

# THE STATE OF ITALIAN LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION AND LEARNING IN THE UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES

*Danica Anna Guban-Caisido, Dyan Lori<sup>zze</sup> Amarillo, Naidyl Isis Bautista, Kristine Cabling, Reginald Dominic Cruz, Rica Nepomuceno<sup>1</sup>*

## 1. PANORAMA OF TEACHING ITALIAN IN THE PHILIPPINES

The presence of Italian language teaching and learning in the Philippines started in 1963 when the Philippine-Italian Association (PIA) offered Italian language courses for children of Italian descent residing in Manila (Philippine-Italian Association, n.d.). The Philippine-Italian Association (PIA) is a non-profit, cross-cultural, and educational organization created to advocate for stronger camaraderie between the Philippines and Italy. The organization aims to promote and further enhance exchanges in the fields of education, culture, and art between the two countries. As a pioneer of Italian language teaching in the Philippines, the PIA has maintained its commitment to making the Italian language accessible to the general public.

Another organization dedicated to promoting the Italian language in the Philippines is the Società Dante Alighieri (SDA). It is a non-profit organization established in 2005 that represents the Comitato di Manila as part of the Società Dante Alighieri network. As its main service, it offers various Italian language classes from A1 to C2 level according to the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR). The organization has partnerships with recruitment institutions in Italy to teach Italian to Filipino skilled workers with the intention of employing them in the country. In addition, they collaborate with local institutions that nurture and advance Philippine-Italian relations, namely, the Embassy of Italy in the Philippines, the Italian Chamber of Commerce in the Philippines, universities, and other Philippine-Italian organizations. In 2025, SDA merged its services with PIA.

Truly, teaching the Italian language has piqued the interest of Filipinos so much so that some Philippine universities have started offering Italian language courses. As part of their curricula for students majoring in European studies or foreign service, the De La Salle University Manila and the Polytechnic University of the Philippines offer Italian language courses (Ambasciata d'Italia Manila, n.d.). On the other hand, there are two universities where Italian is mainly taught as a foreign language: Ateneo De Manila University and the University of the Philippines Diliman.

The University of the Philippines Diliman (UPD), established in 1908, is one of the universities that offers a bachelor's degree in foreign languages through the Department of European Languages' (DEL) BA European Languages (BA EL) program. Formerly known as the Foreign Languages Section, it was established in 1910 as part of the College of

<sup>1</sup> University of the Philippines Diliman.

Philosophy, Science, and Letters with the intention of supplementing the skills of students entering the fields of Agriculture, Veterinary Science, Law, and Fine Arts (Bautista *et al.*, 2023). During this period, the section offered four languages: French, German, Spanish, and Latin until its expansion in 1976 to what is now known as the DEL. The Department also transferred to its new home in the College of Arts and Letters, wherein students can specialize in the following languages: French, Italian, German, and Spanish (Department of European Languages, n.d.). Beyond this, the DEL also offers basic language courses on Latin, Russian, and Portuguese open to the entire student body of UP Diliman. In addition, the DEL also provides public service through its extramural program, wherein European language courses are offered to the public at competitive rates.

However, Italian was not originally part of the major language offerings of the BA EL program. From the program's inception in 1977 until 1989, it was only offered as a secondary specialization, i.e. a minor. This changed through the combined efforts of students and faculty. The students' interest to specialize in the language, along with the presence of the Italian embassy's cultural attaché serving as adjunct professor, stimulated the development of faculty for the Italian Section. Thus, Italian was rendered a major language option.

## 2. THE CURRICULUM

The structure of the BA EL program offers flexibility in the study plans that students can take. The curriculum is divided according to a bifurcated format wherein the first two years are dedicated to language courses until B1 in addition to general electives. The last two years are for content courses which center on disciplines related to philology such as literature, history, and culture.

During the second year, in particular, students choose a minor from an extensive selection. They can either opt to minor in another language (Plan 1), or another discipline outside of the Department (Plan 2) including, but not limited to: English, Comparative Literature, Creative Writing, Filipino, *Panitikan ng Pilipinas* (Philippine literature), Speech Communication, Theatre Arts, Art Studies, Social Sciences, Philosophy, Theory in Fine Arts, Reading, Teaching in the Early Grades, Language Teaching, Communication Research, and Tourism (Department of European Languages, n.d.).

This curriculum was conceptualized with the intention of broadening the cultural horizons of the students and fostering a sense of pride through the idea that the Filipino experience is not isolated, and instead, has similarities and differences to that of other peoples. In order to achieve this goal, the BA EL curriculum focuses on a combination of grammatical, cultural, and technical knowledge of the target language and its country of origin. Due to linguistic, social, and cultural changes that affect language use and learning, the curriculum undergoes revisions to reflect these changes in order to aid students better in adapting their language skills for real-world application.

One of the most notable revisions occurred in 2002, which introduced courses in phonetics and phonology, stylistics, and the undergraduate thesis. Consequently, the introduction of the undergraduate thesis required another revision to the curriculum in order to prepare students to undertake the task. Therefore, more major courses were introduced in 2019 with an emphasis on critical analysis and production of knowledge. These courses are

reading strategies, history, contemporary events, literature, literary criticism, linguistics, composition and academic writing, and research methods. In addition, students must also take courses on specific topics in literature, history, or linguistics. The last iteration of the curriculum offers courses for each language that are tailored based on the CEFR, which aims to produce graduates with at least a B2 level (Vantage) of proficiency or a professional understanding of their target language. All these changes serve to aid students not only to explore and execute various research interests, but to also equip them with knowledge and skills necessary to pursue professional careers in foreign language education, literary and cultural studies, and translation.

In particular, the Italian Section constantly endeavors to expose and immerse students in the Italian language and culture under various contexts. The DEL and the Italian Section prepare students to utilize their linguistic skills and apply them in a manner suitable for corporate, governmental, and academic work.

Since its formation, the Italian Section has collaborated with the Embassy of Italy as well as Italian language and culture institutions in the Philippines to organize varied lectures, seminars, and cultural activities. From 2004 until today, the DEL has been present in celebrating Italian culture through academic and cultural events. In fact, the Italian Section regularly participates and holds its own celebration of the *Settimana della lingua italiana nel mondo* (Week of the Italian Language in the World). During its celebration in 2024, the Section organized the *Scrivi con me*, an iteration of the writing contest first held in 2007, which allowed students majoring in Italian to showcase their writing skills through a story continuation task based on the theme of the celebration: “L’italiano e il libro: il mondo fra le righe”. The writing contest is now an annual event of the Italian Section, which consequently aims to publish the collected submissions. More recently, the Italian Section also joined the international community in the celebration of Dantedì, in collaboration with the Philippine Italian Association-Società Dante Alighieri, in March 2025. Students within and outside the BA EL program gained a better understanding of the context of Dante Alighieri’s famous work, Inferno, through a lecture about his life and his other compositions. Opening Italian cultural events, such as the Dantedì, to the public is one way that the Italian Section broadens perspectives and perceptions through various expositions of the similarities and differences between Italian and Filipino culture.

### 3. ITALIAN STUDIES IN NUMBERS

Italian is regarded as a minor foreign language (FL) in the Philippines, particularly when compared to other more dominant languages, such as Spanish, Japanese, French, German, Mandarin Chinese, and Korean. Unlike these six languages, Italian is not part of the Special Program in Foreign Language (SPFL), the Department of Education’s (DepEd) main initiative for delivering foreign language education at the secondary level (Cabling *et al.*, 2020).

The SPFL was launched in 2009 to produce “globally competitive” multilingual Filipino learners capable of navigating culturally diverse environments while preserving their national identity, and preparing them for higher education and beyond (Cabling *et al.*, 2020: 194). To teach these FLs as electives at the junior high school level, the DepEd collaborates with institutional partners (i.e., Embassies, cultural institutes) for each language to support

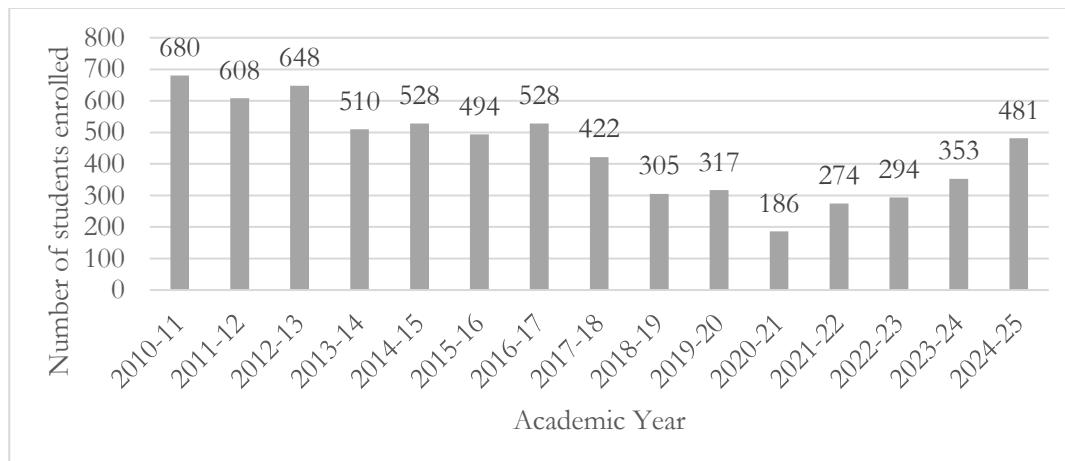
capacity-building initiatives. These partners play a key role in training teachers, both in the language and didactic methods, as well as in providing learning materials (p. 194). The possibility of taking FL electives in higher education is systematized by two memoranda issued by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED): 1) *Memorandum* No. 23, s. 2010, which sought to include foreign language electives in higher education curricula; and 2) *Memorandum* No. 23, s. 2017, which laid out policies, standards, and guidelines for the institution of a full-fledged degree program in foreign languages (Cabling *et al.*, 2020: 197). As aforementioned, the DEL's BA European Languages (BA EL) program is the only academic program in the country that offers a bachelor's degree in European languages with an option to specialize in Italian.

Why students learn FLs other than English in the Philippines varies according to the language. Gonzales' (2010: 10) study, which identified how motivation differentiates FL learners at the university level, has shown that Spanish learners are primarily motivated by the personal satisfaction they get from learning the language, while Chinese learners are driven by a desire to communicate with and connect to the target language community. It was also revealed that those learning Japanese are inclined to do so because of career advancement and economic opportunities, whereas French learners lean towards affiliation with foreigners.

Motivations for studying Italian at the university level, on the other hand, are largely influenced by cultural interests – such as cuisine, architecture, history, and civilization – as well as a strong desire to travel, with employment prospects likewise playing a significant role (Bautista *et al.*, 2023). This will be further discussed and contextualized in the succeeding section of this paper. This reflects the perception that having another FL in one's repertoire is advantageous, as it increases one's chances to thrive in future career opportunities, whether locally or internationally (Quinto *et al.*, 2023: 1948).

In light of these motivations, the Italian Section of the DEL consistently tracks the number of students enrolling in various Italian language and culture classes per year. The majority of the enrollees are students from different undergraduate (and some graduate) degree programs who take Italian as an FL elective. Figure 1 is a 15-year representation of the Italian Section's enrollment trends, from Academic Year 2010-2011 to the recently concluded Academic Year 2024-2025.

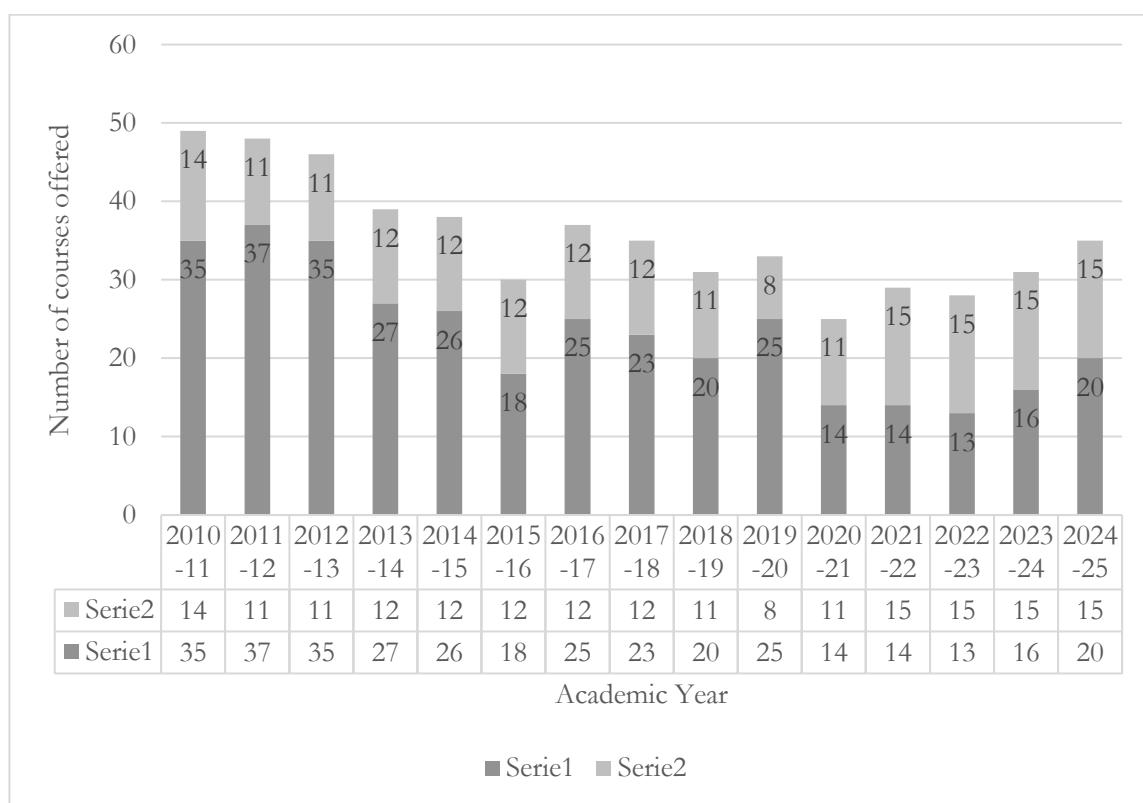
Figure 1. *Italian Section Enrollment Trends from 2010 to 2025*



The year 2010 marks the earliest point at which consistent and reliable data were made available through UPD's Computerized Registration System (CRS), ensuring that the gathered information is comparable and representative. The timeframe was selected because it allows the authors to identify and analyze long-term and/or potential cyclical patterns, as well as grasp the impact of policy and demographic shifts (including major disruptions, such as the COVID-19 pandemic) that would not have been evident with shorter timeframes.

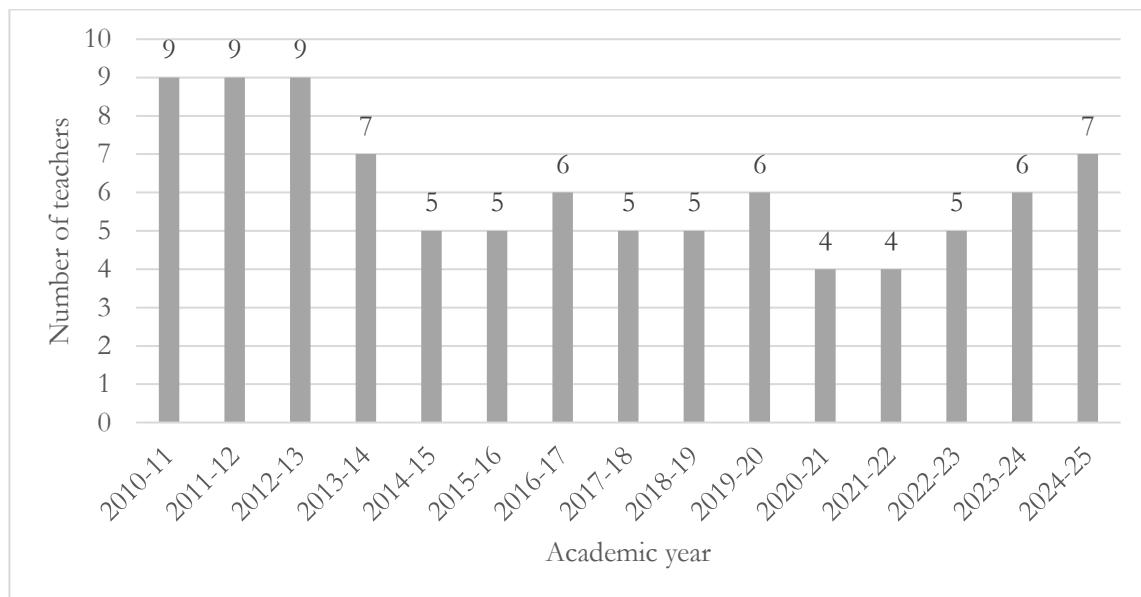
The increase and decrease in enrollment data are heavily influenced by and are directly proportional to the number of basic Italian classes (i.e., Italian 10 to Italian 13, equivalent to A1-A2) offered per semester (see Figure 2) and the number of Italian language/studies teachers (see Figure 3). In Figure 2, Series 1 refers to the basic course offerings (A1-A2), while Series 2 pertains to the advanced courses (B1-B2).

Figure 2. *Basic versus Advanced Course Offerings from 2010 to 2025*



Between AY 2010-2011 and 2013-2014, the integrated A2 level courses (i.e., Italian 12-13) were offered every semester, when the number of faculty ranged between seven to nine. With the decrease in teachers in AY 2014-2015 to five, Italian 12-13 became a seasonal course, and is now only offered during the second semester of every academic year. The drop in the number of teachers noticeably resulted in a gradual reduction in enrollees in the successive semesters.

Figure 3. Number of Italian language/studies teachers from 2010 to 2025



Another factor that brought about the decrease in student registration was the effect of implementing the K to 12 Basic Education program in the country – with the nationwide rollout of senior high school in 2016, many students were obligated to go through two more years of high school instead of going straight to college, resulting in low enrollment in colleges and universities (*CHED K to 12 Transition Program*, n.d.). Thus, in AY 2016-2017 and 2017-2018, there was a reduced number of incoming freshmen for the whole university. The Italian Section experienced the effect of the K to 12 transition only in AY 2017-2018, when it did not have any freshmen. This explains the surge in basic course offerings come AY 2019-2020 (i.e., from 20 to 25) to replace the advanced courses typically offered to junior-standing students. Interestingly, despite the implementation of the Universal Access to Tertiary Education (Republic Act No. 10931) in 2017, which subsidized the tuition and other school fees of undergraduate students (Diliman Information Office, 2017), the enrollment numbers for Italian continued to dwindle.

The most significant dip occurred in AY 2020-2021 (i.e., 186 enrollees), which coincided with the unforeseen circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic. Some students have opted not to proceed with enrollment for the semester/academic year, while some have had to drop their courses due to financial and/or health reasons. This was further exacerbated by faculty members leaving the department, resulting in a decrease in the number of basic classes offered for the academic year. The switch to remote learning during this period (which continued until AY 2022-2023) similarly prompted the university to suspend academic rules, policies, and procedures, such as the deadline for dropping subjects, leave of absence, and rules on scholastic standing and financial assistance, among others (Cardoz, 2022). As a result, the regular academic load of undergraduate students, originally comprising 15 units, was decreased to 12.

The enrollment patterns eventually experienced a gradual rise in the years following the pandemic outbreak. This could be attributed to the return to face-to-face classes for the DEL

in the second semester of AY 2022-2023, whose more interactive environment, which is fundamental for language classes, encouraged student engagement. The reinstatement of face-to-face classes likely contributed to the return of students who took a break/leave of absence during the pandemic. The number of faculty members in the Italian section is also steadily increasing, with one new faculty member joining each year since AY 2021-2022.

The increase in advanced course offerings to fifteen (despite having only four faculty members at the time) is likewise evident beginning AY 2021-2022, surpassing the previous peak of fourteen B1-B2 courses recorded in AY 2010-2011, when the number of teachers was at nine. This shift can be ascribed to the revision of the BA EL curriculum, approved in September 2019, which created and modified several courses to integrate the revised program into the University's academic framework. Compared to the previous BAEL curriculum, the 2019 version includes new advanced core courses and electives (B1-C1), such as FIGS 16 – Advanced language course III; FIGS 51 – Text engagement; FIGS 61 – Academic writing; FIGS 70 – Critical theories; FIGS 111 – Literature II; FIGS 130 – Linguistics I; and FIGS 131 – Linguistics II.

#### 4. MOTIVATIONS AND FUTURE PLANS OF ITALIAN MAJORS AND MINORS

Students in the BA EL program who were taking Italian as a primary or secondary specialization (hereafter referred to as Italian majors and minors, respectively) were surveyed regarding their motivations and future plans. The survey, administered online, received 25 responses out of 37 students, with a response rate of 67.6%.

##### 4.1. *Methodology*

The instrument contained a mix of closed- and open-ended questions on their reasons for studying Italian, the extent to which the program content aligned with their motivations, plans after graduation, and intentions to travel to Italy. A similar, albeit less extensive, survey was distributed two years ago to roughly the same cohort as the present respondents. This initial survey also explored the students' motivations for studying Italian for record-keeping purposes. Meanwhile, the current iteration of the survey additionally examined the students' thoughts on program content vis-a-vis their motivations and plans after graduation.

Thirty-seven students were identified as eligible respondents for the survey. These included students who were studying Italian as their primary and secondary specialization and who were currently enrolled in the AY 2024-2025. Students who were on leave of absence or absence without leave were also included in the participants. However, students from the original cohort who have already graduated were excluded from the present survey. As mentioned earlier, 25 out of 37 students answered the survey, twenty-four of whom were Italian majors while one was a student taking Italian as a minor. A possible factor for unit non-responses is the timing of the survey, given that it was sent out during the summer break.

The answers to open-ended questions were coded using a grounded approach, and the analysis of data yielded three themes: motivations in studying the language, considerations

for going to Italy, and plans after graduation. The results of closed-ended questions were analyzed using central tendencies, and will be discussed under the relevant theme.

## 4.2. Results and discussion

### 4.2.1. Motivations for studying the language

Table 1 presents the percentage of responses to the survey item on students' reasons for choosing Italian as a primary or secondary specialization. The respondents supplemented their answers with more detailed explanations that gave further insight to their motivations.

Table 1. *Motivations of students studying Italian*

Motivations	Percentage of respondents
Employment	60%
Higher studies/possible scholarship	52%
Interest in the culture	96%
Travel/leisure	60%
Migration/family reunification	8%
Others	
Religious vocation	4%
Connecting with other cultures	4%

From the responses, several various internal and external factors were identified that motivated them to start and continue studying the language. Chief among these is their interest in various aspects of Italian language and culture, such as its cuisine, fashion, religion, history, artisanship, and landscapes. These aspects of the Italian language and culture are common images and imaginings readily available to the public. However, only the student taking Italian as a minor has already traveled to Italy as a child, and therefore has firsthand experience of the country. In contrast, all the other students have experienced a diffused version of the culture through Italian and Italian-inspired restaurants and brands, the Internet, and traditional and social media, supplemented by their classes and professors. In addition, cultural events organized by the DEL and its institutional partners also enrich these secondhand experiences of culture by giving students access to interactions with Italians and Italian mother tongue speakers.

Another type of access is also available to students in their third year of the program: they may register in courses taught by Italian nationals, which are usually on contemporary culture. While this is a current feature of the program, this heavily depends on hiring and availability

of Italians willing and able to teach at the DEL. While it may be conjectured that the students hold a romanticized ideal of Italy, they are aware of not-so-ideal realities, such as the country's migrant labor policies, and in addition show a desire to investigate the treatment and experiences of Filipino migrant workers. Another internal motivator for the students is to establish connections with people from other cultures and gain an understanding of the world.

The academic environment also served as a motivating factor for students, such as their peers and their professors' pedagogical styles, sustaining their interest even during the more challenging phase of the program.

As noted earlier, an initial survey was conducted two years ago among a cohort of Italian majors and minors to investigate their motivations in studying the language. The answers from that survey were compared to those from the present iteration, revealing that their motivations remained largely consistent, with only minimal changes over the two-year period. The shifts reported by the students were mainly in the choice of master's degree programs they intended to pursue after graduation, and in a deepened appreciation of the culture.

#### 4.2.2. *Plans after graduation*

These plans are split into two: international and local. While most students expressed an interest to study and work in Italy, they recognize the need for establishing themselves financially and emotionally before going abroad.

Table 2 shows the percentage of responses to the survey item on whether travel to Italy is essential. For most of the respondents, going to Italy is an imperative so that they can immerse themselves in the language and have a direct experience of the lessons that they have learned in the program and the materials they have read. For them, any duration of stay in the country would be a proving ground for their language competency and avoid the deterioration of their skills. For most of the 36% that answered "it depends," the need to travel to Italy is dictated by their financial capabilities, while some of the students considered it optional to set foot in the country.

Table 2. *Perceived need to travel to Italy after graduation*

Perceived need to travel to Italy	Percentage of respondents
Yes	56%
No	8%
It depends	36%

The pursuit of higher education is a common answer for most students, who plan to take master's degrees in related fields like sociology, media and communication, literature, and marketing. Some of the respondents view the combination of their BA EL degree and a master's degree as a pathway to a desired career, especially those who plan to work in

academia. Most of those who plan to pursue higher education intend to study in Italy, and there are those who also plan to work in the country.

Students perceive knowing a foreign language as an asset in the domestic labor market, which will net them increased salary and more job opportunities as there are fewer speakers of Italian. The sectors considered by the students are: teaching and academia, Business Process Outsourcing, translation, government, advocacy work, travel and tourism, foreign service and diplomacy, and religion. It should be noted that there is a distinction between teaching and academia. Teaching solely refers to handling courses in private language schools, such as the PIA. In contrast, work in the academe involves research and public service activities in addition to pedagogy. Aside from these two, only the translation and Business Process Outsourcing industries directly require knowledge in Italian. While the other aforementioned sectors welcome the knowledge of a foreign language, competency in Italian is not a guarantee in securing employment in these industries. To date, only the UPD offers a degree in Italian and is therefore the only institution in which the students may pursue an academic career locally. However, even this is not a direct guarantee of employment as faculty size depends on student population as well.

#### *4.2.3. Considerations for going to Italy*

Respondents who are planning to go to Italy have a realistic view of the associated costs, especially financial and logistical: visa approval and related processes are expensive and lengthy; travel expenses such as transport, board, and lodging largely depend on the foreign exchange; and the itinerary and intended activities are factors to consider in planning and budgeting. In addition, the source of funding is a significant concern for the students, hence their plan to work and save up first before traveling.

For those who plan to stay in Italy for a longer duration for study and work purposes, emotional and mental preparedness are also matters to consider as they will be spending a considerable amount of time away from home. However, for one respondent, employment in Italy is not an option due to the country's migrant labor policies and perceived discrimination against Filipinos.

Although most of the students have not experienced the culture firsthand, their interest in the language and culture of Italy is remarkable in that it can sustain them through the demands of a rigorous academic program. The students envision their career in a broad array of industries wherein their knowledge of Italian will provide them with a competitive edge in their job search.

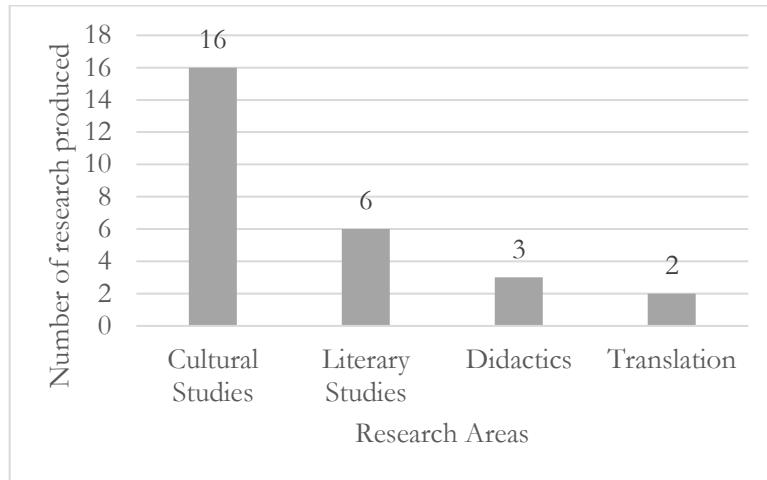
At first glance, being among the small number of Italian speakers in the country may appear to be an advantage due to limited competition in the labor market. However, there are only a select few and specialized fields that demand their knowledge of the language, which may pose a challenge for students whose post-graduation plans do not involve teaching nor academia. Nonetheless, the interdisciplinary nature of the program gives them a wealth of options to pursue in the future.

## 5. RESEARCH TRENDS

The undergraduate thesis is the culminating academic requirement of the students of the BA European Languages program of the University of the Philippines Diliman. What sets this research project apart from the rest of the academic programs of the university is the fact that the theses are written and defended *a viva voce* in the target language the students are majoring in. The students are expected to write about a thesis topic that caters to their interest and that is within the scope of the Department's research agenda, among which are the following: foreign language didactics and applied linguistics, literature and literary studies, translation studies, and cultural studies.

Unfortunately, archival data of much older theses (pre-2015) perished from a fire incident and hence are no longer available at the DEL. Only theses whose electronic copies were saved in a database beginning from 2015 were available for a systematic review. This study focuses on 27 undergraduate theses produced by Italian majors from 2015-2025. These theses were classified by research area and type of corpus used, offering insight into patterns of intellectual engagement over the past decade. Figure 4 below shows a panorama of the current research interests and trends among Italian majors in the BA European Languages Program.

Figure 4. *Research trends among Italian majors since 2015*



The chart above presents an overview of the research trend among the Italian majors from the DEL. Out of the 27 undergraduate theses reviewed, Cultural Studies emerged as the most prominent research area, accounting for over half of the total output. A Fisher's Exact Test, designed for small sample sizes which do not rely on an expected frequency assumption, was conducted to know whether there is a significant association between two timeframes (2015-2019, and 2020-2025) and the distribution of research areas. The division of the n into two timeframes serves to aggregate the data, to reduce random fluctuations, and to create comparable groups. The p-value is at  $p \approx 0.999$ , which yields no significant evidence that the distribution of research areas changed between the two time periods. The changes observed in the trends remain consistent with random chance variation given the small sample size. The given proportion in each area remains relatively stable. For Cultural Studies, the test

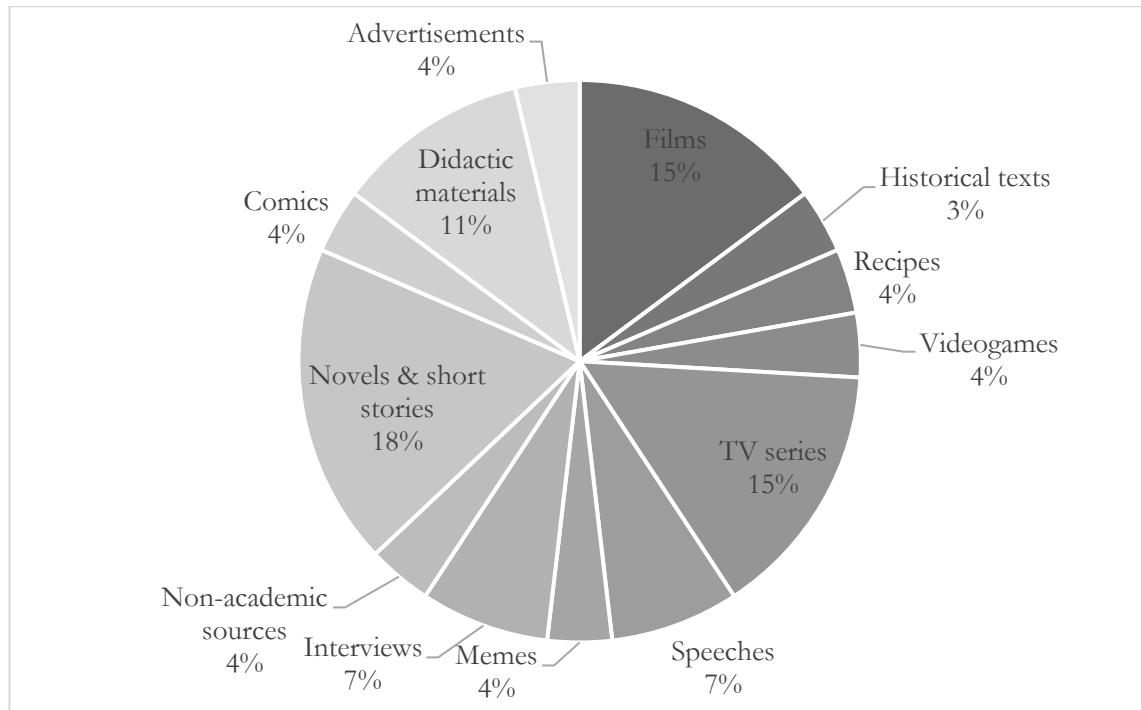
yields 59% or 10/17 in the first period compared to roughly 60% or 6/10 in the second time period. For Literary Analysis, the first time period results in 24% or 4/17, while the second time period yields 20% or 2/10. The other research areas (Didactics and Translation) have very low counts making it impossible to attribute a pattern from random fluctuations.

### 5.1. *Corpus Types and Thematic Trends*

In terms of corpus analysis, novels and short stories comprise a big fraction of the most studied corpora, accounting to 18% of the total number of studies. Literary theses tackled canonical and contemporary works from Dante's *La Commedia* to Elena Ferrante's *La figlia oscura* through a variety of critical lenses, including but not limited to ecocriticism, gynocriticism, and post-colonialism.

Film is the second most frequently studied medium (15%), with students analyzing Italian films across different eras, such as *Amarcord* (1973), *Il vizietto* (1978), *Dove vai se il vizietto non ce l'hai?* (1979), *Più bello di così si muore* (1982), *Cominciò tutto per caso* (1993), and *Malèna* (2000), among others. Other minority corpora include historical texts, literary works, Filipino teleseries, videogames (*Assassin's Creed II*), recipes, and even more novel intertextual corpora such as social media memes and Facebook posts.

Figure 5. *Overall Corpus Type Distribution from 2015 to 2025*



The predominance of Cultural Studies is suggestive of student interest on themes tackling gender representation, feminism, postcolonial identity, migration and acculturation, critical

discourse analysis, and semiotics. While film and literary analyses remain predominant, the recent years have seen growth in the preference for newer, more interactive corpora such as memes, speeches, and video games.

The field of Didactics and Translation Studies remain scarce, with only three and two theses to represent the respective fields throughout the entire decade. Among the themes investigated in the former are contextualization of Italian as a foreign language through materials development, listening skills and language learning strategies, and language-specific grit among students. Didactics-focused theses addressed listening strategies, materials development, and learner grit among Filipino students of Italian. Meanwhile, theses on translation focus on audiovisual translation and the challenges of humor and music in dubbed media (*South Park, My Little Pony*).

## 6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper aimed to present a comprehensive panorama of the current state of teaching and learning Italian as a degree program in the Philippines, with a particular focus on the study of Italian through the Department of European Languages of the University of the Philippines Diliman.

Tracing the historical development of Italian language instruction and analyzing the enrollment trends, course offerings, and faculty dynamics revealed insights into the primary factors that influence institutional capacity as well as student motivation and interests. Survey responses from BA EL majors and minors of Italian shed light on the various motivations that drove students to pursue Italian studies. These motivations, ranging from personal interest to cultural curiosity, are strongly reflected in the students' thesis topics, which often explore the Italian language, culture, and literature, as well as comparative studies between Italy and the Philippines. Not only does this attest to the depth of student engagement with the language, but it also underscores the relevance of Italian studies within the Philippine academic and cultural context.

It is notable that fluctuations in faculty availability greatly influenced the consistency and growth of the section. However, the challenge for faculty development lies in post-undergraduate training for both language and professional development. As students have already recognized, going abroad to Italy will be beneficial in enhancing language skills and deepening understanding of the culture. This is doubly true for teachers as such an experience can be used to improve lesson design and delivery.

Aside from faculty development, there are a few additional recommendations to support the consistent growth of the section through its institutional partners. First, to create a potentially more stable pipeline of majors, the PIA and the Embassy should be involved in instituting Italian as an additional language in the SPFL so that more Filipino students in high school can already be exposed to the language. Second, to make the specialization in Italian a more economically viable option for prospective students, both institutions should be active in establishing and maintaining a network of varied job opportunities suitable for students of Italian. These opportunities should ideally not be limited to Business Process Outsourcing opportunities in order to attract more students.

Ultimately, while the sustainability and expansion of Italian as a major and minor language in the UPD require continuous faculty development, its long-term success will depend more on the visibility of Italian as an academically meaningful and economically promising option for future students. To this end, faculty activities must be reinforced by proactive efforts from its institutional partners that go beyond language promotion.

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## APPENDIX

Table 3. *An overview of the research trend among Italian Majors*

Field of study	Title of thesis	Year completed	Themes and Keywords
<b>Cultural Studies</b>	Immaginare l'Immigrato: una recensione postcoloniale della rappresentazione cinematografica dei filippini in Italia.	2015	Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs), migration, film, postcolonial, <i>Milan, Se chiudo gli occhi non sono più qui, Cominciò tutto per caso</i>
	Le donne in guerre: un'analisi storica dell'origine del femminismo in Italia.	2016	Women, feminism, historical texts, gender roles, Italian Unification, Second World War, Resistance
	Film, femminismo, fascismo: Un'analisi femminista di tre film “Telefoni Bianchi” Di Mario Camerini	2016	Women, fascism, feminism, film, <i>Gli uomini, che mascalzoni..., Il signor Max, I grandi magazzini</i>
	Dalle briciole ai banchetti: un'analisi marxista sulla cucina contadina e gourmet d'Italia nel 1891 nel libro <i>La scienza in cucina e l'arte di mangiar bene e delle Filippine</i> nel 1992 in <i>A culinary life: personal recipe collection</i>	2016	Marxism, commodity, Italian cuisine, Philippine cuisine, <i>La scienza in cucina e l'arte di mangiar bene, A Culinary Life: Personal Recipe Collection</i>
	Giocare con la storia: un'analisi del travisamento della storia rinascimentale del videogioco <i>Assassin's Creed II</i>	2016	Videogames, Italian Renaissance, historiography, Profit Motive, <i>Assassin's Creed II</i>
	L'Amara verità: un'analisi delle mascolinità rappresentate nel telefilm <i>Dolce Amore</i>	2016	Philippine television drama series (teleserye), masculinity, Raewyn Connell, hegemonic and subordinate masculinities, <i>Dolce Amore</i>
	L'anatomia di un dittatore: un confronto tra i discorsi di Ferdinand E. Marcos durante la Legge Marziale e <i>Il Principe</i> di Niccolò Machiavelli	2016	Critical Discourse Analysis, speeches, Martial Law, <i>Il Principe</i>

Un'analisi lefebvriana della rappresentazione dell'alienazione dalla sessualità femminile nella quotidianità dell'Italia fascista in tre film: <i>Amarcord</i> (1973) di Federico Fellini, <i>Una giornata particolare</i> (1977) di Ettore Scola e <i>Malèna</i> (2000) di Giuseppe Tornatore	2018	Henri Lefebvre, fascism, women, representations, everydayness, alienation, estrangement, <i>Amarcord</i> , <i>Una giornata particolare</i> , <i>Malèna</i>
La costruzione della nazione nei discorsi di Aldo Moro e di Ninoy Aquino	2018	Nationalism, hegemony, Critical Discourse Analysis, speeches, Historic Compromise, Martial Law
Donna non si nasce, lo si diventa: la costruzione dell'identità femminile dai personaggi maschili travestiti in tre film degli anni di Piombo	2019	Feminine identity, subversion, crossdressing, Years of Lead, Character analysis
«Il Cavaliere» nella Politica Italiana: Uno studio sui memi di Facebook su Silvio Berlusconi durante le Elezioni politiche italiane del 2018	2020	Memes, semiotics, myth, hegemony, Silvio Berlusconi, general elections, pop culture
Dentro la mafia: un'analisi dei ruoli sociali dei personaggi femminili mafiosi nel telefilm <i>Gomorra</i>	2020	Mafia women, communal roles, gender stereotypes, women's representation in media, patriarchy
Orgoglio ed onore: un'Analisi postcoloniale sugli arredi domestici dei migranti filippini ritornati dall'Italia	2022	Acculturation, cultural Mimicry
Mutə: Una sintesi tematica dei testi sull'italiano neutro	2024	Gender policies, linguistic neutrality
Fare pubblicità in un contesto filippino: uno studio descrittivo sulla percezione del mito dell'italianità degli studenti della sezione d'Italiano del Dipartimento delle Lingue Europee	2025	Semiotics (de Saussure, Barthes, Peirce-Symbol-Reference/ Referent), myth of italianità fetishism of the Italian language, cultural assimilation, process fluency, Made in Italy brands

	Le strategie di acculturazione linguistica degli immigrati italiani nelle Filippine	2025	Linguistic acculturation migration (Italian)
<b>Literary Studies</b>	Le donne medievali della <i>Commedia</i> : Una critica sociologica femminista dei personaggi femminili nella <i>Commedia</i> del basso medioevo	2016	Sociological criticism, feminist perspectives, women, Dante Alighieri, <i>La Commedia</i>
	Othering ne <i>I Promessi sposi</i> e <i>Noli me tangere</i> : Un'analisi della Rappresentazione degli Italiani e Filippini sotto la Colonizzazione Spagnola	2016	Othering, Spanish colonial period, <i>I Promessi sposi</i> and <i>Noli me tangere</i>
	La prospettiva del paesaggio: Un'analisi ecocritica delle novelle selezionate da <i>Vita dei Campi</i> (1880) di Giovanni Verga e da <i>I Giuochi della Vita</i> (1905) di Grazia Deledda	2017	Nature, short stories, ecocriticism, environmental crisis
	La performatività nello spazio: Uno studio di Satanik (1964)	2017	Geocriticism, public and private space, performativity, gender, comics, identity
	Othering nelle opere di Amara Lakhous: un'analisi della rappresentazione degli immigrati e degli italiani come 'altri'	2024	Othering, racism in-group/out-group
	Le madri snaturate: il riposizionamento della maternità patriarcale come un'impresa femminista nelle opere di Elena Ferrante	2025	Motherhood, mothering, patriarchal motherhood, feminism, Elena Ferrante
<b>Didactics</b>	L'insegnamento dell'italiano lingua straniera: Una proposta di unità didattica per insegnare la casa e la famiglia agli studenti universitari filippini.	2016	Materials development, Italian as a foreign language, contextualization of Italian language learning
	Un'analisi delle strategie di ascolto degli studenti di italiano al livello A1 e B1 nelle Filippine	2018	Listening skills, language learning strategies, teaching Italian as a foreign language

	Grinta a Grande: L'investigazione della grana specifica per la lingua degli studenti della sezione dell'italiano del Dipartimento delle Lingue Europee	2024	Psychodidactics, factors that promote and hinder language acquisition
<b>Translation</b>	Un'analisi della funzione umoristica del doppiaggio italiano di <i>South Park</i> , diciannovesima stagione	2019	Translation of humor, creativity in translation, verbally expressed humor, comparative analysis of sitcoms ENG-ITA, <i>South Park</i>
	Voce e visione: un'analisi sulla traduzione audiovisiva delle canzoni nel doppiaggio italiano di <i>My Little Pony: L'amicizia è magica</i>	2025	Audiovisual translation, song translation, dubbing, linguistic, musical, and visual semiotic analysis, <i>My Little Pony: L'amicizia è magica</i>

