

PRIN Conference

INFORMAL ENGLISH LEARNING AT UNIVERSITY

A KALEIDOSCOPE OF VOICES AND PATHWAYS

May 9, 2025

9:30 – 17:30

Aula Bottigella

Palazzo San Tommaso

Invited Speakers

Giuseppe Balirano, Introductory remarks

President of AIA

Sandro Caruana, Keynote Speaker

University of Malta

Paolo Della Putta, Discussant

University of Turin

Speakers from the PRIN Project Team

Maria Pavesi Principal investigator and local coordinator, University of Pavia

Francesca Bianchi Local coordinator, University of Salento

Silvia Bruti Local coordinator, University of Pisa

Raffaele Zago Local coordinator, University of Catania

Elena Ballante

University of Pavia

Camilla De Riso

University of Pavia

Maicol Formentelli

University of Pavia

Elisa Ghia

University of Pavia

Paola Leone

University of Salento

Cristina Mariotti

University of Pavia

Emanuela Paone

University of Bologna

Irene Ranzato

Sapienza University of Rome

Nicoletta Simi

University of Pisa

Massimo Sturiale

University of Milan

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CONFERENCE DESCRIPTION

The ecology of language use and language learning has drastically changed in Europe and beyond, as media affordances around the individual L2 user offer unprecedented opportunities to experience English in daily life. In response to these evolving English-centred ecologies, research on second language acquisition (SLA) has increasingly shifted its focus from traditional classroom settings to non-institutional, naturalistic environments. This shift in emphasis has led to empirical investigations into the role of informal exposure to English across Europe, particularly in relation to media-driven and digitally mediated language contact.

The national PRIN project “The informalisation of English language learning through the media: Language input, learning outcomes and sociolinguistic attitudes from an Italian perspective” represents the first large-scale study in Italy to investigate the impact of emerging language environments upon the behaviour of university students and their English SLA. The study collected over 4,000 valid questionnaires and lexical tests from students enrolled at the Universities of Pavia, Pisa, Salento, and Catania, providing extensive empirical data on informal exposure to English. A series of interviews and longitudinal case studies were also conducted, allowing participants to articulate their experiences while enabling researchers to trace their L2 developmental trajectories beyond formal classroom settings.

In this one-day conference, we will present and discuss key findings of the PRIN project by placing them within the expanding field of Informal Language Learning. The study highlights the diverse and dynamic ways in which university students engage with English, revealing novel patterns in spontaneous, media-related language acquisition and appropriation. The event further serves as a platform for disseminating the research findings to both the academic community and the participants who made the data collection possible.

Registration



Participation in the conference is free of charge. Registrations are open until full capacity is reached.

Scientific committee:

Maria Pavesi
Giuseppe Balirano
Francesca Bianchi
Silvia Bruti
Francesca Costa
Bronwen Hughes
Maicol Formentelli
Elisa Ghia
Cristina Mariotti
Elisa Perego
Raffaele Zago

Local organising committee:

Maria Pavesi
Luca Briatico
Camilla De Riso
Maicol Formentelli
Elisa Ghia
Elena Giribaldi
Silvia Monti

Contacts: camilla.deriso@unipv.it

Website: <https://prin.unipv.it/index.php/en/>

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