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Educational approaches to Internationalisation through Intercultural Dialogue:
Reflections on theory and practice

Editors: Paloma Castro, Ulla Lundgren and Jane Woodin

Student and staff perspectives on Internationalisation at Home: A local investigation

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Student and staff perspectives on Internationalisation at Home: A local investigation

This chapter reports on a small-scale study carried out at the University of Bologna (UNIBO), Italy, within the frame of the European project ATIAH (*Approaches and Tools for Internationalisation at Home*, <https://www.staff.ncl.ac.uk/atiah/>). The aim was to investigate how the UNIBO community (students, academic and non-academic staff, policy makers) conceptualised Internationalisation at Home (IaH), namely whether, in their local working/learning environment, they perceived “the purposeful integration of international and intercultural dimensions into the formal and informal curriculum for all students” (Beelen & Jones, 2015: 69). Data was collected through nine interviews (five senior managers, two teachers, two officers) and two focus groups (with staff and students, respectively), and analysed thematically. Three main themes were identified in the overall corpus; participants in the study linked Internationalisation at Home to multilingualism (which includes but it is not limited to English language use and learning), interculturality, and the idea of investing on it to renew the UNIBO curricula.

Keywords: internationalisation at home, interculturality, multilingualism, internationalisation of the curriculum, University of Bologna

1. Introduction

This chapter reports on a small-scale study carried out at the University of Bologna (UNIBO), Italy, within the frame of the European project ATIAH (<https://research.ncl.ac.uk/atiah/>). The aim was to investigate how the local university community (students, academic and non-academic staff, policy makers) conceptualised Internationalisation at Home (IaH) in terms of existing practices, desiderata and possible future scenarios.

According to Beelen and Jones (2015, p. 69), IaH aims at “the purposeful integration of international and intercultural dimensions into the formal and informal curriculum for all students within domestic learning environments”. Since contemporary European universities are international by nature, the challenge is

investing in local diversities so that not only mobile minorities but the entire population of a given higher education institution (HEI) acquires opportunities for intercultural learning on campus (Teekens, 2007). However, this kind of development is not an automatic outcome of diverse people being together (Leask, 2015) in language learning, just as it is not a natural consequence of living abroad (IEREST, 2015); precise and contextualised strategic interventions are needed in order to promote an intercultural dialogue (ICD) approach in universities (Woodin, Lundgren & Castro, 2011).

The study addressed IaH from the point of view of the university community. Accordingly, data was collected through 9 interviews (5 senior managers, 2 teachers, 2 officers at international affairs departments) and two focus groups (with staff and students respectively). The overall objective was to identify how subjects, regardless of their roles, perceived IaH in terms of educational goals and outcomes, university policies, viable strategies for implementation, and concrete activities or initiatives.

2. Internationalisation at Home

IaH in higher education has often been defined in opposition to a view of internationalisation as limited to or mainly consisting in outgoing mobility. Consequently, early conceptions of IaH tended to characterise it through the absence - rather than the presence - of distinguishing features. For example, Wächter (2000, p. 6) identified IaH as “any internationally related activity with the exception of outbound student and staff mobility”. Since the early 2000s, much research has contributed to isolating the constituent features of Internationalisation at Home. Some of this is briefly introduced below.

One main goal of IaH is to guarantee all HE students and staff – and not only to the mobile minority – the opportunity to develop their intercultural and international

skills¹ (e.g., Beelen & Jones, 2015; Teekens, 2007). HEIs can use measures to reach this overarching goal in both formal and informal curriculum, where the latter is defined as “various support services and additional activities and options organized by the university that are not assessed and do not form part of the formal curriculum, although they may support learning within it” (Leask, 2015, p. 8).

As regards the formal dimension of learning in higher education, the expression “internationalisation of the curriculum” is often used. This is a broad concept encompassing strategic decisions, organisational matters and professional choices which define what is learnt and taught at the university as well as how learning and teaching processes take place. Internationalisation of the curriculum can pertain to facilitating incoming mobility of students and lecturers, by supplying good house facilities, tutor services, etc. (Beelen, 2007); offering programmes “in an internationally frequently spoken foreign language” (English) as well as “additional courses for foreign students in the host country” (Wächter, 2000, pp. 10-11); investing in the international classroom (Leask, 2009) as well as in the international and intercultural dimensions of the disciplines (Beelen & Jones, 2015) while teaching; organising virtual international exchanges (Teekens, 2003); adapting teaching materials to international learners’ necessities in terms of subject contents and language difficulty (Beelen, 2007); and being aware of potentially problematic issues related to using a non-native language of instruction (Teekens, 2003).

In informal curriculum, international and intercultural learning can be promoted by investing in cultural diversity on and off campus. This can be done by promoting

¹ In our opinion, the difference between ‘intercultural’ and ‘international’ in IaH literature is not challenged enough, and remains unclear. This issue, however, lies outside of the scope of the current study, and thus for the purposes of this chapter, we consider these as separate but interdependent dimensions. As reported by Beelen (2007, p. 2): interculturality constitutes “the basis for any international activity, but [...] there are additional matters that form an international competence, such as functioning in an international environment for professional reasons”.

meaningful interaction between students from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds outside of the classroom (Leask, 2009) or by creating the conditions for all students to explore their domestic learning environments (e.g., working with local cultural groups) (Beelen & Jones, 2015).

With every evidence, all previous IaH measures – either related to formal and informal curriculum – can contribute to the implementation of intercultural dialogue in HEIs, which entails for example “preparation/training for staff in working in international teams”, “programmes of integration of international students and staff AND home students”, “engagement with the wider society” (Woodin, Lundgren & Castro, 2011, p. 130).

3. The context

3.1 The ATIAH project

The ATIAH project (*Approaches and Tools for Internationalisation at Home*, 2016-2018) was co-funded by the European Commission within the framework of the ERASMUS+ Key Action 2. It involved three European institutions: Newcastle University (UK), the project coordinator; the University of Bologna (IT); and the University of Leuven (BE). ATIAH aimed at developing a series of tools² for HEIs to review and improve their IaH practices. In order to put forward the project outputs, the ATIAH partners carried out a two-year-long research effort, which included:

1. A multi-faceted overview of existing IaH policies and practices at the three partner institutions. This phase consisted in three different “Internal Audits”, carried out by means of individual interviews and focus groups conducted by

² The three outputs are freely accessible on the project website: <https://research.ncl.ac.uk/atiah/>.

each ATIAH partner with representatives of their local university staff members, teachers and students;

2. A European-wide student and staff questionnaire, with a total of 342 responses.

Since the present study is based on the data collected during the UNIBO Internal Audit, the following section provides additional information about this particular ATIAH research action.

3.2 The Internal Audits

The three Internal Audits were carried out in March and April 2017 at each partner institution. Despite their different formats, individual interviews and focus groups pursued the common research goal of exploring the participants' viewpoints on IaH policies, strategies and practices at their universities.

A total of 24 individual interviews and 5 focus groups were conducted. Participants were management leaders (e.g., Heads of school or departments, and administrators), staff responsible for curriculum development (e.g., degree programme directors, module leaders and teachers), representatives of university departments in charge of professional development, and officers of international affairs departments. As far as students were concerned, individual interviews and focus groups involved local non-mobile students and both “degree-mobile” and “credit-mobile”³ international students enrolled in B.A. or in M.A. programmes.

³ Following Schomburg and Teichler (2011, p. 23), we distinguish between “degree-mobile” or “diploma-mobile” students, i.e. those intending to study a whole study programme abroad, and “temporarily mobile”, “short-term mobile” or “credit-mobile” students, i.e. those intending to study abroad for one semester or a somewhat longer period within a study programme’.

While each ATIAH partner took responsibility for conducting their own Internal Audit, they all shared interview protocols and moderator guidelines (concerning themes and main questions, procedures and timings), in order to allow for a comparability of results. Participants were asked for consent to be recorded and their words transcribed for research and dissemination purposes.

4. Methodology

4.1 The context: some data on UNIBO Internationalisation at Home⁴

In terms of numbers, UNIBO presents itself as a large multi-campus with a quite developed internal international outlook. As far as the student population is concerned, out of 85,244 students enrolled at the University of Bologna in the 2016/2017, approximately 7% were international degree-mobile (12/13% is the expected percentage in the forthcoming years). Most of them enrol in one of the 71 international degree programmes offered by the university (out of 215 programmes in total), 47 of which are taught in English. The substantial rate of inbound credit-mobile students also increases the numbers of UNIBO IaH; for example, in the 2016/2017, 2,113 students from abroad were on exchange programmes in Bologna. The University – as well as its individual departments – also supports the invitation of international visiting professors and offers free access to thousands of international journals, e-book and databases. Participation in international research projects is also a distinctive feature of the university.

4.2 Aims and research questions

⁴ These features are available on the official university website <https://www.unibo.it/en/homepage> [15.07.2018].

Within both the broader goals of ATIAH and the specific UNIBO context, this study aimed to obtain insight on how internationalised the UNIBO community perceived their own university, especially for what concerned existing IaH practices and initiatives. In particular, we intended to explore if and how participants understood the intercultural potential of their learning/teaching/working environment, and what concrete actions they valued or wished to implement in order for UNIBO to better invest in and profit from IaH.

4.3 Data collection and analysis

Data was collected as part of the above-mentioned Internal Audit.

Nine semi-structured interviews were conducted with key stakeholders in internationalisation at UNIBO, including five senior managers, two teachers, and two officers. The interviews lasted from a minimum of 32 minutes to a maximum of 53.

As for the focus groups, two of them were organised with eight staff members and nine students (four local and five international students involved in different degree programmes).

Considered as a whole, participants in the study were mostly female (17 out of 26), and their age ranged from 21 to 54. All data collection was carried out in Italian, apart from one interview, which was carried out in English and Italian.

The Internal Audit was moderated and recorded by one of the authors. Data was then translated and analysed thematically (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The identification of codes and themes was carried out on the original transcriptions; we translated only the extracts to be quoted in this chapter into English, and used italics to indicate the interview partially conducted in English. Each participant was given a progressive code (I1, I2, etc.) for the purpose of analysis, followed by the specific data collection

initiative in which s/he participated (SI = Semi-structured Interview; FG = Focus Group).

5. Results

Starting with the participants' perceptions of the overall phenomenon of internationalisation (and not specifically with IaH), the study made evident two main approaches: In the first, internationalisation is mainly perceived as a successful way of promoting economic growth and competitiveness; in the second, it is conceived as an opportunity to foster an international and intercultural mind-set in the UNIBO population.

I17-FG In my opinion internationalisation means ... it's the job market which my students have to face, where companies move in an international context, even if they are local companies. And so, it is like ... it is the labour market itself which requires us ... forces us to have an international dimension.

I16-FG ... for me it's not like that ... in my opinion, the risk is focussing too much on the instrumental dimension of internationalisation, since it is useful for the job market. However, on the other hand, in reality, it does not correspond to culturally preparing the new generations to have this kind of [intercultural] approach.

These positions, which in abstract terms can be interpreted as mostly polarised, actually tend to coexist in the discourses of most interviewees.⁵ This tendency to

⁵ From here on, the term "interviewee" refers to participants in the study in general terms, whether they were involved in the semi-structured interviews or in the focus groups.

integrate educational and instrumental discourses (Stier, 2006) also resonates with previous studies, which have addressed internationalisation from the perspective of HEI practitioners (Castro, Woodin, Lundgren & Byram, 2016).

In contrast to the term ‘internationalisation’, most participants were not familiar with the expression ‘Internationalisation at Home’. In some cases, they had never heard of it before (e.g., I10-FG, I17-FG, I18-FG, I25-FG); others put forth a straightforward association with mobility:

I13-FG Internationalisation is very often associated with mobility [...]

I10-FG It is an aspect that obviously I had not particularly taken into consideration, because I saw internationalisation as something related to mobility, to movement ... and I had never thought about it ... I had never thought about this.

Despite their lack of confidence/experience in dealing with a technical-scientific expression like ‘Internationalisation at Home’, once asked to reflect on the practices related to internationalisation, all interviewees proved to be familiar with key IaH concepts and discourses. We identified three main themes across interviews and focus groups, which were mainly transversal to the different target groups: the role of multilingualism on campus (§5.1), the link between IaH and interculturality (i.e., intercultural contact and learning) (§5.2), and the idea of IaH as an opportunity to renew the UNIBO curricula (§5.3).

5.1 Multilingualism at the core of IaH

According to most interviewees (e.g., I1-SI, I2-SI, I6-SI, I7-SI, I12-FG, I17-FG), internationalisation of the university has had a strong effect on UNIBO language policies and practices. Developing the English skills of the entire university population (students, teachers and non-academic staff) and investing on English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) are two main objectives of the UNIBO, as in many other HEIs (§5.1.1). However, interviewees also expressed their wish that the university would take the opportunity offered by internationalisation to better promote multilingualism, i.e. the learning and use of additional languages (§5.1.2) and investment in (L1 and L2) Italian (§5.1.3).

5.1.1 English as a medium of instruction and English for all

Educational stakeholders (mostly I8-SI and I21-FG) linked the importance of investing in English to the UNIBO's capacity of attracting international students. While this position is surely well attested (e.g., Leask, 2016), the majority of interviewees (e.g., I6-SI, I8-SI, I24-FG, I18-FG) instead stressed the challenges represented by EMI. Some of the problems they mentioned have already been investigated: there is a risk of compromising teaching quality if lecturers are not proficient in English; student-teacher relations can thus be challenged, making all uncomfortable; the teaching of specific disciplines can be additionally challenged by the very nature of their contents (Teekens, 2003). For I8-SI this last point is particularly relevant in humanities and social sciences.

I8-SI There are subjects for which the use of a vehicular language other than Italian does not affect teaching in a significant way. But there are other subjects [...] If I have to comment on a piece of literature or on piece of ... or a quote from a text, I have to translate it [to Italian and then to English]. The translation of this text is a complex operation. That is ...

textual analysis or everything concerning the philology of texts ... well,
translating to another language creates problems.

In other cases the subjects should be deeply changed in order to meet international students' learning necessities, as they may lack what is common knowledge in the Italian HE:

I8-SI I must also keep in mind the students' background. If I say "Giolitti" [to an Italian audience] ... eh, no, it doesn't work. While, if I mention Garibaldi, almost everyone knows him, and thus ... for humanistic disciplines and social sciences, this does not play a secondary role.

Other concerns expressed during the interviews and the focus groups are closely related to the UNIBO's international degree programmes and, for the perspective they entail, seem to be very much oriented towards IaH. If EMI contributes to making the University of Bologna attractive for international students, quite often it is the very reason why Italian students do not enrol in or drop out of international courses (I5.SI, I7-SI). Quite paradoxically, giving much space to EMI – which is broadly recognised as one of the main internationalisation strategies – risks inhibiting IaH, by *de facto* reinforcing the separation between English-speaking internationals and Italian-speaking locals, as well as by preventing the latter from accessing internalised learning objectives and contents.

From a different, more inclusive, perspective, some interviewees (I2.SI, I8-SI, I13-FG, I19-FG) highlighted the importance of promoting English language skills among all students, and not just for those enrolled in international degree courses. In this respect, the project *AlmaEnglish* has been mentioned as a good local practice,

which should be strengthened in the future: within this transversal programme, students from any degree – as well as academic and non-academic staff – are offered free modules of English (50 hours), which are funded by the Ministry of Education.⁶ Other comments seemingly following the same line of thought (I2.SI, I7-SI, I8-SI, I21.FG), exposed participants' satisfaction for the university encouraging individual departments and degree programme directors to organise initiatives in English language learning for all their students and staff members. All in all, this final point seems to introduce an element of novelty in HEI language policies, since a focus on English as the main means of internationalisation is rarely conceived for all programmes and students (Leask, 2016).

5.1.2 Foreign language competence

Perhaps surprisingly, English did not seem to hold a dominant role in the internationalisation of higher education for the interviewees. Most participants (e.g., I1-SI, I7-SI, I8-SI, I10-FG, I14-FG, I19-FG) contested the idea that English is the natural common language of higher education. This is in line with much recent literature on internationalisation and English as a Lingua Franca (e.g., Jenkins, 2013).

I10-FG internationalisation does not necessarily mean using English as a lingua franca.

I7-SI *The starting point in this sense is English as a sine qua non for international communication: the University of Bologna is already working considerably on this. Basically, what I'm trying to do is go beyond that [...]. In terms of other languages taught in departments or faculties or schools, which have not traditionally invested in language*

⁶ <http://www.cla.unibo.it/corsi/almaenglish> [15.07.2018].

learning. This is particularly in response to what is also indicated at the European level ... which indicates languages as not only important factors in identity, social cohesion or European identity [...] but also as important factors in the development of economy, for skills that can be used in small and medium-sized enterprises for example.

A widespread opinion among interviewees was that the UNIBO should invest more in developing all students and staff members' foreign language competence, in order to foster the realisation of a multilingual UNIBO community. At times they also mentioned and commented upon existing good practices. The work of the University Language Centre, which offers language courses at reasonable prices for all UNIBO students and staff, for example, was highly appreciated. Moreover, the interviewees seemed to value that students of different academic backgrounds (not only language specialists) could choose one language course in addition to English as part of their curriculum.

5.1.3 The roles of the Italian language

According to a number of interviewees (e.g., I2-SI, I7-SI, I8-SI), Italian plays a strategic role in terms of the promotion of multilingualism and IaH.

I7-SI Italian is the language to communicate in [...] and it is also a point of attraction for many students coming to the University of Bologna... People coming in to the University of Bologna both to study perhaps a course of Economics in English but also because the University of Bologna has ... it is famous worldwide, and people want to come to Bologna and ... and want to do it in a way that Italian is not neglected.

Italian use is of course part of UNIBO tradition, and thus part of its international credibility as an educational ‘brand’. The University of Bologna has invested considerably in teaching Italian as a second language in recent years. For example, for a certain period of time, regular L2 Italian courses at the University Language Centre increased in their impact thanks to the *AlmaItaliano* programme, which offered additional free courses of Italian (50 hours) to international and credit-mobile incoming students. Besides mentioning this initiative, participants stressed that L2 Italian learners can benefit from a range of free online language resources as well as a number of initiatives aimed at familiarising them with the Italian language and culture.

Interviewees gave the Italian language value in general terms as well, and not exclusively as L2 Italian promoted among international students.

I2-SI [...] concerning language policies [...] the Italian language is enhanced as a language of teaching as well as the language of communication within our university.

Finally, the central role attributed to Italian is often coherently linked to the idea of the multilingual campus that some interviewees hope to see within the UNIBO community of the future.

I14-FG the symbolic strength of Bologna is focusing on internationalisation not only in English, but also in Italian ... keeping multilingualism as a frame ... multilingualism should be valued, promoted as a positive element, not as a negative effect [of internationalisation].

5.2 IaH as interculturality?

Besides multilingualism, a second main theme is interviewees' establishing a parallelism between interculturality and Internationalisation at Home.

I13-FG internationalisation is very often associated with mobility [...]. Personally, if I think of what is the real value of internationalisation – including Internationalisation at Home, is the possibility of changing perspectives - that is, of changing people's mind-set ... When you start living in a different way, you no longer think only in one way, but you open yourself up to different perspectives, you can see the same thing from different perspectives.

I16-FG [...] the value of interculturality does not only include international degree programmes, but all programmes. It is not a matter of language, which is only a tool ... but a matter of a broader vision. [...] There is no pedagogical culture of interculturality. [...] I see intercultural pedagogy implemented only in language courses.

Even if it is difficult to say from our data what interviewees meant with 'interculturality', 'intercultural mind-set', etc., there is little doubt that they move beyond the idea that foreign students on campus are the (only) ones who provide opportunities for intercultural contact and learning (Knight, 2011; Leask, 2015). As a matter of fact, at the policy level, the initiatives they mentioned as best practices mostly overlook internationals on campus. For example, I1-SI and I7-SI mentioned the IEREST project and its teaching resources for intercultural education (IEREST, 2015 <http://www.ierest-project.eu/>) as a UNIBO IaH initiative linked to interculturality. She highlighted that, after the official end of the project in 2015, IEREST had several

follow-ups at the UNIBO (e.g., training sessions for students in interpreting and translation and for staff employed at the International Affairs Department), which excluded mobility and were often part of informal curriculum.

5.3 Internationalisation as an opportunity to renew curricula

When asked about IaH and internationalisation, most interviewees interpreted the moderator's question as referring to the UNIBO international degree programmes. From a certain point of view, this is already a result, as this clearly illustrates the meaning associated to this terminology. However, when expanding on the topic, participants put forward a series of recurring opinions and attitudes towards the UNIBO and its IaH policies and practices.

First, referring to international degree programmes, most interviewees (e.g., I2-SI, I8-SI, I10-FG, I12-FG, I13-FG, I14-FG) clearly stated that the teaching of language (i.e., English) is not enough for an educational offer to be considered internationalisation-oriented. Rather, the entire curriculum should be redesigned, starting from teaching methodologies and contents.

I2-SI [...] language is not enough! That is, language is one of the elements that make the context international, but it is not just the language. This means rethinking the degree, redesigning the international degree programmes. This leads to an adaptation, to a change of the degree, which is not a simple transposition. I have also to say that sometimes ... there are some new degrees that are ... that were shaped to adapt to international needs. [...] they have also rethought the ways in which the lessons are conducted or learning tested; for example, many international courses have written exams unlike in Italian courses.

Curricular reforms are often also advocated in relation to UNIBO degree programmes, which are not ‘international’:

I8-SI In our opinion, this type of teaching [internationalisation of curriculum] should be included in the overall teaching policies at the University, school and department levels. Otherwise what is the risk you run? Otherwise one designs an international degree programme as ‘icing on the cake’, which is unrelated to the educational policies ... educational policies and department strategies [...] in my opinion, the issue with internationalised teaching is really making it a part of our teaching and not something that is ‘added’ to the regular offer.

Besides these policy-oriented considerations, others revolved around internationalisation of the curriculum at a micro educational level. For example, it was a common perception (I6-SI, I17-FG, I21-FG, I22-FG) that adapting teaching contents and methodologies to internationalisation and to the necessities of international students is still very much delegated to programme coordinators or even to individual teachers. In this respect, interviewees reported on a number of good practices, especially implemented in the Department of Modern Languages, Literature and Cultures. For example, some language teachers (e.g., Portuguese and German) organise online tandem sessions, and thus autonomously implement forms of virtual mobility (I14-FG); other teachers have created specific internships to let their classes experience local cultural diversities (I1-SI); quite often Russian students volunteer as language assistants in Russian language classes (I1-SI). More generally, even if there are several good IaH practices at the University of Bologna, the impression is that they are very fragmented (I7-SI) and thus are not usually exploited to renew existing curricula.

Most interviewees seem to agree that there is a need to increase the teachers' awareness of the importance of internationalising and thus reforming their teaching.

I14-FG The problem is this there is a teaching mentality that is not sensitive to internationalisation. [...] This should be one of the objectives of IaH to make teachers become aware of the strategic role that internationalisation has for the whole system. [...] it concerns teaching methodologies, teaching languages, teaching technologies; it has to do with relationships, interculturality and investing on diversity. [...] there is very strong resistance.

I7-SI I think it is very important to introduce forms of teacher training, in order for teachers to be aware of what they are doing in the classroom. [...] awareness is the key.

While offering different examples, most interviewees seemed to converge on the idea that internationalisation demands changes and, at the same time, offers the UNIBO the very opportunity for renewing the existent. Some participants – mainly senior managers in charge of teaching and/or internationalisation policies, also put forward ideas on how a global strategy at the institutional level can be imagined in order to redesign the university in the light of IaH and internationalisation at large:

I14-FG Internationalisation is a fundamental factor, but it always depends on other factors. There is no internationalisation per se; internationalisation is always associated to other aspects ... with teaching, with research, with other dimensions. I assume that very soon we will also have internationalisation associated with the third mission of universities,

which is by the way a very interesting prospect. [...] I think the strength of internationalisation is precisely in that it is not able to act alone.

I12-FG there are some examples in Northern Europe, as they are going in this direction ... that is, they no longer have a unit for international relations, rather they have experts who operate among departments and divisions, and who promote the international dimension in services, degree programmes, offices, research [...]

6. Conclusions

The importance of examining the local context when researching on Internationalisation at Home is in no way new. According to Teekens (2007), the very origin of the IaH field in early 2000s was due to a willingness to grant importance to the peculiarities of individual universities, as a response to mainstream studies on internationalisation, which had mostly committed themselves to global business-oriented and competitive discourses.

Many people in the field felt alienated and no longer identified with what was going on. It felt as if their own institution was not at the centre of things any more, perhaps even out of control. The discourse on IaH sought to bring back the human touch. Internationalisation came 'home' again and could be identified with. (2007, p. 4)

Our study followed a 'traditional' path within IaH research, aiming to investigate our home institution, the University of Bologna, and, in particular, to examine how staff and

students perceive and make sense of IaH policies, strategies and initiatives at the UNIBO.

The investigation was carried out with the participation of a total of 26 people (academic and non-academic staff members and students) variously involved in internationalisation policies and practices. It identifies three main themes that interviewees linked to Internationalisation at Home in their local work and study context: multilingualism (which includes but it is not limited to English language use and learning), interculturality, and IaH as an opportunity for renewing curriculum. For the most part, these issues are not new to research on Internationalisation at Home (see Beelen, 2007 for an overview; and Wächter, 2003 on interculturality as a ‘pillar’ of IaH). Moreover, they resonate well with some key issues of an ICD approach in higher education (Woodin, Lundgren & Castro, 2011); for example, participants in our study show to perceive IaH as the coexistence of strategies to boost UNIBO international visibility/competitiveness as well as its commitment to offering good education for all, in an intercultural (and multilingual) perspective. More generally, interviewees offered unique insight on how they experience their own university with respect to broader international discourse and orientations toward IaH.

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