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## **Language policy in Italy: the role of national institutions**

### **Abstract (Italian)**

Questo saggio inquadra all'interno della politica linguistica nazionale il ruolo delle istituzioni che si occupano della lingua italiana in Italia. La lunga storia della lingua italiana richiede di precisare lo sfondo culturale e linguistico sul quale oggi si innestano le posizioni riconducibili alla politica del paese, pertanto il saggio si apre con uno sguardo alla storia recente della politica linguistica italiana (1). Seguono una riflessione sulle questioni attualmente più rilevanti della politica linguistica contemporanea (2.) e la descrizione delle attività alle quali contribuiscono alcune università, la Società Italiana Dante Alighieri (2.1) e l'Accademia della Crusca (2.2).

### **Abstract (English)**

This paper sets the role of the institutions that deal with the Italian language in Italy within the framework of the country's language policy. The long history of the Italian language requires us to detail the cultural and linguistic background against which the positions attributable to the politics of the country are set today, so the paper opens with a look at the recent history of Italian language politics (1). This is followed by a reflection on the most relevant current issues of present-day language policy (2) and a description of the role played by some of the universities, by the Italian Dante Alighieri Society (2.1), and by the Accademia della Crusca (2.2).

## **1. Introduction**

Language policy and language planning<sup>1</sup> start to be considered in Italy in the very early years of Unification, the political and social movement that consolidated the different states of the Italian peninsula into the single state of the Kingdom of Italy in 1861.<sup>2</sup> As soon as the Italian language was established as the national

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<sup>1</sup> On the meaning and relevance of language policy and language planning see Spolsky (2004, 2005, 2009, 2012)

<sup>2</sup> For an account of the relationship between language policy and ideology in Italy today, and between the development of the Italian nation state since political unification in 1861 and Italian as the national language, see Guerini (2011); for the interrelation between language and society in contemporary Italy see Tosi (2001); and for an overview of the language situation in Italy within the framework of language policy and language planning see Tosi (2008). See also Guardiano (2005). I would also like to mention the large volume by Lucilla Pizzoli, which I could not take into account because it was published when this article was already in print (Pizzoli 2018).

language of the country, specific policies concerning its status and role both at home and abroad started to be considered. Nowadays the main concerns of language planning in Italy concern the use of the national language in institutions and education; the effects of social organisation and cultural contexts on the language; the use of dialects and minority languages; the role of the Italian language in EU institutions; and the promotion of the Italian language abroad. The “new” languages arising from immigration are also considered. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Education have responsibility for issues related to language policies, and in addition there are governmental bodies and official institutions which constitute an important – and independent – form of linguistic advice.

## **2. A glance at the recent history of linguistic policy in Italy**

When the Italian state was established at the end of the nineteenth century, there was no national language. Italy had not undergone a process of political centralisation as had happened in England or France, where the dialect of Paris had become the national language, nor a strong cultural unification as in Germany, where the language used by Luther in his translation of the Bible became the basis of the national language (Lepschy/Lepschy 1994, 25). The Italian language was mainly the obsolete language of Italian literature of the past and was very little used in speech, while most of the population were using local (mostly Italo-Romance) varieties. According to De Mauro (1991, 43), the number of people able to communicate in Italian amounted to 2.5% of the total population. The need for a living form that could become the national language, both written and spoken, was a major issue. After a long debate among politicians and intellectuals, the proposal to choose the contemporary educated Florentine variety, officially submitted by the writer Alessandro Manzoni to the Minister of Education in 1868 with his report *Dell'unità della lingua e dei mezzi di diffonderla* ('On the unity of language and the means to propagate it') was finally accepted. However, for many years the national language existed only on paper. The very low number of speakers of Italian required a vast campaign of “italianization” throughout schools, newspapers and media (radio), resulting in a rapid reduction in the use of the local varieties. These did not disappear, although their use began to be associated with a lack of education, linguistic deprivation and low socio-economic status.

A number of social factors contributed to the spread of the Italian language (although, once again, at the expense of local languages): internal migration, industrialisation, urbanisation, bureaucracy (which imposed the language of administration from the centre across the whole country) and the army, which “moved” thousands of young men from one part of the country to another, forcing them to abandon their languages for the common one. The new communication skills required by the new assets of the country strengthened the use of Italian, but also contributed to weakening the dialects (Lepschy/Lepschy 1988).

A few decades after Unification, in the first half of the twentieth century, the Fascist regime implemented a language policy that promoted a strongly purist campaign and a severe opposition to the use of dialects and foreign expressions, in order to produce an “ideal” Italian language (Còveri 1984; Della Valle 2014; Foresti 2003; Klein 1986; Raffaelli 1997). The Reale Accademia d’Italia was founded “with the task of promoting and coordinating the Italian intellectual movement in the fields of science, literature and the arts, to preserve the pure national character according to the genius and traditions of the race, and to promote its expansion and influence beyond the confines of the State” (article 2 of the Statute). As a consequence loanwords were replaced by Italian words, such as ‘autista’ instead of ‘chauffeur’, which were sometimes newly coined, e.g. ‘polibibita’ instead of ‘cocktail’. The linguistic minorities (Orioles 2003; Toso 2008, 2011)<sup>3</sup> – i.e. people speaking some Romance and non-Romance languages, still mainly concentrated along the borders of Italy, including Albanian, Catalan, Greek, Croatian, Franco-Provençal, French, Friulian, German, Ladin, Occitan, Sardinian, and Slovene – were marginalised, then forced to abandon their mother tongue and to adopt the Italian language.

The political, social and cultural “revolution” following the Second World War changed this gloomy picture. The re-established freedom of the country allowed people to access the new media of communications, and there was a huge increase in the spread of the Italian language. Although the constitution of the newly born Italian Republic issued in 1948 did not officially recognise Italian as the national language, this recognition is nowadays implicit in the official use made of it and in a series of laws and documents.<sup>4</sup> However, the constitution contained articles referring to the language rights of all citizens, including those speaking minority languages:

Art. 3: Tutti i cittadini hanno pari dignità sociale e sono uguali davanti alla legge senza distinzione di sesso, di razza, di lingua, di religione, di opinioni politiche, di condizioni personali e sociali

(All citizens have the same social dignity and legal equality without distinction of sex, race, language, religion, political opinions, and personal and social conditions)

Art. 6: La Repubblica tutela con apposite norme le minoranze linguistiche  
(The Republic protects linguistic minorities with appropriate measures)

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<sup>3</sup> For a sketch on linguistic minorities see Maraschio/Robustelli (2009). Today many new linguistic minorities are due to immigration, but the wide spectrum of linguistic variations makes it hard to identify them.

<sup>4</sup> The Italian language is still not officially recognised in the Constitution as the national language in Italy, although it is recognised in the law 482/1999 on linguistic minorities. The debate and the request for the inclusion of this recognition in the constitution has recently reopened, partly in relation to the role of Italian as an official language of the EU.

Fifty years later, partly as a result of the work of EU institutions to protect and promote linguistic minorities (for example, the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages<sup>5</sup>), Italy enacted Law 482/1999, entitled *Norme in materia di tutela delle minoranze linguistiche storiche*. Despite its aim of protecting and enhancing the language, this law has been the object of heavy criticism, mainly because it limited itself to considering “historical” linguistic minorities and excluded the “new” minorities, such as those arising from recent immigration.<sup>6</sup>

In the second part of the twentieth century, the Italian language began to be used more and more widely in the country, although linguistic diversity was still alive and re-emerged as an important social and educational problem. The “national” language used was not “one” language, as it appeared in the form of many regional, or rather local, varieties, differentiated above all by their pronunciation. According to De Mauro (2014, 33-34), in the early Fifties 13% of the inhabitants of Italy were illiterate people. 64% used only dialect, and 36% alternated between Italian and dialect. However, these different systems slowly “integrated into a general framework” which was able to guarantee reciprocal comprehension within the national community and to safeguard linguistic cohesion (Lepschy/Lepschy 1988, 37-38). Moreover, the advent of TV (1954) and of the mass media helped to expose large sectors of the population to different uses of the Italian language, including everyday speech. The Italian language lost its dusty appearance and started to be used more and more, although with marked regional variations in pronunciation. Pier Paolo Pasolini, intellectual and protagonist of the Italian cultural scene in the Sixties, intervened in the linguistic debate (the so-called “second question of language”) about the birth of a “new” Italian, a better communicator for the modern age than the old Italian literati.

Italian language policy in schools has seen, since the years of Unification, a series of measures in favour of the use of the Italian language and the marginalisation of dialects. Dialects were not used in the classroom and their use was more and more stigmatised as a sign of illiteracy and low cultural level. Even accents started to assume the role of new social markers (Galli de’ Paratesi 1985). As a consequence, most of the younger generations lost familiarity with dialects and adopted the national language. Schools remained impervious to the use of dialects in teaching practice and in ministerial programmes, despite the social and cultural revolution represented by the increase of compulsory schooling to 14 years and the establishment of the single Middle School in 1962. In the 1970s the language policy for education finally changed. The *Società di Linguistica Italiana* and the

<sup>5</sup> For a brief history of the adoption and application of the Charter see Grin (2003).

<sup>6</sup> Italian language policy towards the languages of migrants still seems inadequate. For example, the relationship between maintenance of the mother tongue, knowledge of Italian and integration in the social context of the country is still under discussion. It should be noted that Law 94/2009 requires „long-term residents“ to pass an Italian language test in order to obtain a residence permit.

*Gruppo di Intervento e Studio nel Campo dell'Educazione Linguistica* (GISCEL) encouraged teachers to take dialects into account in schools (Guerini 2011, 120). GISCEL's manifesto *Dieci tesi per una educazione linguistica democratica* (1975) suggested new educational language practices. The Middle School Curriculum approved by the Government in 1979 stated that:

The peculiar linguistic situation of Italian society, characterised by the presence of different (Italo-Romance) dialects and other languages, as well as by the outcomes of large-scale migratory phenomena, requires the school (authorities) to take into account this variety of traditions and linguistic resources.

and a few years later the Primary School Curriculum<sup>7</sup> acknowledged that “the occasional use of the dialect as a marker of cultural identity also deserves respect”.<sup>8</sup>

By the end of the twentieth century Italians had achieved a full command of the national language, thanks mainly to schooling and the media (although school language policy has focused more on acquiring skills in foreign languages – perhaps we should say “in English” – than on the Italian language, despite the fact that there are still cases of primary illiteracy in the country). Dialects, however, have not disappeared as a sign of illiteracy: on the contrary, speakers can switch between dialect (mainly used within the family and with friends) and the national language, in a form of bilingualism.

Today, however, the Italian language can be considered without any hesitation the national language, and this linguistic situation allows – and requires – a language policy capable of looking outside the boundaries of the national community.

### 3. Language policy in Italy today<sup>9</sup>

Language policy issues in Italy are dealt with by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Education, and by language societies or bodies, mainly the *Società Dante Alighieri* and the *Accademia della Crusca* (Marazzini 2016).

Although language policy in Italy does not represent a question of major importance in the national political panorama, as has recently been pointed out (Orioles 2011), the official approach of the State towards language planning is fo-

<sup>7</sup> Presidential Decree no. 104, 12 February 1985. Third Part, Curriculum and planning, Italian language teaching

<sup>8</sup> On a general basis, local languages are today very much considered as a sign of identity. Political activists claim the right for their local variety to be used in road signs, schools and newspapers as a major emblem of their linguistic and cultural identity, as opposed to the national language imposed by the centralised state institutions. But this is an extreme position.

<sup>9</sup> Linguistic policy and language planning in Italy have been recently discussed at the conference *L'italiano della politica e la politica per l'italiano* (Napoli, 20-22 novembre 2014) organised by the Associazione per la Storia della Lingua Italiana (ASLI). See the proceedings Librandi/Piro (2016).

cused mainly on the promotion of the Italian language abroad, as language is considered as an instrument for promoting the country as a whole as well as the languages of historical minorities and of immigration, i.e. the so-called “new” minority languages as different from those of the “historical” minorities. International documents call for the promotion of immigrants’ languages, as well as Italian academics such as the *Gruppo di Studio sulle Politiche Linguistiche* of the *Società di Linguistica Italiana* who officially declared itself in favour of such policies with the document *Sette tesi per la promozione di politiche linguistiche democratiche* (2013).<sup>10</sup> In addition, the University of Siena has launched the *Osservatorio linguistico permanente dell’italiano diffuso fra stranieri e delle lingue immigrate in Italia*. The protection of linguistic minorities is now re-cast not – as for the historical minorities – as a form of cultural respect for immigrants, but in the light of the principle of plurilingualism as a fundamental value and parameter of all language policies (Stoppioni 2016).<sup>11</sup>

In addition, other topics are under discussion, some concerning the acknowledgement of changes in the language due to sociolinguistic factors such as political correctness, with special regard to the efforts to have women represented through the language (and the so-called “gendered language” issue). This was raised in Italy for the first time in the 1980s with the book *Il sessismo nella lingua italiana* (1987) by Alma Sabatini, with a preface by Francesco Sabatini, commissioned by the Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri. On the basis of a very detailed corpus of inbuilt sexism in the Italian language – especially grammatical dissymmetries – the author identifies some instances of sexist attitudes and suggests a series of changes. This work was accused – unfairly – by individuals and the media of having a prescriptive aim, with the result that a (sometimes harsh) debate arose, which is still going on. The recent endorsement of so-called “gendered language” by the Minister of Education and by the Head of the Chamber of Deputies has inflamed the discussion. The Accademia della Crusca, with its president Nicoletta Maraschio, supported it through a research project and then the publication of the *Linee Guida per l’Uso del Genere nel Linguaggio Amministrativo*. A few articles have also been published on the Accademia website, and its current President, Claudio Marazzini, has clarified the position of the Academy on several occasions.<sup>12</sup> In 2016 the Accademia and the newspaper *La Repubblica* published a book entitled *Sindaco e sindaca, il linguaggio di genere*, within the book series *L’Italiano formidabile* (Robustelli 2016).

<sup>10</sup> Italiano LinguaDue, n. 1. 2013. Gruppo di studio sulle politiche linguistiche – Società di linguistica italiana, *Sette tesi per la promozione di politiche linguistiche democratiche*.

<sup>11</sup> On plurilingualism and new linguistic minorities see also Vedovelli (2014).

<sup>12</sup> [www.accademiadellacrusca.it/it/tema-del-mese/forestierismi-mestieri-femminili-due-settori-degni-attenzione](http://www.accademiadellacrusca.it/it/tema-del-mese/forestierismi-mestieri-femminili-due-settori-degni-attenzione).

The need for a clear language of administration has led to the revision of the administrative or “bureaucratic” language which in Italy has for many years been (and still, somehow, remains) unchanged and obscure. In the 1990s the Government was keen to bring public institutions closer to citizens, and accordingly to push for the use of simplified administrative and legal documents as part of a wider process of the renewal of public administrative institutions. Administrators and employees, then, had to be provided with guidelines for standardising and simplifying administrative language, as well as with training courses on the simplification of administrative writing techniques. In 1993 the Department of Public Service (Dipartimento della Funzione Pubblica) promoted the *Codice di Stile delle Comunicazioni Scritte ad Uso delle Amministrazioni Pubbliche* by the legal expert Sabino Cassese, which was the first joint effort by language and legal professionals to make administrative language accessible to Italian citizens. In 2002 the drive towards simplifying administrative language became an institutional and political commitment when the Minister of Public Service issued the *Direttiva sulla semplificazione del linguaggio dei testi amministrativi* (May 8th, 2002). Since that time, a new awareness of the need for clarity and transparency in communication between institutions and the general public has slowly emerged, and a series of positive actions have been implemented in the individual institutions to disseminate it. The Accademia della Crusca has also contributed to this area of language planning by supporting research on the topic, organising conferences and projects, contributing with its linguists to the publication of the *Guida alla redazione degli atti amministrativi*<sup>13</sup> and founding the *Associazione per la Qualità degli Atti Amministrativi* (AQuAA).<sup>14</sup>

The language(s) of education, the influence of the English language and the promotion of the Italian language within the EU are also issues taken into account.

### 3.1 The promotion of the Italian language abroad: the role of the *Università per Stranieri* and of the *Società Dante Alighieri*

The *Università per Stranieri* di Perugia and the *Università per Stranieri* di Siena are public universities which specialise in the teaching, research and promotion of Italian language and culture in all its forms. The *Società Dante Alighieri* (SDA) is an Italian cultural institution whose purpose is to protect and disseminate Italian language and culture throughout the world; it is a member of the European Union National Institutes for Culture (EUNICs). It was founded in 1889 by a group of intellectuals and established as an organisation with the purpose of “protecting and spreading Italian language and culture in the world, revitalising the spiritual

<sup>13</sup> [www.ittig.cnr.it/Ricerca/Testi/GuidaAttiAmministrativi.pdf](http://www.ittig.cnr.it/Ricerca/Testi/GuidaAttiAmministrativi.pdf).

<sup>14</sup> [www.aquaa.it/](http://www.aquaa.it/); [www.accademiadellacrusca.it/it/attivita/aquaa-associazione-per-qualit-atti-amministrativi](http://www.accademiadellacrusca.it/it/attivita/aquaa-associazione-per-qualit-atti-amministrativi).



ties of compatriots abroad with their homeland, and fostering in foreigners the love and worship of Italian civilisation".<sup>15</sup> The *SDA* has a major role in the field of teacher training and the teaching of Italian as a foreign language, as well as in research and development projects, and in the promotion of Italian language and culture abroad. It sets up and supports schools, libraries, circles and courses of Italian language and culture, publishes books and publications, promotes conferences, cultural excursions and artistic and musical events, and awards prizes and scholarships. Through its Italian Committees, it participates in activities aimed at increasing and expanding the nation's culture and promoting every event to illustrate the importance of spreading the language, culture and creations of Italian genius and achievements.

The *SDA* has committees in Italy, distributed throughout almost all provinces, and overseas, especially in South America. There are 401 committees spread around the world in about sixty countries which organise more than 8,000 Italian language and culture courses in which more than 195,000 student members are registered. The *SDA* also ensures the presence of Italian books through 300 libraries spread across the globe, with over five hundred thousand volumes. Following an agreement with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and with the scientific supervision of the "Sapienza" University of Rome, the *SDA* issues the PLIDA (Italian Language Project Dante Alighieri) certificate, a diploma certifying competence in Italian as a foreign language according to a scale of six levels based on those defined by the Council of Europe in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. Since 2012, the *SDA* has been part of the CLIQ (Quality Certification of the Italian Language) Association, promoted by the MAE, which brings together the certification bodies (*Società Dante Alighieri*, *Università per Stranieri di Siena*, *Università per Stranieri di Perugia* and *Università di Roma Tre*) with the aim of providing a unified certification system that will overcome the problem of fragmentation of study offers for Italian students globally. In addition, and usually in collaboration with the *Università per Stranieri di Siena*, the education offices of the Consulates and the Italian Cultural Institutes all over the world promote initiatives specifically targeted at Italian nationals living abroad.

The Italian government, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, University and Research, organises two main national events, respectively every year and every three years, to discuss the state of dissemination of Italian teaching abroad, to set up innovative strategies and to launch new projects. The *Settimana della Lingua Italiana nel Mondo* was launched in 2001 through the joint action of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation and the Accademia della Crusca, and subsequently joined by the Swiss Confederation;<sup>16</sup> the *Stati Generali*

<sup>15</sup> <https://ladante.it/chi-siamo/lo-statuto.html>, art. 1.

<sup>16</sup> [www.esteri.it/mae/en/politica\\_estera/cultura/promozionelinguaitaliana/settimanalinguaitaliana](http://www.esteri.it/mae/en/politica_estera/cultura/promozionelinguaitaliana/settimanalinguaitaliana).



*della Lingua* was launched in 2014 as a joint project with key contributions made by experts, academics and representatives of the agencies involved in actively promoting the Italian language abroad.<sup>17</sup>

### 3.2 Grammar, orthography, neologisms, and the history of the Italian language: the role of the *Accademia della Crusca*

The *Accademia della Crusca*, whose origins can be traced back to 1582-83 has for centuries had a role in the development of the Italian language. At the end of the sixteenth century its members defined the norm of literary Italian on the bases of the works of the great Tuscan writers Dante, Petrarch and Boccaccio. The *Vocabolario degli Accademici della Crusca*, the first modern language dictionary, was published in 1612 to provide the models of the language to use in literature.<sup>18</sup> Up to the beginning of the twentieth century the *Accademia* published new editions of the *Vocabolario* in 1623, 1691, 1729-1738, which over the years was enriched with new words which were considered “pure” and suitable for the literary language, for whose quality it was considered an essential point of reference. In 1923, under the Fascist Regime, significant changes began. The Minister of Education stopped the compilation and printing of the dictionary. A long dark period followed, until in 1965, thanks to funding from the Italian Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche, a project to compile a new dictionary was finally launched.<sup>19</sup> This new climate led the *Accademia della Crusca* to organise in 1971 an international round table on lexicography issues in Florence, involving ten representatives of dictionary projects,<sup>20</sup> with the aim of establishing contacts and the exchange of information and ideas between institutions on theoretical assumptions and different methods, such as the electronic resources which were fairly new at the time. The new *Vocabolario degli Accademici della Crusca* project was different from the old one. It should have documented the historical formation and development of the national language instead of – like the previous editions – a chosen canon of pure language and correct writing. This immense project unfortunately clashed with economic difficulties, so it was decided to concentrate resources on a lexicon

<sup>17</sup> [https://www.esteri.it/mae/it/politica\\_estera/cultura/promozionelinguaitaliana/stati\\_generali\\_lingua\\_italiana.html](https://www.esteri.it/mae/it/politica_estera/cultura/promozionelinguaitaliana/stati_generali_lingua_italiana.html).

<sup>18</sup> The bibliography of the first edition of the vocabulary is now too wide to be mentioned. I will limit myself to mentioning the proceedings of the recent conference on the theme, to which I refer also to the bibliography: Belloni/Trovato (2018).

<sup>19</sup> In 1937 a Centre for Studies of Italian Philology was established “with the aim of promoting the study and the critical edition of the ancient texts and classical writers of Italian literature from the beginning to the nineteenth century” (Beltrami/Fornara 2004).

<sup>20</sup> See Considine (2010, xxxiv). The proceedings of the conference were published as the volume *Tavola rotonda sui grandi lessici storici* (Firenze 3-5 maggio 1971). Florence: Accademia della Crusca, 1973.

of medieval Italian, the *Tesoro della Lingua Italiana delle Origini* (TLIO), conducted by the Research Centre known as the Opera del Vocabolario Italiano. A new project, the *Vocabolario dinamico dell'italiano moderno* (VoDIM), has recently been launched.<sup>21</sup>

Today the Accademia della Crusca maintains its original character as a Fellowship composed of distinguished scholars, with the purpose of describing and promoting research into the Italian language. Its original purist attitude has turned into a more open one, so that the Accademia now refuses to have a prescriptive role. As we have said before, the Accademia does not campaign for the spread of Italian as a foreign language,<sup>22</sup> but it consistently aims for international comparison, as its president Claudio Marazzini recently underlined (Marazzini 2016): among its main goals are supporting academic activity in Italian linguistics and philology; enlarging knowledge about the history and present evolution of the Italian language; and collaborating with the most important foreign institutions on many issues, including multilingualism. In this respect, the Accademia has been carrying out a wide range of activities for two decades, including the co-founding of EFNIL, public speeches, a series of conferences (including the Colloquium and a Public Sitting in the presence of the EU Commissioner for Multilingualism Leonard Orban in 2008), the annual meeting of the Piazza della Lingue, dedicated to multilingualism and the Italian language, etc.<sup>23</sup> The Accademia is supported in its activities by its Library,<sup>24</sup> three Centres for Advanced Studies and Research,<sup>25</sup> and the *Centro di Consulenza sulla lingua italiana contemporanea* (CLIC).<sup>26</sup>

<sup>21</sup> [www.accademiadellacrusca.it/it/eventi/crusca-torna-vocabolario-lessicografia-dinamica-dellitaliano-post-unitario](http://www.accademiadellacrusca.it/it/eventi/crusca-torna-vocabolario-lessicografia-dinamica-dellitaliano-post-unitario).

<sup>22</sup> However, the project *Viv-it* (*Vivi Italiano*) is worth mentioning. This is an integrated digital archive of teaching materials, iconographic and multimedia documents and texts for promoting abroad the knowledge of Italian language and historical-cultural heritage, with particular attention to second and third generation Italians abroad ([www.viv-it.org/](http://www.viv-it.org/)).

<sup>23</sup> [www.accademiadellacrusca.it/it/search/apachesolr\\_search/multilinguismo](http://www.accademiadellacrusca.it/it/search/apachesolr_search/multilinguismo).

<sup>24</sup> The Library is the only Italian library specialising in Italian language and linguistics. It has a comprehensive collection of classics and a wide selection of dictionaries and grammar books. Many works have been digitalised and are now collected in a digital corpus with texts from the 16th to the 19th century accessible online.

<sup>25</sup> Centro di Studi di Filologia Italiana (see the periodical *Studi di filologia italiana*); Centro di Studi di Lessicografia Italiana (see the periodical *Studi di lessicografia italiana*); Centro di Studi di Grammatica Italiana (see the periodical *Studi di grammatica italiana*).

<sup>26</sup> The *Centro di Consulenza sulla lingua italiana contemporanea* (Contemporary Italian Language Consultancy Centre), which was set up in 2001 to stimulate reflection on language issues in contemporary Italian and to communicate them to the public through mass media, namely the internet. It can be considered as a real vantage point to track Italian language development in the country and abroad.

The Accademia, in addition to the duties previously mentioned (and in the absence of an official national policy) is considered as highly relevant and influential on any linguistic issue both by ordinary people and the media. As in any language, Italian speakers are often worried about linguistic correctness and appropriateness. In recent years the Accademia della Crusca has been asked by people of all ages to comment about the impending “decline” of the language or the diminished use of the subjunctive or other language-related questions, from orthography to conjugations. Thousands of questions arrive every year at the CLIC, and each receives an answer with the main aim of providing a critical view of the issue and not simply a solution to the individual question. Although it has neither official role, nor any official responsibility for the Italian language, the Accademia provides an independent and authoritative source of advice on language issues.

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