ca' Foscari University of Venice)

English-Medium Instruction (EMI) programmes in European higher education increasingly attract diverse student populations, creating multilingual and multicultural learning environments. However, limited research explores how students with varying levels of EMI experience perceive intercultural dimensions of their learning journey. This study investigates student perceptions of intercultural learning in English-taught courses in a Foreign Language Department at an Italian university. Through a cross-sectional survey design collecting data from both Italian and

international students, the study aims to identify how EMI experience levels relate to intercultural competence perceptions, examine the role of classroom climate in fostering intercultural learning, and document student-developed communication strategies. Findings will provide evidence-based recommendations for enhancing intercultural integration in multilingual classrooms and informing faculty development initiatives.

### **Living and learning in English-medium Education in Italy. International students' experiences in their first few months**

Olivia Mair Bunbury (Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore)

English-medium education (EME) takes place within a complex system in which geopolitical factors, national policy, institutional approaches and local communities interact with individuals' experiences. Recent research calls for a clearer understanding of students' adaptation to EME in non-Anglophone settings and their transitions into EME, taking into account contextual dimensions. This study draws on Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems model to interpret the findings of focus groups with 28 newly arrived international degree-seeking students in EME programmes in Italy. Focus groups addressed students' initial period in the university and local community. Thematic analysis was applied to data from the focus groups, shedding light on how environmental dimensions shape EME students' experience.