

Innovative Pedagogies and Emotional Wellbeing in the Italian Classroom

University of Sheffield - Friday 12th June 2026

The Diamond - Workroom 2 (and online)



PROGRAMME

10:00–10:20 — Registration and coffee

10:20–10:30 — Welcome

10:30–10:55 — Presentation 1: Beatrice Lombardi (King's College, London)

“Correction to Compassion: A Three-Step AI-Enhanced Feedback Cycle for Emotional Wellbeing in the Italian Classroom”

10:55–11:20 — Presentation 2: Mario Valori (Università di Pisa)

“Ma che vuol dire?” — Generative AI as a Clarification-Seeking Interlocutor in the Italian Classroom

11:20–11:45 — Presentation 3: Martina Amontagna (Independent Researcher) and Andrea Peressini (Università di Torino)

“L'IA generativa e l'ingegneria dei prompt per una didattica inclusiva dell'italiano L2”

11:45–11:55 — Break

11:55–12:20 — Presentation 4: Giuseppe Fazzari and Beatrice Leonello (Centro Interculturale della Città di Torino)

“Il potere del linguaggio nella scoperta emotiva e identitaria del sé. Una sperimentazione nella classe di italiano”

12:20–12:45 — Presentation 5: Anna Mantovani (DiSLL, Università di Padova)

“Raccontarsi in italiano L2: il genere e-mail in un intervento CLIL con adolescenti neoarrivati”

12:45–13:45 — Lunch and Networking

13:45–14:45 — Shorter Contributions

Federica Colleoni, MIM, Istituto Superiore Mamoli, Bergamo , *“Peer Education and Bilingual Mediation in the Italian L2 Classroom: Outcomes of an Inclusive and Collaborative Practice”*

Monica Oriani, University of Warwick *“Developing a personal voice in Italian: reflective and digital practices for emotional wellbeing in the Italian classroom”*

Rosa Nazzaro, University of Warwick , *“Introducing Wiki to enhance collaborative knowledge construction in an asynchronous environment”*

Carmela Esposito Faraone, University of Bath, *“Using Escape Rooms to Foster Engagement and Well-being in Italian Learning”*

14:45–15:30 — Group Discussions & Reflections: Considerations and Takeaways in Our Contexts

15:30–16:00 — Announcements & Closing

SPEAKERS AND ABSTRACTS

Beatrice Lombardi (King's College London)

Bio: Beatrice Lombardi is Lecturer in Italian Language and Culture at King's College London Language Centre. With over a decade of international teaching experience across the UK, France, and Italy, her work focuses on inclusive pedagogy, feedback literacy, and the integration of educational technologies in language learning. She convenes a cross-disciplinary course on Cultural Awareness and leads scholarly projects exploring compassionate assessment and AI-mediated feedback. Her current research examines how structured, dialogic feedback practices can support learner autonomy, reduce anxiety around error, and foster emotional wellbeing in beginner language classrooms.

Title: *“Correction to Compassion: A Three-Step AI-Enhanced Feedback Cycle for Emotional Wellbeing in the Italian Classroom”*

Abstract: This presentation introduces a three-step AI-enhanced feedback cycle designed to support emotional wellbeing, reflective learning, and feedback literacy in beginner Italian classrooms. The model integrates: (1) maieutic AI-mediated feedback using guided questions rather than prescriptive corrections; (2) structured reflection on errors and feedback; and (3) an Interactive Cover Sheet supporting metacognition and revision planning. The approach reframes mistakes as opportunities for inquiry, reducing anxiety and encouraging participation in early-stage language learning. AI is positioned as a scaffolded reflective tool within a compassionate assessment framework, not a replacement for teacher expertise. The project is currently a pilot study exploring how AI-mediated dialogic feedback influences learner agency and students' affective responses to formative assessment. The session outlines the pedagogical design, implementation process, and ethical considerations, inviting discussion on responsible AI integration in language education.

Mario Valori (Università di Pisa)

Bio: MA in Cultural History (2022); PGCert in Italian Literature (2023). Mario Valori subsequently specialised in Artificial Intelligence and Digital Technologies in Inclusive Education (2025), with a dissertation exploring the school digital divide in the age of AI and the role of government-led initiatives in levelling the playing field for all students. Now back at his alma mater, the University of Pisa, he is engaged in digital humanities studies, with a focus on LLM stereotypes in writing.

Title: *“Ma che vuol dire?” — Generative AI as a Clarification-Seeking Interlocutor in the Italian Classroom*

Abstract: As large language models enter Italian classrooms for conversation practice, they typically adopt an overly accommodating style, affirming learner output even when communication is only partially successful. While this may reduce anxiety, it risks creating a false sense of communicative competence. This paper proposes an alternative design for AI mediated Italian practice in which the AI acts as a clarification-seeking interlocutor. The approach draws on research into negotiation of meaning in second language acquisition and the concept of

desirable difficulties. Communication outcomes are supported through reusable classroom interventions using adaptable prompts and portable task templates. Emotional wellbeing is redefined through low-stakes challenge, learner agency, and eventual resolution.

Martina Amontagna (Independent Researcher) and Andrea Peressini (Università di Torino)

Bio: Martina Amontagna è un'insegnante di inglese e di italiano L2. Ha conseguito con lode una Laurea Magistrale in Letterature Moderne, Postcoloniali e Compareate presso l'Università di Bologna e attualmente frequenta il Master EsPEDA (Esperto/a nei processi educativi e didattici a scuola) presso l'Università di Torino. I suoi interessi di ricerca si concentrano sull'intersezione tra l'educazione linguistica e l'intelligenza artificiale.

Bio: Andrea Peressini è dottorando in Semiotica presso l'Università di Torino. Si occupa di semiotica delle riviste e, in particolare, di alcune legate allo strutturalismo italiano e francese nel periodo tra il 1955 e il 1970. Tra le sue altre aree di indagine ci sono la teoria semiotica, la letteratura e i media digitali. Ha partecipato come relatore a sei congressi. Ha in pubblicazione un saggio per la rivista SeLM - Scuola e Lingue Moderne e un contributo in volume per Routledge.

Title: *“L'IA generativa e l'ingegneria dei prompt per una didattica inclusiva dell'italiano L2”*

Abstract: Questo studio analizza l'intersezione tra IA generativa (GenAI) e progettazione di materiali didattici inclusivi per l'italiano L2. In una lingua morfologicamente marcata per genere, la rappresentazione di identità non binarie e l'uso di strategie di genere neutro (schwa ə, asterisco *, ristrutturazione sintattica) pongono sfide pedagogiche ma offrono opportunità per promuovere benessere emotivo e appartenenza dei discenti. La ricerca sottolinea il ruolo dell'ingegneria dei prompt nel guidare i LLM oltre pregiudizi eteronormativi. I risultati indicano che l'integrazione della GenAI nella progettazione consente ai docenti di creare materiali rispettosi delle diversità, ridefinendo l'inclusività dell'insegnamento linguistico.

Giuseppe Fazzari and Beatrice Leonello (Centro Interculturale della Città di Torino)

Bio: Giuseppe Fazzari ha conseguito la laurea in Letteratura, filologia e linguistica italiana presso l'Università di Torino, con una specializzazione in didattica dell'italiano L2. La sua attività di ricerca si concentra sull'acquisizione dell'italiano da parte di apprendenti non nativi, sulla microlingua scientifico-professionale e sulle potenzialità del graphic novel in ambito educativo. Ha pubblicato saggi su Expressio, Lingua e testi di oggi e in volumi collettanei editi da La Scuola e Franco Cesati. Ha contribuito agli Atti del Congresso dell'Associazione degli Italianisti e partecipa regolarmente a progetti di innovazione didattica nella scuola secondaria di secondo grado, dove insegna lingua e letteratura italiana.

Bio: Beatrice Leonello ha conseguito la laurea in Psicologia applicata, clinica e della salute presso l'Università dell'Aquila. È psicologa e ricercatrice indipendente. Ha collaborato a diversi progetti di ricerca su competenze trasversali, processi valutativi e sviluppo professionale. Si occupa di benessere psicologico ed emotivo, linguaggio e costruzione dell'identità, con particolare attenzione all'integrazione tra intervento clinico e contesto sociale. Nel suo lavoro

promuove ambienti sicuri e supportivi, orientati alla consapevolezza e alla crescita personale, ed è autrice di diverse pubblicazioni scientifiche.

Title: *“Il potere del linguaggio nella scoperta emotiva e identitaria del sé. Una sperimentazione nella classe di italiano”*

Abstract: Il contributo presenta un’attività interdisciplinare svolta in due classi seconde di liceo scientifico, finalizzata a promuovere benessere emotivo, partecipazione e sicurezza psicologica attraverso un approccio integrato all’educazione linguistica. Il percorso, centrato sulla visione del film *The Animal Kingdom* (Cailley, 2023), ha affrontato i temi della diversità e dell’inclusione, integrando analisi testuale e riflessione sulle emozioni. L’intervento ha mirato sia allo sviluppo di competenze interpretative e argomentative, sia alla consapevolezza del valore connotativo del linguaggio e del suo impatto sull’identità. Attraverso attività guidate e cooperative, gli studenti hanno esplorato il rapporto tra lingua, emozioni e costruzione dell’identità, sviluppando consapevolezza rispetto al potere inclusivo o escludente delle scelte linguistiche. I risultati suggeriscono che un approccio che integri educazione linguistica, riflessione emotiva e attenzione alla dimensione identitaria possa contribuire in modo significativo alla costruzione di un ambiente di apprendimento più inclusivo, partecipativo e attento alla dimensione emotiva dell’esperienza scolastica (Ghenò, 2019; Trentanove, 2024).

Anna Mantovani (DiSLL, Università di Padova)

Bio: Anna Mantovani è dottoranda all’Università di Padova e docente di italiano L2, impegnata nello studio dell’acquisizione dell’italiano per lo studio, delle strategie di apprendimento e delle pratiche CLIL-translanguaging in contesti scolastici multilingui della scuola secondaria. Ha partecipato a conferenze nazionali, internazionali e ha svolto periodi di visiting in Germania, Bulgaria e Finlandia, collaborando con ricercatori europei sui temi dell’inclusione linguistica e dell’innovazione didattica. Attualmente insegna italiano L2 a studenti Erasmus, integrando ricerca e pratica didattica in prospettiva interculturale.

Title: *“Raccontarsi in italiano L2: il genere e-mail in un intervento CLIL con adolescenti neoarrivati”*

Abstract: Lo studio analizza un intervento CLIL in italiano L2 (Luise, 2009; Galante, 2020; Serragiotto, 2023) rivolto a 105 adolescenti neoarrivati in Italia con competenze di alfabetizzazione limitate (QCER A1/A2), inseriti in contesti scolastici eterogenei. L’attività ha utilizzato il genere dell’email per sviluppare la competenza scritta e la comunicazione digitale, favorendo l’espressione di esperienze personali e affettive. Gli studenti hanno partecipato a simulazioni di scrittura e a un compito finale creativo, in cui hanno espresso i loro sentimenti, difficoltà e riflessioni legate al loro inserimento nella scuola italiana. L’analisi evidenzia come pratiche di translanguaging e approcci CLIL sostengano sia lo sviluppo linguistico sia la gestione di aspetti emotivi, quali l’autorappresentazione e l’integrazione sociale.

Federica Colleoni (MIM, Istituto Superiore Mamoli, Bergamo)

Bio: Federica Colleoni received her PhD In Italian Studies at the University of Michigan. She is a tenured teacher of Italian Literature, Language, and Italian L2 in Public schools in Bergamo, Italy. She also teaches CLIL methodology to Italian teachers. In 2025 she published a collection of

essays on Italian film and literature: "Utopia, Trauma e Memoria: Percorsi nell'Immaginario" (Edibom Edizioni Letterarie).

Title: *"Peer Education and Bilingual Mediation in the Italian L2 Classroom: Outcomes of an Inclusive and Collaborative Practice"*

Abstract: The paper engages with the themes of cooperative and participatory pedagogies, emotional wellbeing through positive peer relationships, and innovative strategies for linguistic and intercultural inclusion. It presents a practical experience of peer education in Italian L2 classes in secondary schools in Italy involving structured peer tutoring activities. Italian–Moroccan bilingual students mediated access to Italian for NAI students (Newly Arrived Students in Italy) by using Moroccan Arabic as a language of mediation. This plurilingual dimension valued students' existing linguistic repertoires and encouraged supportive peer relationships, while aligning with current perspectives on translanguaging and linguistic mediation in Italian L2 education.

Monica Oriani (University of Warwick)

Bio: Monica Oriani holds a Master's degree in Italian Literature and Humanities and a PGCE in Italian, History and Latin (University of Milano), DITALS Certificate (University of Siena) and a Post Graduate Award in Introduction to Teaching in Higher Education (University of Coventry). After teaching in Secondary Education in Italy, she spent the past 11 years working with a variety of institutions in the UK. She currently teaches Italian at the University of Warwick, Warwickshire College, and for Warwickshire County Council, alongside her work as an independent tutor.

Title: *"Developing a personal voice in Italian: reflective and digital practices for emotional wellbeing in the Italian classroom"*

Abstract: This presentation addresses language anxiety in adult learners, often linked to the belief that successful communication requires grammatical accuracy and error-free production (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1986). It explores reflective and digitally supported practices aimed at reducing anxiety and promoting emotional wellbeing in Italian language classrooms, both online and in person. The approach shifts focus from linguistic knowledge to meaningful communication, encouraging active language use. Activities include weekly check-ins, personal learning journals, Padlet-based storytelling, and guided use of AI tools. These low-pressure practices support engagement and the development of a personal voice. Drawing on research on learner identity and reflective practice (Norton, 2013), the presentation shows how such strategies foster confidence, agency, and authentic language experience.

Rosa Nazzaro (University of Warwick)

Bio: After completing her MA in Modern Foreign Languages, Rosa earned her teaching qualifications for German and English as foreign languages at the University of Pisa and a postgraduate master's in Teaching Italian at the University of Venice "Ca' Foscari". Since 2017, she has been teaching German and Italian at the Warwick Language Centre. In 2020, she completed her Post-Graduate Award in Technology Enhanced Learning, becoming a Fellow of the HEA. In 2025, she co-founded the "Alma Intercultural Centre", a non-profit organization officially recognised by the Consulate General of Italy as a managing body promoting Italian language and culture in the UK.

Title: *“Introducing Wiki to enhance collaborative knowledge construction in an asynchronous environment”*

Abstract: This small-scale research project, developed as part of a PGA TEL programme, explores the impact of Wiki as a collaborative tool in an asynchronous learning environment on student motivation and learning outcomes. The project was implemented in a beginner German class and later in an advanced Italian module. Wiki-based activities were introduced to foster collaboration and shared knowledge construction beyond face-to-face sessions. Grounded in a constructivist, multi-paradigmatic approach, the project is evaluated through the Community of Inquiry framework, focusing on social elements, teaching and emotional presence. Findings indicate that this type of asynchronous collaboration promotes reflection, increases participation—especially among reticent students (Bach et al., 2006)—and enhances peer interaction, while emotional presence supports belonging, engagement and sustained motivation (Rienties and Rivers, 2014; Cleveland-Innes and Campbell, 2012). It is important to humanize the online environment in order to create a sense of belonging and an emotional response to the course (Herrington, 2010; Laurillard, 2012).

Carmela Esposito Faraone (University of Bath)

Bio: Carmela Esposito Faraone spent over twenty-five years teaching Italian and French across schools, colleges, and universities in England. A qualified secondary school teacher and Fellow of the Higher Education Academy, she currently teaches non-credit bearing Italian courses at the University of Bath - open to both students and members of the public - and credit-bearing and non-credit bearing French modules at the University of Warwick. Carmela is passionate about creating strong, supportive learning communities where students feel safe, motivated, and genuinely eager to attend. Her interests centre on innovative approaches to language teaching, learner engagement, and the role of well-being in successful language learning.

Title: *“Using Escape Rooms to Foster Engagement and Well-being in Italian Learning”*

Abstract: This contribution explores how educational escape rooms can support language learning and student well-being in the university classroom. A pilot activity with A2 Italian learners showed high engagement, active collaboration, and strong enthusiasm, prompting further investigation into their sustained impact. Research suggests that escape rooms foster positive emotions, reduce anxiety, and encourage confident participation by creating a low-stress environment (Vosieva & Decker, 2025). They also enhance collaboration, creativity, and peer connection, contributing to a stronger sense of belonging (Voreopoulou et al., 2024; Hahn et al., 2025). Building on these insights, this paper presents an escape room design for Italian language learning and outlines a plan to examine its effects on learners’ emotional and social experience. The aim is to assess whether such activities can consistently promote motivation, engagement, and overall well-being alongside linguistic development.