South Tyrol and the Challenge of Multilingual Higher Education

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Abstract

Since its founding in 1997, the Free University of Bozen-Bolzano (Unibz) has looked beyond English medium instruction (EMI) as the preferred pathway to internationalisation, opting for a unique trilingual model of higher education with academic programmes delivered through modules taught in German, Italian and English. Additionally, the Faculty of Education offers subjects in a fourth language, Ladin, an ancient Romance language that enjoys a minority status in the Dolomite area. Through its plurilingual policy, Unibz seeks to put into practice a glocal vision: promoting interaction and intercultural exchange in the diverse languages and cultures of South Tyrol, while simultaneously consolidating its role as a multilingual Higher Education Institution (HEI) in Europe.

The challenge of delivering multilingual curricula to heterogeneous classes through innovative and effective teaching methodologies that integrate content and language (ICL) puts pressure on continually updating Unibz's language policy and practices to respond to the shifting needs of students, professors, and other stakeholders. Two critical points have emerged that reveal a gap between the multilingual mission of the university and the implemenation of language policy: first, the need to support students through an embedded approach to multilingualism across the curriculum in order for them to achieve the advanced-level competences in all three main languages required for graduation; second, the need to provide training to professors teaching in their L1 or L2 to classes with mixed linguistic competences, especially in terms of using language for specific and academic purposes (LSP/LAP).

This article analyses the effectiveness of the Unibz language-in-education policy (LEP) by examining some critical challenges of integrating content and language in multilingual teaching across academic disciplines. It suggests that constructive alignment can

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help bridge the policy-practice gap by merging pedagogical, didactic, and linguistic learning aims for multilingual education contexts. An example of this alignment process in the design of a Unibz training programme for professors, "Excellence in Multilingual Teaching in Higher Education", serves to illustrate how EMI support, embedded in a broader multilingual strategy, can encourage cross-curricular critical language awareness.

1. South Tyrol and Multilingual Higher Education

Efforts to internationalise the higher education sector emerged following the Bologna Declaration (1999) and its reform strategies to harmonise tertiary education systems and programmes across Europe. Beelen and Jones (2015) identify three main strategies for internationalisation in higher education: first, outbound mobility through exchange programs for students and faculty, including dual/joint degrees with foreign institutions, partnership agreements, and unilateral mobility programmes; second, "internationalization at home" (IaH), which refers to the purposeful integration of international and intercultural dimensions into the formal and informal curriculum for all students within domestic learning environments; third, "internationalization of the curriculum", which refers to international dimensions of the curriculum regardless of where it is delivered, including through transnational /cross-border education – for example, through academic franchising programmes developed in one place but delivered elsewhere for external stakeholders.

While many European higher education institutions have adopted English-medium instruction (EMI) as the main means of achieving internationalisation in all three dimensions, the Free University of Bozen-Bolzano (Unibz) is one of a select few to embrace a genuine multilingual policy and to proactively pursue plurilingualism by integrating content and languages across its faculties and degree programmes. Since its founding in 1997, Unibz has looked beyond EMI as the preferred pathway to internationalisation, opting for a unique trilingual model of higher education, with academic programmes delivered through modules taught in German, Italian and English in an integrated content and language in higher education (ICLHE) approach.

Additionally, the Faculty of Education offers subjects in a fourth language, Ladin, an ancient Romance language that enjoys a minority status in the Dolomite region, in order to prepare teachers to work in schools in the Ladin valleys.

Through its plurilingual policy, Unibz seeks to put into practice a "glocal" approach to internationalisation: a vision at once defined by a strong local habitus while simultaneously looking beyond territorial borders toward an identification with a global community. According to the sociologist Roland Robertson (1995), "glocalization" refers to the co-presence or simultaneity of both universalising and particularising tendencies in social and economic practices. Through its plurilingual strategy for tertiary education, Unibz seeks to promote interaction and intercultural exchange in the local languages and cultures of South Tyrol, while simultaneously consolidating its role as a multilingual higher education institution (HEI) in Europe and globally. However, translating the university's multilingual mission into practice reveals an underlying tension between the local and global dimensions that is not easily resolved.

The emergence of a multilingual mindset in educational contexts in South Tyrol finds an obstacle in the monolingual habitus (Gogolin, 1994, 1997) reflected in educational norms and practices that are based on assumptions about language and its role in shaping a national culture or habitus. Education systems have often reproduced the myth of homogeneity in language and culture for the tacit purpose of creating a coherent nation state; this political agenda is especially marked in South Tyrol given the history of conflicts and tensions that have defined this contested border territory for the past one hundred years.[1] Consequently, multilingualism has historically been pursued in

1 At the time of Italian unification in 1861, the region was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and remained so until 1919. Subsequently, attempts to assimilate German speakers under Fascism (1920–45) resulted in ethnic cleansing of the German-speaking minority through assimilation to Italian or migration to Austria or Germany. Beginning in 1922, the Fascist attempts to "Italianize" the territory culminated in a 1941 agreement with Germany, the "Option": the German population was given the 'option' of assimilation to Italian or migration to Austria or Germany; about 86% of the German-speaking population opted for the German Reich, but only a small part of them left South Tyrol. Prohibition of the use of the German language in official public offices and on all public inscriptions was introduced, as well as policies of unilingual Italian education for all children starting school (*Riforma Gentile* October 1923), leading to a dissolution of all German-language schools and dismissal of German-speaking teachers. Only

the region through separate monolingual realities, each with its own social and institutional practices, as illustrated in the three distinct educational authorities – German-speaking, Italian-speaking and Ladin-speaking – that administer the region's schools from kindergarten to the end of upper secondary education.

Tertiary education in the South Tyrol breaks with this mould of formal linguistic separation, enabling Unibz to offer a unique model of multilingual education; the Unibz mission is for students to achieve plurilingual competences as part of their degree studies, as well as to develop a multilingual mindset, one that is open to languages and cultures and navigates these in a flexible way. This twofold goal is not easily achieved, however, and the university faces several challenges in realising its vision of multilingual higher education. First, more and more students from across Italy and Europe with different cultural backgrounds and languages are enrolling and are encountering difficulties meeting the exit requirements in all official languages of instruction by graduation; second, professors teaching these heterogeneous classes, at times in a language of instruction different from their first language (L1) due to multilingual curricular requirements, have little preparation or training in content and language integrated learning and may also have weak second language (L2) competences. These critical points are examined in the sections that follow, beginning with an analysis of the design and delivery of the university's multilingual strategy for language education.

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with the 1946 Paris Agreement (known as De Gasperi-Gruber Agreement) was protection guaranteed for linguistic minorities in South Tyrol; this legislative framework was subsequently enshrined in the 1948 Italian Constitution which recognised a special autonomy status for the region. Rising tensions and violence in the 1950s led to the 1972 "Paket" or Second Autonomy Statute – a formal agreement between the Italian and Austrian governments: the latter formally renounced claims on South Tyrol in return for legal guarantees for linguistic communities within the territory. This consociational model of political organization through a power-sharing agreement (PSA) continues in the region to the present day.

2. Multilingual Language Strategy at Unibz

According to data collected in the 2017 Kolipsi II study, the majority of secondary students in South Tyrol tested below B2 level for language competence in Italian L2 and German L2, notwithstanding the many years of language study at school. Among German L1 speakers, only 21.7% achieved a B2 level in Italian L2, 52% achieved a B1 level, 20% achieved an A2 level and 5.9% achieved a C1 level (Abel, Vettori & Martini 2017, p. 56–57). These results represent a significant decrease in linguistic competence from the previous Kolipsi I study (2007) when 41.1% of students tested achieved a B2 level, 46% achieved a B1 level and 9.9% achieved a C1 level (Abel, Vettori & Martini 2017, Figure 40). The L2 performance results are similar for Italian L1 speakers tested in German L2. According to data collected in Kolipsi II, only 13.8% of students achieved a B2, while 34.5% achieved a B1, 36% achieved an A2, 9.8% achieved an A1, and 6% achieved a C1 (see Abel, Vettori & Martini 2017 p. 56–57).

Furthermore, a lack of ease in using the L2 has increased for both the Italian-speaking and German-speaking groups, with the latter expressing a higher level of discomfort or anxiety (ranging from "some anxiety" to "much anxiety") when carrying out productive tasks in the L2, including "engaging in a brief conversation", "writing a brief text", and "speaking the L2 outside the region of South Tyrol" (see Abel, Vettori & Martini 2017, p. 114–115). These findings underscore the fact that the monolingual habitus of South Tyrol, with its system of linguistically segregated schools, is not helping students enhance their language confidence or competence in L2. Nor is it preparing the highly skilled, flexible and plurilingual workforce needed for the region's economic growth, which relies heavily on tourism and on the activities of small to medium local businesses.[2]

2 In the last five years (2013–2018), exports from South Tyrol have grown by 1 billion euros, a net increase of 25.5%, indicating the region's economic viability in the global marketplace (Associazione Imprenditori 2019). Not surprisingly, plurilingual competences lie at the base of this economic potential in the region of South Tyrol.

The Free University of Bolzano has sought to respond to this need by implementing a multilingual language strategy. Initially, the policy focused on assessing only the *entrance level competences* in order to filter out students who did not already have a B2 level in two of the three languages of instruction (German, Italian, English) according to the global scale of the Common European Framework of Reference for languages (CEFR); the policy recognised that the third language could be acquired over the course of studies. This initial policy orientation was based on the conviction that the expected language outcomes – C1 in L1, B2+ in L2 and B2 in L3 – would be acquired before graduation through a multi-layered language strategy, including attending general language courses, Language for Specific Purposes (LSP) and Language for Academic Purposes (LAP) courses, and courses taught in all three languages across academic disciplines in the faculties.

However, it soon emerged that the language competences of graduates were not sufficient for the South-Tyrolean labour market and, in the 2011-12 academic year, the University Council decided to amend its language policy and establish mandatory *exit level competences* for all students across degree levels for the three languages. The table below presents the current exit levels (2020) in all three languages of instruction at Unibz:

Table 1 – language competence exit levels foreseen in the Unibz language strategy across the university (in 2020)

Exit levels	Bachelor's degree	Master's degree (2 years)	Master's degree (5 years)
L1	C1	C1	C1
L2	C1	C1	C1
L3	B2	B1	B2

The high exit levels introduced for L2/L3 implied a considerable additional workload for students alongside their regular degree course requirements. Many left the language "hurdles" to tackle only at the end of their studies, sometimes remaining blocked and unable to graduate due to difficulty in ob-

taining the required certifications for language proficiency in L2 and L3. Considering that a regular 3-year undergraduate degree programme comprises 180 European Credits Transfer System (ECTS), the number of so-called 'hidden credits' for language study at Unibz can be as many as 40 ECTS (or 1000 hours of study) for some students, more than one additional semester.[3]

In March 2014 when the first cohort of students completed their studies under the new policy regime, it became apparent that the majority had not reached the exit levels for language proficiency. For this reason, a global language strategy for the university was developed with a tripartite goal:

- to enable students who met the entrance level requirements for languages (B2, B2 and A0) in the three teaching languages (German, Italian, English) the opportunity to enrol at the Free University of Bozen-Bolzano;
- to enable students without any knowledge of the third language (whether German, Italian or English) to achieve basic language competence (A1+) before the start of the first academic year through pre-sessional study, and to achieve independent language competence (level B1+) before the start of the second academic year;
- to ensure that students have the opportunity to reach the exit level required for proficiency in the third language by the end of the first semester of the second year of study, at the latest, in order to effectively consolidate and further develop the three languages during the remaining time of their degree studies and complete their degrees within the regular time period.

The greatest challenge faced by students is reaching independent language proficiency in the third language – a B2 level according to the Common European Framework of Reference – in order to be able to follow lectures, seminars or laboratories in that language, to interact with fellow students and professors during lectures, and to pass course examinations in the L3. Many students remain blocked and unable to graduate due to high exit levels required in three languages and the heavy workload to achieve these language competencies alongside regular degree course requirements.

3 This represents the study time required by a student whose L1 is neither German, Italian nor English. From B2 to C1 in L1 (8 ECTS = 200 hours); from B2 to C1 in L2 (8 ECTS = 200 hours); from A0 to B2 in L3 (24 ECTS = 600 hours).

It became clear that to fully realise the ambitious aims of the multilingual language strategy at Unibz, a structure was needed to embed language study across the curriculum in several key ways, as represented in the figure below: first (pillar 1), through general language courses (in German, Italian, English, as well as other optional modern languages) for all students up to a B2 level (CEFR); second (pillar 2), through courses in language for specific purposes (LSP) and language for academic purposes (LAP) in the various disciplines in order to help students develop the language of scientific communication; third (pillar 3), through integrating content-and-language (ICL) training and support for professors teaching in their L1 or L2 to heterogeneous groups of students with mixed-level competences in the three main languages of instruction. The three-pillared multilingual model of integrated content and language learning in higher education (ICLHE) is represented in the following diagram:

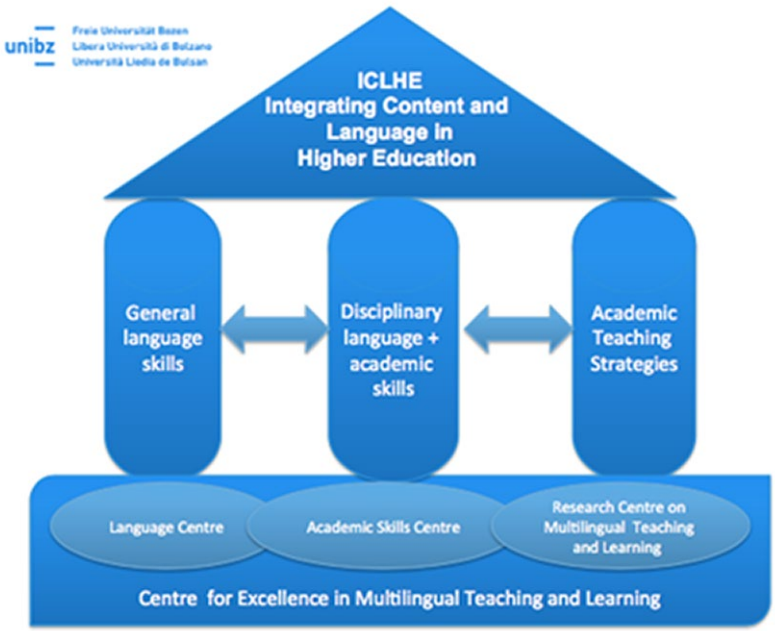

Figure 1 – the Language Strategy of the Free University of Bozen-Bolzano (see Zanin, 2018)

The first pillar was implemented at Unibz in 2014–15, with general language courses offered on a trial basis. The programme of language courses includes intensive courses offered during periods in the academic year when degree courses are suspended (February, July, September) and semester-long courses offered throughout the academic year, mainly in the evening so as not to overlap students' disciplinary studies. All courses are modular and progressive, enabling students to stop and start at will while progressing through a common programme. The language learning pathways were devised on the basis of the average number of hours required to reach the respective levels as determined by ALTE (Association of Language Testers in Europe). For the academic year 2019/20, the following number of hours was calculated for the four language learning pathways:

- Language learning pathway A0 - B2: 480 hours in total (12 modules)
- Language learning pathway A1 - B2: 440 hours in total (11 modules)
- Language learning pathway A2 - B2: 320 hours in total (8 modules)
- Language learning pathway B1 - B2: 160 hours in total (4 modules)

The intensive language courses take place at all three campuses of the Free University of Bozen/Bolzano (Bozen/Bolzano, Brixen/Bressanone, and Bruneck/Brunico), comprising 8 hours of lessons per day for 2 or 3 consecutive weeks. A first survey on the intensive courses at the beginning of the 2015/16 academic year found that although the 232 participants felt the intensive courses were strenuous, they were very satisfied with their progress. In fact, 105 students replied that they had significantly improved their language skills and 124 students replied that they had improved their language skills, which represents over 98% of respondents satisfied with their progress. Since then the language courses have been continually monitored by the Language Centre and the results of the ongoing surveys regularly lead to adjustments and improvements of the intensive and semester-long language courses.

In the 8 hours per day of intensive language study, 6 hours are dedicated to covering the course programme and 2 hours to individual in-depth guided study and practice with the help of the course instructor. The latter are hours in which learners reflect on what they have learned, scrutinize potential ambiguities and – possibly working in groups - actively practice what they

have learned according to the principle of constructive alignment (Biggs, 1996; Biggs & Tang, 2007, 2011). This principle, which can serve as a basis for ICLHE didactics, states that: "The intended outcomes specify the activity that students should engage if they are to achieve the intended outcome as well as the content the activity refers to […]" (Biggs & Tang, 2007, p. 52). Two teachers are scheduled per course, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. The two teachers are jointly responsible for the learning progress of the two supervised groups and meet regularly to discuss not only teaching strategies but also to share observations about the individual learning progress of each student.

The language teacher does not envisage his role as an "omniscient instructor but as a consultant, a moderator, a source of knowledge and a contributor to the activities" (Leisen, 2020a). The focus during the language courses is on autonomous learning, independent work, joint in-depth study, group work, cooperative learning and project work. As in Leisen's Teaching and Learning Model, "the tasks and roles are precisely assigned: The learner learns, the teacher steers, moderates, and promotes the learning process" (Leisen, 2020a). Teachers assume full responsibility for the professional design of learning environments and for facilitating numerous optimal learning processes.

To optimise the multilingual learning environment at Unibz and provide more opportunities for students to learn in a second/additional language, language learning must be transversal across the higher education curriculum; not only in language courses but in all courses. At present, the three-pillared multilingual model remains aspirational since only the first pillar has been fully realised; pillars 2 and 3 are currently being addressed in an *ad hoc* fashion through a variety of initiatives in the different faculties and through the Language Centre, but with no systematic or coherent university-wide approach.

Two critical points reveal a gap between language policy and its actual implementation: first, the need to further support students through an embedded approach to multilingualism across the curriculum in order to help them achieve the advanced-level competences in all three major languages by the end of their degree course studies; second, the need to provide pedagogical

training to professors teaching in L1/L2 to classes with mixed linguistic competences, especially in terms of using language for specific and academic purposes (LSP/LAP). The challenge of delivering multilingual curricula to heterogeneous classes puts pressure on continually updating Unibz's language policy and practices to respond to the shifting needs of students, professors, and other stakeholders.

3. Language Awareness in Multilingual Tertiary Teaching

3.1 Data Collection

In 2018, a survey was conducted on the Free University of Bolzano language policy to evaluate student satisfaction with the current language strategy and collect qualitative data for a needs analysis for future programme improvements (see Mastellotto & Zanin, 2018). The small-scale survey consisted in a questionnaire followed by semi-structured interviews[4]. The piloting of the questionnaire was conducted in 2018 with 15 students: 9 from the Faculty of Education, 5 from the Faculty of Economics and Management, and 1 from the Faculty of Computer Science.

Drawing on Fandrych & Sedlaczek's (2012) study on language practices in English-taught programmes (ETPs) in Germany, the Unibz questionnaire was adapted and translated (in Italian, German and English); it included the following six descriptors:

Table 2 – Questionnaire descriptors for Unibz student satisfaction survey (2018)

Part I	Personal data and language biography
Part II	Content questions on second / foreign languages
Part III	General assessment of language ability in the second/ foreign language

4 The piloting of the questionnaire and interviews was conducted by Lydia Görsch. See her unpublished Master's Thesis (2019).

Part IV	Reasons for decision to study at the Unibz
Part V	Assessment of linguistic and subject-related competences in foreign language lectures
Part VI	Assessment of the language skills of teachers and fellow students

The semi-structured pattern of the interviews facilitated coverage of key issues while preserving a free narrative structure to capture more fully participants' attitudes towards language study at Unibz and their direct experience of language teaching practices; this approach draws on the theory and practice of 'attitude studies' (Garret, 2010). The interviews were carried out with 9 students, all of whom were elected student representatives in the Faculties (7 students), in the Academic Senate (1 student), and in the University Council (1 student). The interviews were based on a series of questions subdivided according to the following 10 descriptors:

Table 3 – Descriptors for semi-structured interviews with Unibz student for satisfaction survey (2018)

Part I	Personal data and language biography
Part II	Content questions on second/foreign languages
Part III & IV	General assessment of language ability in the second/foreign language
Part V	Reasons for choosing Unibz
Part VI	Language preparation measures for the study programme
Part VII	Language use in the course of study
Part VIII	Assessment of linguistic and subject-related competences in foreign language lectures
Part IX	Assessment of the language skills of lecturers and fellow students

3.2 Discussion of Findings

Three specific areas of concern emerged from the survey in relation to trilingual tertiary study: (1) a lack of targeted B2+ training on language for academic purposes (LAP) and language for specific purposes (LSP) needed in the study of disciplines for students to succeed in their coursework; this shortfall may be contributing to students' achievement gap through their reduced ability to follow lessons in the L2 and to read and write in the L2 on an academic level; (2) a negative impact on the quality of disciplinary teaching by non-native speaker teachers (NNSTs) offering courses in their L2, often resulting in curricular compromises as concepts are diluted due to professors' lack of proficiency; (3) the need for a more balanced distribution of courses in the three languages across degree programmes in all academic disciplines.

The following comment by one student is included here as it highlights the first two issues above, critical aspects of teaching in L1 or L2 to heterogeneous groups of students in a multilingual context:

> I would say that we should make a policy of ... for how ... for the people you are going to hire, that is if a professor has been hired at the University of Bolzano he must have a good competence in English but beyond that he must be aware that you come here, you have an audience of people who come from more than two cultures because there are so many different cultures of native speakers and the professor can't wash his hands, in my opinion because if people say: "No I'll do mine. My English sucks a bit but I don't give a damn". No. There is in my opinion ... It is a policy ... that is if it is not a policy ... it is not a policy is to report a statement. If you come to teach at Unibz [...] you have to ... you have to be as particular as a student is, understand. That is, we are ultimately a little bit special as students ... even the teachers should be special.

This comment raises two critical points. First, a lack of proficiency in lecturers' L2 which can impede learning. This example of student dissatisfaction echoes the findings of recent studies regarding the linguistic deficits of NNSTs tasked with EMI classes (see Pulcini & Campagna, 2015; Campagna, 2016; Dearden & Macaro, 2016; Guarda & Helm, 2016; Francomacaro, 2011), sometimes unaware of the language level needed to teach through the medium of English.

Though they are discipline experts, they may lack L2 competence in explaining disciplinary concepts and interacting with students. The transmission of content in academic disciplines consists in conveying concepts expressed through vocabulary that is sometimes technical but is embedded in academic language and shaped by academic conventions that are not generic; professors must be aware of these factors when they teach, in order that form (language) does not become an obstacle to meaning (content).

Second, some professors (both NSTs and NNSTs) lack an awareness of the linguistic implications of their teaching and/or lack sensitivity about the linguistic and cultural diversity of the students and their specific needs in studying a disciplinary subject in L2. A lack of "language awareness" among professors – explicit knowledge about language, language learning and teaching practices, and a sensitivity to language diversity – contributes to a hesitancy to broach language-related issues in tertiary teaching and to a view that disciplinary specialists do not also "do language", as Airey (2012) found in his study of EMI lecturers in Sweden who, although engaged in teaching physics in English, did not believe their job was to "teach language".

Dafouz et al. (2014) similarly illustrate the case of EMI programmes in Spain where lecturers do not necessarily have explicit knowledge of ICL methodologies nor an approach to course design that includes a conscious reflection on the language dimension of curricula. Costa and Coleman's study (2012) of English-taught programmes (ETPs) in Italy found that all Italian universities from north to south demonstrated a marked focus on content over language. Helm and Guarda (2015) similarly note that Italian lecturers tend to compensate for their perceived weaker language competence in an EMI context (English L2) by focusing on the disciplinary content of lessons, often with highly scripted presentations which leave little room for spontaneous questions and discussions in L2, especially on language-related issues. The common thread across these studies is the perspective of subject teachers who fail to see language as a transversal competence underpinning all subjects across the disciplines or to consider how acquiring a good command of academic language goes hand-in-hand with the development of subject knowledge and understanding (Bolitho & Tomlinson, 1995).

Language acquisition research has, in fact, underlined the developmental value of enhanced "noticing" and of "consciousness raising" in relation to the target language (Carter, 2003). This, however, requires a willingness on the part of non-linguistic subject teachers to actively engage learners by highlighting particular language features emerging from the topics covered in their lessons. Drawing attention to language use across the curriculum is a first step toward an integration of content and language in higher education (ICLHE), which requires the constructive alignment of curricula in order to integrate disciplinary, pedagogical and linguistic practices.

Unibz's multilingual mission means everyone has to become more 'language aware' in teaching practices and assessments in order to support an integrated approach to content and language learning in higher education (ICLHE). Aguilar (2015) proposes that lecturers' attitudes and preparedness should be analysed and training programmes developed to support them in making at least the minimal necessary pedagogic adaptations for the integration of content and language learning in HE. This echoes Leisen's (2020b) view of a "language-sensitive lesson", that is, one in which form and meaning are inseparable for the learning/teaching of any discipline to succeed; an awareness of this union is needed, not just by language instructors but by all instructors, especially in the context of multilingual classrooms.

3.3 Training for Tertiary Teachers

The Free University of Bolzano has recently taken a first step in this direction by offering to professors an "Excellence in University Teaching" training course on pedagogical and linguistic strategies for multilingual classes. The twenty-hour course was held in September 2019 and targeted newly appointed faculty members from all five faculties – Education, Art and Design, Engineering, Economics, Computer Science – covering such topics as: "Constructive alignment in syllabus design", "Problem-based learning in the HE classroom", "Digital tools and environments", "Micro-teaching and peer evaluation for professional development", "Language across the curriculum", "Integrating content and language in course design and delivery", and "Communicative strategies for heterogeneous classrooms". The seventeen participants gained valuable insight on methodologies for teaching in multilingual classes

and are collaborating with the authors of this article on ongoing research into the problematics of tertiary teaching in ICLHE contexts.

The special autonomy statute of South Tyrol grants legal provisions that allow the university to appoint up to 70% of its professors from abroad; this has enabled Unibz to ensure that courses offered in German, Italian, and English across faculties and degree programmes are taught by native speaker teachers (NSTs). However, in order to ensure a balanced ratio of courses in the three languages of instruction, it happens time and again that lecturers are often asked to teach in their L2. Unibz is trying to meet this challenge through the implementation of a "languages across the curriculum" approach to multilingualism, resulting in a more complex language strategy than is often embraced by higher education institutions (HEIs) seeking to internationalise curricula.[5] This complexity represents a critical challenge to curricular delivery, that of integrating content and language(s) in the higher education curriculum.

At least two perspectives must be considered in relation to this challenge: the learning perspective and the teaching perspective. From a learning perspective, the following situations emerge which require a differentiated response: (1) students are L1 speakers of the language of instruction; (2) students are L2 speakers of the language of instruction. From a teaching perspective, two different situations also arise: (1) the professor teaches in L1; (2) the professor teaches in L2. If one takes an intersectional view of these combined dimensions of the classroom experience, it becomes clear that trilingual courses pose major challenges for multilingual teaching and learning.

Scenario 1 – the professor teaches in his/her L1; the course is followed by students for whom the language of instruction is either L1 or L2/L3. The language is not a problem for most of the L1-students, so they discuss technical questions and raise comprehension questions without hesitation. However, the language presents a hurdle for L2/L3-students, who do not intervene

5 This model differs from the courses provided through EMI in many Italian universities, which have recently encountered a legal barrier to English-only instruction: ruling no. 42/2017 makes courses taught exclusively in English inadmissible in Italy. Unibz has never pursued English-only instruction since this was deemed an inadequate response to the challenges of a complex society characterised by multilingualism and multiculturalism.

in class, avoiding discussions or spontaneous questions. For them, the lecture represents a challenge both in terms of the subject matter (content) and the language (form).

Scenario 2 – the professor teaches in his/her L2; the course is followed by students for whom the language of instruction is L2/L3, but there are also students present in class for whom the language of instruction is L1. The professor is still the expert of the discipline but not of the language of transmission; the design of the lecture thus represents a linguistic challenge for the instructor given that there are L1 speakers present in the lecture alongside L2/L3 speakers.

The diaphasic varieties of languages in use call for strategies of well-functioning adaptation which, at crucial moments, may go well beyond the concept of linguistic accommodation (Kabatek, 2015). These strategies are not only about mutual adaptation or the choice of a suitable variety or register within a language, but also about the choice of the language itself with the associated code-switching, also within the specialist language of the academic discipline (LSP). Teaching in a language other than the speaker's L1 involves recognising, learning and practicing the processes; therefore, didactic training for teachers who teach in a L2 should be a priority for multilingual universities given the heterogeneity of classes (in linguistic and cultural terms) and of the lecturers themselves.

Clearly, these teaching challenges cannot be solved through a uniform approach to training because it is necessary to take into account the different L1 languages of teachers and students in any such programme. Classroom observation and data analysis show that when teachers teach in a L2, they may sometimes use a more rigid and lexically restricted language, which leads them to largely avoid rephrasing, examples and questions (Costa, 2012). The contrastive divergences between the languages result from different conceptualisations in the languages and are reflected in the structure of communicative units, in the sequence of thematic and rhematic elements in the sentence structure, and in the focusing strategies. Knowledge is “packaged” and “sent” to the listeners. For this purpose, routines are used that belong to the linguistic knowledge, as well as to the cultural and textual knowledge, of the language community. As Feilke (1994, 1996) has shown for German, this “knowledge”,

as part of the surface structure, can be recognised, described and analysed as "idiomatic coinage" (see also Bertschi & Bubenhofer, 2005).

Language competence at the level of efficient communication at university level encompasses an indispensable component of idiomatic and prosodic competence as well as the ability to "package" the content elements of the communicative act from the point of view of information structure. Beyond these detailed aspects, it is also important to take a look at the larger context, which Ehlich (2000) addresses in the following way:

> Das Weltwissen ist nur als sprachgebundenes zuhanden. Die Weltwissensentwicklung, die in einzelnen Sprachen und Sprachstrukturen verfasst ist, gewinnt gerade hieraus die differenzierten Perspektiven. Über sie ist nicht, etwa in der Form einer Metasprache, hinauszukommen. Der Charakter der Alltagssprache als letzter Metasprache impliziert auch, dass diese letzte Metasprache in der Realität vielfältiger Sprachen existiert. Deren intersprachliche Kommunikation ist ein wesentliches Stück der gesellschaftlichen Arbeit, die für die Wissenschaft der Zukunft und damit für das zukünftige Weltwissen aufzubringen ist. Gerade die Weiterentwicklung der in den verschiedenen Wissenschaftssprachen angelegten Möglichkeiten eröffnet neue Perspektiven für die Wissenschaft insgesamt.[6]

The interlingual communication of professors and students is an essential part of the social effort required for developing the scientific discourse of the future and, thus, for future world knowledge. It is precisely the further development of the possibilities offered by the various languages of scientific communication that opens up new perspectives for science as a whole. When Ehlich (2000) in this context speaks of an impoverishment of scientific practice through

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6 [Author's translation (Renata Zanin)] "World knowledge is only available as language-bound knowledge. The development of world knowledge, which is written in individual languages and language structures, gains its differentiated perspectives precisely from this. It is impossible to go beyond those, for instance in the form of a meta-language. The character of everyday language as the metalanguage also implies that this ultimate metalanguage exists in the reality of diverse languages. Their interlingual communication is an essential part of the social work to be done for the science of the future and thus for future world knowledge. It is precisely the further development of the possibilities offered by the various scientific languages that opens up new perspectives for science as a whole."

monolingualism and of necessary investments to counteract this, he touches on a nerve centre of tertiary education that has yet to receive enough attention by researchers, practitioners or administrators.

4. Conclusion

Unibz was created to help respond to the economic and social imperatives of modernising the region of South Tyrol and changing the prevailing monolingual ideology through an openness to languages and cultures as a strategy for greater internationalisation. However, the lack of a transversal approach to plurilingual education, one embedded across academic disciplines in the faculties, has hindered the full realisation of this mandate. At present the multilingual language strategy adopted at Unibz has a limited reach since it is not fully embedded in university-wide classroom practices that seek to integrate content and language learning in higher education curricula (ICLHE); this misalignment is due to the absence of a "practiced language policy" (Bonacina-Pugh, 2012), that is, language policy enacted at the level of language practices in classroom discourse.

In their concluding assessment of the efforts of German universities towards internationalisation, Fandrych and Sedlacek (2012) state that linguistic competence can only be achieved through the integration of languages into the curriculum, recognising that credit points must be awarded to the study of language(s) for them to receive the recognition they deserve. Unibz cannot realistically allocate credit points to the language training students receive in all three languages of instruction since the number of ECTS would be inordinately high given the ambitious language aims that drive the university's multilingual policy; consequently, an alternative approach is needed to promote language awareness across the curriculum.

The needed approach would establish a connection between general language courses, LSP/LAP courses, and training for professors, drawing on the framework of a Constructive Alignment Model (Biggs 1996, Biggs & Tang

2011), with the aim of achieving "*eine reflektierte, sprachbewusste und Sprachbewusstsein fördernde Mehrsprachigkeit in den Wissenschaften*"[7] (Ehlich, 2000). Such an alignment would help bridge the policy-practice gap by merging pedagogical, didactic, and linguistic learning aims for multilingual learning. Spolsky's (2005) idea that the "real language policy of a community is more likely to be found in its practices that [sic] its management" (p. 2163) suggests that finding the optimal alignment for multilingual higher education is highly complex; at Unibz this endeavour remains a work in progress.

The Free University of Bozen-Bolzano has taken a first step in this alignment process through the design of a Unibz training programme for professors, "Excellence in Multilingual Teaching in Higher Education", which illustrates how a focus on form, embedded in a broader pedagogical and didactic strategy to support content and language integrated learning, can encourage cross-curricular critical language awareness. This recent initiative to provide training to professors on effective strategies for incorporating language awareness into the delivery of content across academic disciplines through lesson observation and micro-teaching analysis is a way not only of actively responding to the needs of heterogeneous classes but also of fostering a multilingual habitus from the bottom up, through programme design based on educational research that seeks to answer the questions: "What to teach?", "How to teach?" and "Under what conditions?" (Van Els, 1994, p. 64).

7 [Author's translation (Renata Zanin)] "a reflected, language-aware and language-aware multilingualism in sciences and humanities"

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