

SIGMA Scientific Committee on Languages

LANGUAGE STUDIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN ITALY

Vittoria Tessitore

Centro Linguistico di Ateneo
Università degli Studi di Roma III, I - 00154 Rome, Italy

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. The national linguistic situation

1.1.1. National languages

The official language of Italy is Italian; however, the rights of linguistic minorities are acknowledged and protected. So much is quoted in Article 6 of the Basic Principles of the Italian Republic Constitution (1947). In some border regions other languages are recognized as official languages, besides Italian - French, Ladin, German, and Slovenian. There are other linguistic islands such as Catalan, Serbo-Croatian, and Albanian, which are also protected, and these languages are locally used along with Italian in schools and public offices. Sardinian - which is also regarded as a language of its own - is broadly spoken in the Sardinia Region, and is used for newspapers and other publications, but is not taught in schools. Many of the dialects have had a rich and varied literary tradition - and not necessarily only popular literature for many centuries, and are still kept alive as a great asset to the national culture.

1.1.2. Language policy

Italy has been a politically unified country only for a little more than a century, albeit it has had a much longer tradition of a unified literary/written language. As for communicative language, however, the persistency of dialects and the widespread illiteracy have been gradually overcome by the institution of a national state, with its national education policy and the compulsory military requiring all young men to travel to move to regions different from their own and to live in communities of heterogeneous origin. However, the gap between literary and communicative language in Italy as in many other countries had to wait for the advent of television to be filled in a more thorough way.

1.2. The system of higher education

The system of higher education in Italy coincides almost entirely with the University system. The system is controlled and governed by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific and Technological Research (Ministero dell'Università e della Ricerca Scientifica e Tecnologica).

There are 65 higher education institutions (universities) in Italy, only 8 of which are private. All 65 award diplomas which are officially recognized. Most (47) of the 57 State run institutions are called universities and have a full range of subjects taught, two (one in Perugia, and the other in Siena) are only for foreigners (Universit[^] per stranieri), three are Polytechnics (Bari, Milano, Torino) and others are University Institutes of a more specialized nature (Istituto Universitario Navale in Naples, Istituto Universitario Orientale, also in Naples, and Istituto Universitario di Architettura in Venice; three more

carry the name of Schools and admit students on a competitive basis: these are the "Scuola Normale Superiore" and the "Scuola Superiore di Studi Universitari e di Perfezionamento", both located in Pisa and the "Scuola Internazionale Superiore di Studi Avanzati" in Trieste.

Private higher education institutions are: 1. Libero Istituto Universitario "Carlo Cattaneo" di Castellaneta; 2. Università Cattolica del S. Cuore di Milano; 3. Università Commerciale Bocconi di Milano; 4. Istituto Universitario di Lingue Moderne di Milano; 5. Istituto Universitario di Magistero "Suor Orsola Benincasa" di Napoli; 6. Libera Università degli Studi Sociali; 7. Libera Università Maria SS. Assunta di Roma; 8. Libera Università "Campus bio-medico" di Roma.

All secondary school diplomas obtained after thirteen years (8 required, plus five of high school) give access to university, but some institutions have *numerus clausus* in certain subjects.

Other institutions of higher education, to which access is granted after a thirteen (in a few cases, twelve-year) secondary school curriculum are in the field of the arts, or in that of Physical Education. (1) Academies of Fine Arts (*Accademie di Belle Arti*) prepare students for diplomas in painting, sculpture, scenography, and decorative arts. (2) Higher Institutes for Applied Arts (*Istituti Superiori per le Industrie Artistiche-ISIAs*, active in four locations (Rome, Florence, Faenza, and Urbino). (3) National Academy of Dramatic Art (*Accademia Nazionale d'Arte Drammatica*) located in Rome; (4) Higher Institutes for Physical Education (*Istituti Superiori d'Educazione Fisica - ISEF*).

All degrees granted by universities have legal value which is recognized as necessary to enter certain professions. As far as academic curricula are concerned, there are general outlines in all subjects which are drawn by the central authorities for higher education (*CUN= Consiglio Universitario Nazionale*, elected by the entire academic body of the country, and chaired by the Minister of University and of Scientific and Technological Research) but curricula differ from one university to the other, in so far as subjects offered in a given course of studies are not the same everywhere.

There are three main levels of degree one can get: (1) a DU ("Diploma Universitario"), a first level University Diploma to be obtained after a period of three years of study and some training; the only exception at the time is the diploma of "Interpreter, Translator, and Correspondent in Foreign Languages" which is given at the Forlì campus of Bologna University after a two year programme, (2) a DL ("Diploma di Laurea"), a course of four or five year duration and (3) a DR ("Dottorato di Ricerca"), a highly specialized postgraduate course, often awarded by a consortium of various universities.

Diplomi Universitari represent an innovation within the Italian system of higher education, having been set up with a 1990 law (Law n.341 of 19 November 1990,). Nonetheless the number of fields in which a diploma course has been designed is rather high: there are 49 different diploma courses organized in various universities throughout the country. Some of them are held in different locations from that of the university which awards the diploma and in certain cases are organized in connection with other public, or private institutions, more directly related to the local market demand.

Related to this new type of course, and some of them in the process of changing their status, are the so called Schools for Special Purposes (*Scuole Dirette A Fini Speciali*). Originally conceived as a training ground for some professions not necessarily based on a full university laurea curriculum these schools have existed, as attached to some universities, since 1933, and count now in the number of 93 denominations scattered in various institutions throughout the country.

The *Corsi di laurea* at the moment are of 91 different denominations, also active through the various universities in the country. In order to obtain a laurea a student must pass a number of exams (from 20 to 40) in various subjects, plus a final discussion of a thesis.

Dottorati di Ricerca are postgraduate courses aiming at an advanced training to scientific research lasting three, or four years. Only few students are admitted and through a rather competitive selection. All DR candidates are given grants, and are entitled to spend part of their course in a foreign university. Other postgraduate programmes are the *Scuole di specializzazione*, which aim at academic education and professional training in various specific disciplinary sectors. There are 221 different schools throughout the country, none of which covers the disciplinary field of our concern. The Law n.341 of 1990 establishes also a "Scuola di Specializzazione" for the initial training of secondary school teachers, to be founded in each University or Consortium of regionally located universities.

The academic year usually goes from the first of November to the end of October. Classes are given until the end of May, while exams can be taken in June and then again in October and the following February. Some universities have the year divided into two semesters, with an interval in February, between the two.

1.3. The impact of secondary education on language studies in higher education

Teaching of foreign languages has only recently entered the primary level (age 6 to 10). It is required of Law N.148, of 5 June 1990, starting of the second year of *Scuola Elementare*, with three hours a week in each class. However, only few schools implement this new part of the curriculum as there are very few teachers qualified to teach foreign languages to children of that age.

In Scuola Media (Middle School), which covers the last three years of required schooling in Italy (age 11-13), a foreign language is taught in all three years with a frequency of three hours a week. As far as the upper bracket of secondary school, that is the last five years before University, there is a great variety of established programmes, as in some schools (Classical Licei among them) only two years of a foreign language are mandatory, while in some other - more technical school, the students have five years of one language and three of another one. In the present system there are no options offered to a student in secondary schools, as he/she must attend all subjects required for a given year of course.

English is by far the most frequently taught language in Italian schools at all levels, followed by French, and at a long distance, by German and Spanish.

2. LANGUAGE DEGREE PROGRAMMES OFFERED BY UNIVERSITIES

In the first of the three levels described above, the only *Diploma Universitario* in the field of languages is that of "Interpreter, Translator, and Correspondent in Foreign Languages" which is given at the Forlì campus of Bologna University after a two year programme. As far as the *Scuole Dirette a Fini Speciali* are concerned there is only one, that for Experts in Foreign Languages for the Commercial Sector, currently active in Arezzo, as part of the University of Siena.

Of specific interest for the teaching of Foreign Languages are the following *Corsi di Laurea*: Interpreting, and Translation Studies both of them active in only two Universities, Bologna (in its Forlì campus), and Trieste; Oriental Languages and Civilizations active in the Istituto Universitario Orientale di Napoli, Oriental Languages and Literatures active in the University of Venice, and East European Languages and Institutions in the University of Udine.

2.1. Traditional Language/Literature programmes

Traditional Language/Literature programmes are quite numerous in Italian universities, as they are in other EU countries. They are basically defined within *Corsi di laurea (second level)* in Foreign Languages and Literatures, active as such in 48 universities, and with a slightly different denomination - European Foreign Languages and Literatures - in 9 universities.

2.1.1. Content and objectives

Students have to opt for one "major" language and literature to study through the four years of the course, and one "minor" one which is to be studied for three years. Thus, 7 of the 20 exams that a student has to pass in order to have her/his degree (after a four-year course) are defined as "X Language and Literature" (both written and oral), the rest of the subjects are grouped according to different curricula they want to follow.

2.1.2. Structure of programmes (length, assessment, etc)

A national curriculum in Foreign Languages and Literatures with its three subdivisions, (cultural-historical, linguistic, literary) is suggested by the central Ministry, but students are left with quite a few options in choosing their own fields of study.

Courses are traditionally considered of a year duration; around a given course there also many seminars and other activities; sometimes the evaluation is done in itinere, but more traditionally there is a formal exam at the end of the course. Exams are evaluated on the basis of a formal programme: the evaluation is done on the basis of thirty points, 18 being the minimum passing grade.

The language is mostly taught by native speakers, who have a special kind of contract with the university, "language experts" specialists in the field of language teaching. Technologies used are in general video, and audio devices, as well as computer aided programmes, some of it commercially produced and some custom made.

At the end of the four-year programme, the student has to write a thesis on a subject which s/he has agreed upon with a supervisor. The thesis is finally discussed with a commission of 11 professors, each of whom has formally got 10 votes. The final assessment is based on one side on the average vote the student has got on the basis of her/his curriculum, on the other is an evaluation of the dissertation which is being discussed in the final examination.

In the course of 1993-94 the number of students in all fields registered in Italian Universities for a Laurea Course were 1,578,358, of which 33,334 were in Lingue e letteratura straniera, while out of the total number of 92,539 graduates there are 6,266 graduates in Foreign Languages, (plus 89 in Oriental Languages and Literatures, and 175 in Interpreting and Translating).

2.1.3. Impact of Community programmes

Community programmes are very popular with the Language and Literature students. Students are encouraged to take part in the exchange programmes, to practice their languages while studying other subjects rather than taking specific language courses. Italian students are in the condition to do it as their curriculum is not restricted to language and literature but comprises a number of other subjects as well.

LINGUA II has been a good asset, and has allowed the students to explore new possibilities in the field of language learning.

Staff exchange has not been very fruitful up to now, and is practiced under different provisions such as bilateral agreements between universities, or short courses offered by visiting professors.

There are a few cases of common curricula being worked out. A very recent one in the field of Romance languages and literatures has been jointly set up by the University of Siena, and three universities, one in Spain, one in France, and one in Portugal.

2.2. 'Alternative' programmes (Applied Language Studies, etc.)

2.2.1. Content and objectives

There are other courses - at the Corso di Laurea level - which deal with foreign languages and literature, but in more specific, specialized fields. Such are for instance, *Oriental Languages and Civilizations* active in the Istituto Universitario Orientale di Napoli, *Oriental Languages and Literatures* active in the University of Venice, and *East European Languages and Institutions* in the University of Udine.

Applied Linguistics is one of the subjects offered in the four year Foreign Languages and Literatures Corso di Laurea. Within the "Linguistics" option several students write their final thesis on a subject related to Applied Linguistics, and in some cases on language teaching theories and methods.

A special case is that of Italian as a foreign language, which is taught in the Universities for Foreigners (Perugia and Siena), as well as in many other universities as a special programme for exchange students.

2.3. Postgraduate programmes (up to and including PhD)

2.3.1. Content and objectives

As far as *Dottorati di Ricerca* (III level) are concerned, calls for application are issued every year in the Official Journal of the Italian Republic. Dottorati courses are generally held by consortia of universities. Among the programmes published in 1994, the following are of interest in our area:

- 4 in Anglistics (3-year programmes at: Universities of Chieti, Sassari, and Viterbo; Genova, Milano, Perugia, and Torino; Venezia, Padova, and Verona; a 4-year programme at Universities of Florence, Bologna and Pisa)
- 4 in French studies (all of 3-year duration: Universities of Bari, Lecce, and Basilicata-Potenza; Milano, Padova, Pavia, Venezia, and Verona; Roma I, Firenze, Pisa, and Tuscia-Viterbo; Torino, Genova, and Parma)
- German Language and Literature (4 years, at Universities of Pavia, Bologna, Firenze, and Torino)
- German Studies (4 years at Universities of Pisa, Catania, L'Aquila, Roma I, Venezia)
- German Studies and Philology (4 years at Universities of Florence, Napoli Orientale, Roma I, Roma III, Torino, Tuscia-Viterbo)
- Iberian and Ibero-American Languages and Literatures (3 years at Universities of Palermo, Napoli, Napoli-Orientale, Basilicata/Potenza)
- Iberian Studies (4 years, at Universities of Bologna, Bergamo, Milano, Pavia, and Venezia)
- Hispanic Studies (3 years, at Universities of Pisa, Cagliari, Genova, and Torino)
- Slavistics (4 years at University of Rome I, Naples/Orientale, Padova, Pisa, Rome II)
- Glottology and Philology (3 years, at Universities of Milan and Verona)
- Linguistic, Philological, and Literary Disciplines (3 yr. - Bari)

- Philology and Interpreting Techniques (3 yr. - Venezia, Verona)
- Romance Philology (3 yr. - Firenze, Pisa, Siena, Torino)
- Romance Philology and Linguistics (3 yr. - Naples)
- Romance and Italian Philology (3 yr. - Rome I, II, III, Messina, Pisa)
- Language and Literature of Central and Southern Italy (3 years, at Universities of Chieti and Aquila)
- 4 in Linguistics (a 4 year programme at Universities of Padova, Udine, and Venezia, and 3 year programmes at Universities of Pavia, Bergamo, Bologna, Cagliari, and Torino; at Universities of Pisa, Firenze, Napoli/Orientale, Rome I, and Udine; at University of Rome III)
- Applied Linguistics and Communication Languages (3 years at University of Milano/ Cattolica)
- Italian Linguistics (3 years at Universities of Firenze and Siena)
- Linguistic, Philological and Literary Sciences (4 years at University of Milano/Cattolica)
- Semiotics (3 years at University of Bologna)
- Language Theory and Sciences of Signs (4 years at Bari, and Bari/Politecnico)

2.3.2. Structure of programmes (length, assessment, etc.)

These postgraduate programmes last from three to four years. Students are required to attend some specialized seminars and to write a final dissertation, which has to be an original work of research. In some cases postdoctoral grants are awarded to doctors who want to pursue their research.

2.3.3. Impact of Community programmes

Only few Community programmes can be easily used by graduate students in Languages. Few students have participated in the Comett programme, but more attention should be paid to the Research programs (former HC&M) for research students who could be easily sent to specialized laboratories in the field of languages and language teaching.

2.4. Career prospects for graduates of language programmes

Teaching in different schools and institutions, both in the public and the private sectors. Teaching abroad. Research scholar in universities or other research centers. Documentalist. Translator. Interpreter. Language and cultural consultant for private and public institutions. Consultant in the field of publishing. Journalism. Public relations. Diplomatic service.

3. INITIAL AND IN-SERVICE TRAINING OF LANGUAGE TEACHERS

3.1. Initial training

Training is required for language teachers at various levels. As for the Elementary School level (cfr.1.3, above), required of the Law are qualified Elementary School teachers with a specific competence in the field of foreign languages. Middle Schools teachers who are supposed to teach three hours in each class should be holding a specific degree (Foreign Languages and Literatures).

3.1.1. Institutions responsible for training

As mentioned above, the most recent law provides the institution of a post-lauream course for all graduates who are interested in teaching in secondary schools. This is intended as an official qualification for the profession, as well as the basic training ground for any given subject.

3.1.2. Content of training programmes

In the first phase of Foreign Language teaching in Elementary Schools courses the training has been carried out by local educational authorities. Throughout the country, in 1991-92, 3,865 elementary teachers have been trained and qualified to teach foreign languages in elementary schools, and around 2,000 are usually involved each year.

Broadly speaking the corsi di laurea in "Lingue e Letterature straniere" could be considered the basic training courses for future teachers; not much is done, to provide professional training to future teachers of foreign languages, even though locally in Departments of Linguistic there are specific programmes on Methodologies of Foreign language teaching.

3.2. In-service training

3.2.1. Institutions responsible for training

As the Ministry of Education is structured in diverse sectors corresponding to the various specifications of secondary school, there have been several projects of experiments aiming at an improvement as well as an enlargement of foreign language teaching. This in view of a general plan to raise to two the number of foreign languages taught at secondary (last five years) school in the country. All in all there are about 450 schools which are now involved in the project, and consequently quite a few teachers involved in a specific training, while in service.

As activity of in-service training the Ministry of Education has put out a Special Project (Progetto Speciale Lingue Straniere PSLS), started in 1978, as a bilateral agreement between Italy and the USA. Within this programme a section is dedicated to the teaching of foreign languages at the Elementary level (Insegnamento della Lingua Straniera nella Scuola Elementare, ILSSE).

3.2.3. Structure of programmes (length, assessment, etc.)

These courses are in general offered during the school year. They last an average of 100 hours, with three class hours per week.

They are taught by other secondary school teachers who have had experience in teachers' training both in Italy and abroad.

As far as the elementary school teachers are concerned the courses take place in each province, and are organized by the Local Education Authorities (Provveditorati agli Studi); they have been organized since 1991-92.

As for Secondary school teachers, the mentioned special project (PSLS), is organized by the local (regional) Institutes for School Experiments and Continuing Education (Istituti Regionali per la Sperimentazione Scolastica e l'Aggiornamento Educativo, IRSSAE).

3.2.4. Impact of Community programmes to date

It is mostly through Action I of LINGUA that language teachers take part in Community programmes. They attend intensive courses mostly during the summer for periods of two weeks or more.

Another very popular and widely practiced activity is the exchange of entire classes, visiting one another for a given period of time - usually from two to four weeks. Though designed for the students, this turns out to be a very useful kind of in-service training for

language teachers who have an opportunity to know the foreign country while getting involved in their own professional environment.

In addition to these activities specifically dedicated to language teachers, the Teachers Exchange Programme (TEX) is addressed to teachers of all subjects who want to cooperate with other institutions in Europe.

As regions are asked to coordinate as well as cooperate financially in all these activities, the participation differs from one region to the other.

4. LANGUAGE PROVISIONS IN UNIVERSITIES FOR STUDENTS OF OTHER DISCIPLINES

4.1. Language studies integrated into non-language programmes and language options offered in combination with non-language programmes

Almost all university courses have by now at least a foreign language required to fulfil the final objective. This is true of scientific and technological curricula, where the language has a functional role, and even more so of curricula connected with such subjects as law, economics and political sciences.

4.1.1. Content and objectives

Often the emphasis is simply on the teaching of reading strategies in the foreign language. Such a content is encouraged by professors who desire their students to be able to read specific texts in a foreign language. However, many universities have now Linguistic Centers operating for the entire academic community. Their institution has been strongly encouraged by a recent law - at the moment there are about 20 such centers throughout the country. Among the best organized are the centers of Florence and Turin.

4.1.2. Structure of courses (length, assessment, etc.)

Language courses which are linked to a disciplinary curriculum of a different kind are not structured in terms of duration (with the exception of the reading courses mentioned in 4.1.1., usually covered in one year). In University Language Centers students attend courses for the length of time they need. Often they follow self-access programmes based on multi-media technology, and more frequently now with didactic softwares some of which imply a very active participation on the part of the learner.

4.1.3. Impact of Community programmes to date

As far as learning foreign languages is concerned, Community programmes have provoked a great rise of interest in language learning for functional purposes. Students of all subjects are encouraged to attend courses both before leaving for their host universities, and when they get there.

4.2. General and subject-oriented language courses accompanying non-language programmes (service courses)

As the Italian system of higher education does not imply the identification of two parallel subjects studied through the years spent at university as it happens in several UK universities and elsewhere, language courses in non-specialist programmes are all to be considered as service courses. Most of them are the responsibility of a University Language Center, and have been described in 4.1 above.

5. THE TRAINING OF TRANSLATORS AND INTERPRETERS

5.1. Institutions responsible for training

There are only two universities offering academic programmes leading to a laurea in this field. The University of Bologna (in its Forlì campus), and that of Trieste - both of them State universities - award degrees in Interpreting, and Translation Studies.

Other private institutions - Scuole per Interpreti e Traduttori - offer professional diplomas in interpreting and translating. Two of these schools - one in Milan, and one in Rome - have recently been conferred a status comparable to Diploma courses (first level degrees) and students are given the possibility to continue their studies towards a Laurea in Lingue e letterature straniere.

5.2. Content of training programmes

In all institutions students who train to be interpreters and translators, are required to specialize in two languages. Courses in linguistics, grammar, literature, law, history and culture related to the language are asked of all students, as well as translation studies, and interpreting techniques.

5.3. Structure of programmes (length, assessment, etc.)

Most courses are structured on a three, or four-year basis; students are required to attend a certain number of hours and the assessment for each course is given on the basis of the practice as well as of the final exam.

In some universities Languages and Literatures programmes offer also courses in translation in the third or fourth year of the course. Some special courses are given at a postgraduate level.

5.4. Impact of Community programmes to date

There are no official records of these institutions taking part in the Erasmus programme.

5.5. Career prospects outside the areas of translating and interpreting

Future translators and interpreters have a definite profession to look forward to. However, translating and interpreting are not limited to international, or interlanguage conferences. They can work in Public Relations, in the information and communication sectors of both the public and the private sectors. They are required in all situations in which the shifting from one language to another is a necessary and frequent need. International and European organizations have always required this type of professional skill, but it is getting more and more frequent also at the national, and local levels.

6. LANGUAGE STUDIES IN NON-UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Non-university institutions officially described as institutions of higher education are those listed above in 1.2 (par. 5). To these one can add private Schools of all kinds (more specifically schools for Interpreters and Translators) and - to a certain extent - professional schools organized by regional governments often under the auspices of the European Community.

All these schools and courses require at least one language, and some in a more compelling way than others. It is difficult to describe their programmes, and even their

content and objectives as their statutes are not centrally defined, but worked out at the time of their onset.

7. NEW NEEDS IN THE AREA OF LANGUAGE STUDIES

7.1. In undergraduate and postgraduate programmes offered by universities

7.1.1. Seen in relation to the development of language studies

As far as language studies are concerned, the need is felt for a specific programme in Language and Linguistics. In such programme cultural and historical subjects should be complementary to the basic linguistic requirements.

There is need for a larger number of subjects and courses linked with Language Theory and Practice, and consequently more Faculty specialized in the field.

Postgraduate programmes in Language and Linguistics should be set in cooperation with institutions of other countries.

7.1.2. Seen in relation to professional requirements

Students who start on a Language and Literature programme often declare that their interest is in learning at least two foreign languages for practical reasons. As things stand now the gap between the students' admitted request and the programme offered is too wide.

At the undergraduate level students should feel from the very beginning that they are working towards a professional qualification for which a practical training is required.

7.1.3. Seen in relation to the creation of Europe

Both at the undergraduate and the graduate level students should become familiar with communication technologies as a common ground on which the entire European community builds its learning strategies.

Common programmes, mutually recognized curricula and certifications should be set up in order to encourage awareness of common European needs throughout the EU.

7.2. In initial and in-service language teacher training

7.2.1. Seen in relation to the development of language studies

As already mentioned, the most recent legislation in Italy requires the establishment of an interdisciplinary Graduate School for the initial training of teachers in secondary schools. Such a school should be directly linked to the previous curriculum at universities, and as far as Language teacher training is concerned, should insist on a general approach necessary to teachers of any subject, as well as on a more specific one, dedicated to language teaching. Language studies, then, should enter this training programme, to widen the horizon of future teachers, considering the international, intercultural value that the acquisition of one or more foreign languages adds to an educational programme.

7.2.2. Seen in relation to professional requirements

Future teachers of a foreign language, should be well informed and experienced in the methodology/methodologies recently worked out for the different situations and objectives. They need to have a broad, but neatly defined, outline of their profession, as

they are likely in their future professional lives to encounter different demands according to different types of school and objectives.

7.2.3. Seen in relation to the creation of Europe

The importance of language learning within the general framework of a wider and intercommunicating Europe has been stressed in all the recent documents issued by the European Commission. In particular, those documents related to the new Socrates programme.

Future teachers should be aware of the common objective we are all pursuing.

Special programmes, within the general scheme of Lingua (I, Ib, and Vb), should be launched to encourage the European dimension at the level of initial training.

7.3. In language provision in universities for students of other disciplines

7.3.1. Seen in relation to the development of language studies

A specialized Faculty should provide for such courses and students should be encouraged/required to attend courses for a given language both in general communicative skills and in "specific language". In the present situation, students attend a course in a given language, either because they are required to pass an exam, which is often on the specific language of their subject matter, or in order to survive when travelling, and particularly when they prepare to go to a foreign university with an exchange programme. These are occasions which should be better implemented, in accordance to a general project of common studies and recognized degrees.

7.3.2. Seen in relation to professional requirements

Both students and faculty should reflect on the continuous change undergone by the social and economic asset of Europe. There is hardly any job at a post-university level which does not imply a European dimension. Professional profiles should comprise such dimension, thus requiring a special care in the teaching and practicing of foreign languages in all fields of study.

7.3.3. Seen in relation to the creation of Europe

Participation of students and Faculty in the exchange programmes is still the most apparent way of building a common Europe. As things are now, especially at the undergraduate level, there are areas which do not participate as much as others. Engineering, chemistry, physics - to quote a few areas in my experience - are more reluctant. In any case, as the percentage of students actually moving through the European universities is necessarily low, the Socrates programme encourages the establishment of a European dimension through other actions than the exchange of students.

An important step towards the European dimension in Higher Education could be done with institutional and recognized exchange of teachers, as well as with common curricula.

7.4. In the training of translators and interpreters

7.4.1. Seen in relation to the development of language studies

As there are only two universities in Italy providing courses towards a degree in Translation and Interpreting, there is a need to have more comprehensive programmes

such as those, as well as specific translation courses within more general Foreign Languages programmes.

7.4.2. Seen in relation to professional requirements

A professional profile of interpreters and translators - with the definition of specific competences and requirements is needed for a profession which has in itself an international scope of activity.

7.4.3 . Seen in relation to the creation of Europe

More encouragement should be given on the part of the European Commission to programmes in lesser used and studied languages: the need for translators and interpreters in these languages is evident; besides, in terms of linguistic education policy, it would be a valuable step forward towards integration and respect of minorities.

7.5. In language studies in non-university institutions of higher education

For these institutions see above under 6.

7.5.1. In language programmes

In most institutions there are no specific language programmes. Exception made for the private schools of interpreting and translations mentioned above.

8. MEASURES TO BE TAKEN TO SATISFY THE NEEDS IDENTIFIED

8.1. Measures to be taken in the areas of initial and in-service language teacher training

8.1.1. Measures within the responsibility of the institutions

Besides realizing the postgraduate school for future teachers of secondary schools measures could be taken at the undergraduate level.

As a complement to courses in Language Teaching Methodology students in their fourth year should be trained in the University Language Centers as assistants to the Language Experts who teach there.

8.1.2. Measures within the responsibility of the regional and national authorities

Qualified teachers who are already teaching in schools of a given region should be allowed to attend university refreshing courses in order to verify their teaching attitude with other teachers and with the most updated research in the field.

8.1.3. Measures within the responsibility of the European Union

European training seminars, where the European dimension is proposed as the main focus of attention. These should be offered regularly, with the view that language teachers are probably the first and necessary stage in diffusing such an important dimension to European education at large.

8.2. Measures to be taken in universities (outside the area of teacher training)

8.2.1. Measures within the responsibility of the institutions

To encourage the institution of specific degree courses in Languages and Linguistics, so as to have a recognizable scientific center for research and teaching in the field.

At least two languages should be part of such a curriculum.

Lesser used languages should be taught and encouraged in all universities with a foreign languages programme.

8.2.2. Measures within the responsibility of the regional and national authorities

Regional and national authorities should standardize the language requirements for many jobs, especially those of the public sphere. The certification for such requirements should be awarded by the universities, and agreed upon with the European Union.

8.2.3. Measures within the responsibility of the European Union

Allow and encourage the constitution of common curricula, and common recognized degrees, in particular, postgraduate programmes of European scope.