

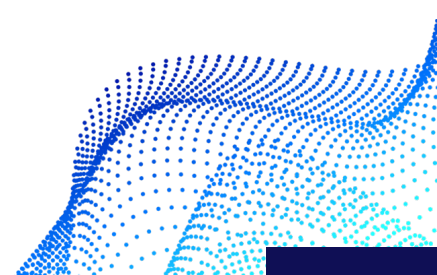


Multilingualism and Language Biases in Research Assessment

Questionnaire to CNR scientific community

September 26, 2024

Ginevra Peruginelli & Sebastiano Faro



Questionnaire information: target audience and aim

Questionnaire addressed to the **Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche [National Research Council of Italy] (CNR) research community.**



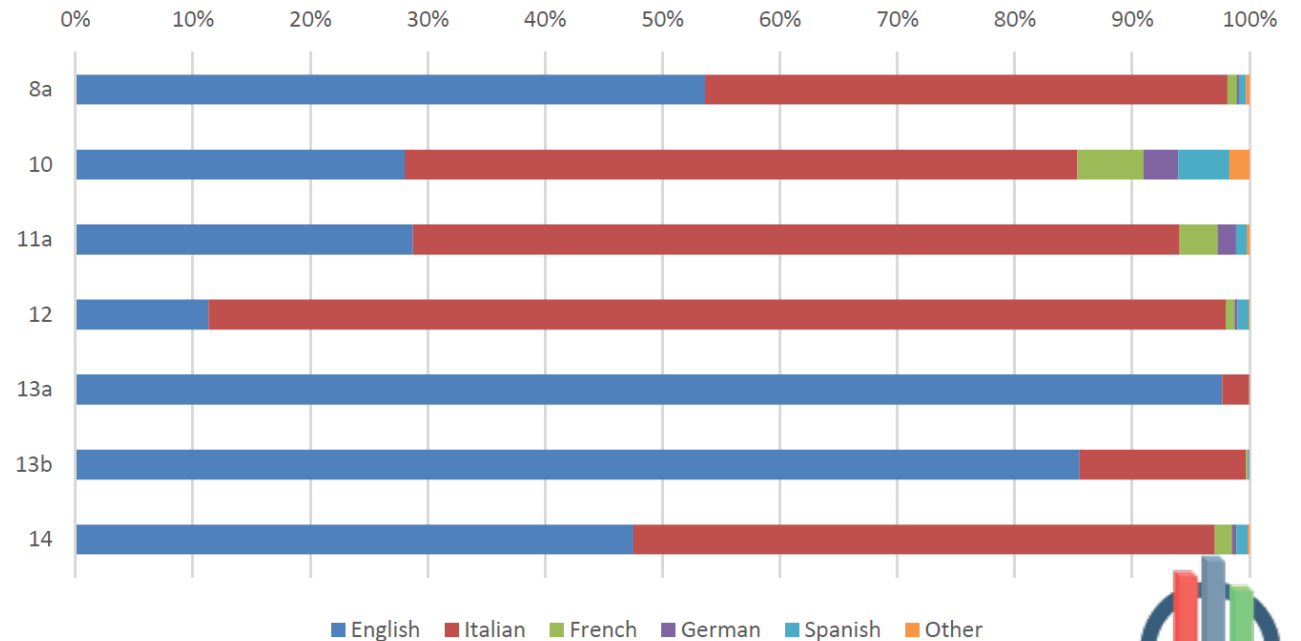
The CNR is Italy's **largest public research institution**, dedicated to advancing scientific knowledge across various fields. It fosters interdisciplinary collaboration and innovation.

Objective: **Investigate perceptions and reactions to multilingualism and language biases in scientific research within the CNR community.**

The context: Italian Research Evaluation Assessment (VQR)

- In the last VQR 2015–2019 carried out by ANVUR the number of products submitted for evaluation by universities and research institutes participating in the VQR was 182.648
- In PE+LS areas, almost all research products are written in English
- In SH, a considerable share of products is written in Italian, with significant portions in other languages

SSH areas: language of publication of the research products submitted in the Italian VQR exercise



Source: Critical analysis of VQR 2015-2019 results. Edited by the Research Quality Assessment Organizational Unit and the Third Mission Organizational Unit

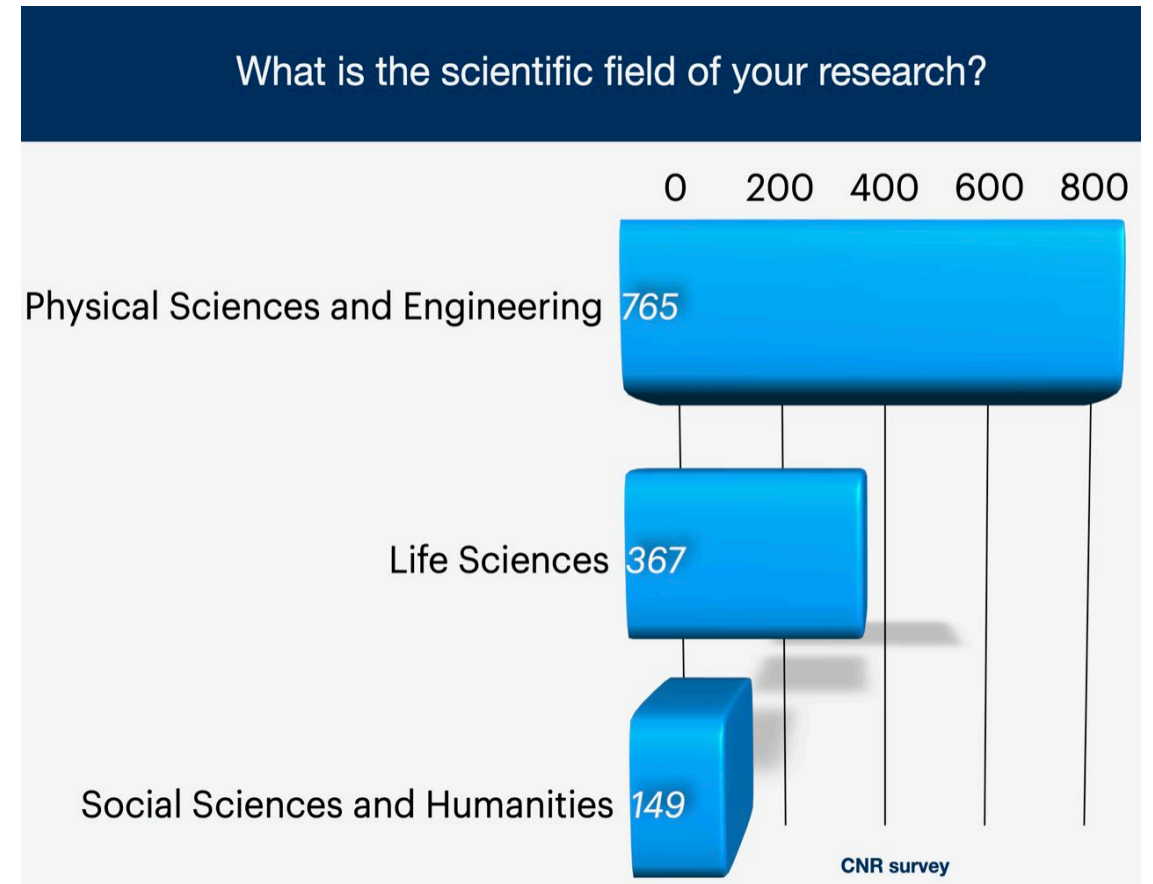
Survey participation overview

A total of **6,833** CNR staff invited
910 people responded (**13,3%**)

SH community represents around **9%** of the total of CNR personnel, while in our survey it represents **13%**.

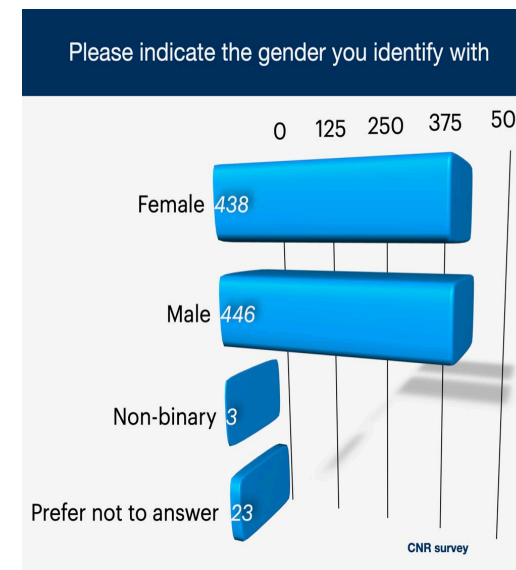
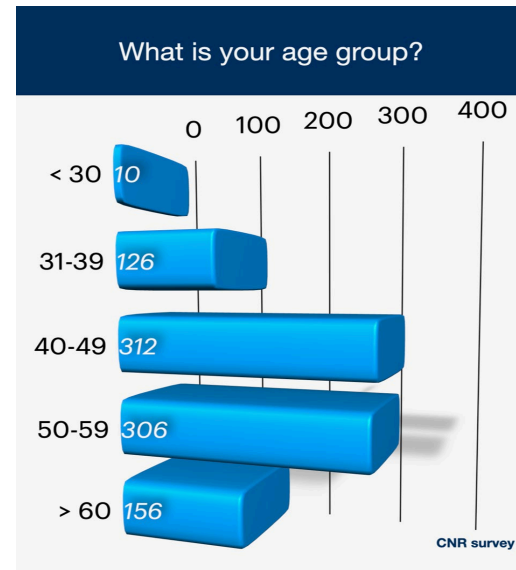
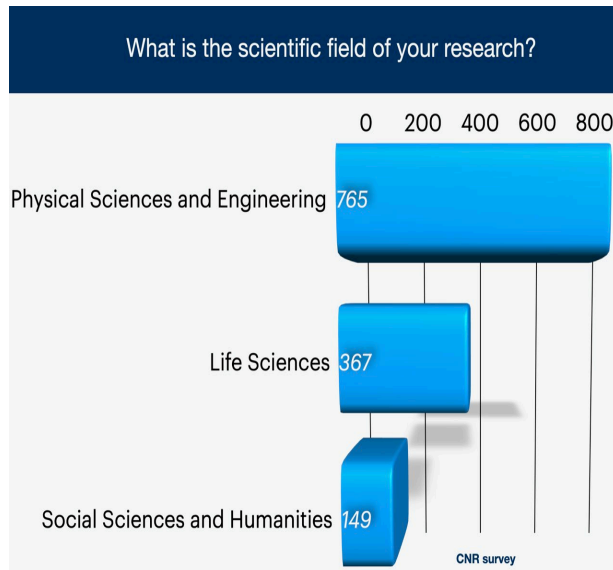
Interdisciplinarity:

- 80 respondents are affiliated with PE + LS.
- 43 respondents are affiliated with PE + SH.
- 6 respondents are affiliated with LS + SH.



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The questionnaire structure

Questionario in tema di Multilinguismo e pregiudizi linguistici nella valutazione della ricerca

CoARA è la [Coalizione per l'avanzamento della valutazione della ricerca](#), di cui fanno parte università, enti finanziatori, autorità nazionali e regionali e società scientifiche e di ricercatori che hanno firmato l'[Accordo sulla Riforma della Valutazione della Ricerca \(ARRA\)](#). CoARA include le organizzazioni coinvolte nel processo di valutazione della ricerca per facilitare lo scambio di informazioni e buone pratiche e avviare una riforma complessiva del sistema di valutazione della ricerca. Il Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche (CNR) che ha firmato l'ARRA è anche co-coordinatore del Capitolo Italiano di CoARA.

Il questionario qui proposto è stato sviluppato dall'[Istituto di Informatica Giuridica e Sistemi Giudiziari \(IGSG-CNR\)](#) che fa parte del gruppo di lavoro CoARA "Multilingualism and Language Biases in Research Assessment" e tecnicamente realizzato dall'[Istituto di Ricerche sulla Popolazione e le Politiche Sociali \(IRPPS-CNR\)](#). Si tratta del primo passo per esplorare la percezione del multilinguismo nelle pratiche di ricerca nei vari settori scientifici; destinato alla comunità scientifica del CNR, mira a indagare come la diversità linguistica sia percepita nelle attività di ricerca e nella loro valutazione.

Indicazioni per la compilazione del questionario

Il questionario considera l'italiano come lingua di riferimento per gli intervistati. In particolare, le domande hanno per oggetto le attività di ricerca svolte dalle ricercatrici e ricercatori e includono diverse competenze quali la redazione di testi, l'interazione orale, la lettura/studio, l'insegnamento e la comunicazione/di-vulgazione dei risultati della ricerca.

Trattamento dei dati personali

Il questionario è anonimo e non si richiedono informazioni che consentano l'identificazione del partecipante. Se è stato usato un codice di accesso per accedere a quest'indagine, questo codice non sarà registrato assieme alle risposte fornite. Il codice partecipante è gestito in un database diverso e viene aggiornato soltanto per indicare se è stata completata (o no) l'indagine. Non c'è nessun modo per abbinare i codici di accesso alle risposte all'indagine. I dati raccolti e la loro analisi in forma aggregata saranno pubblicati su Zenodo.

Vi ringraziamo per l'aiuto che vorrete dare a questa indagine!

Sections

Introductory questions

Section A: Linguistic behaviors in research activities

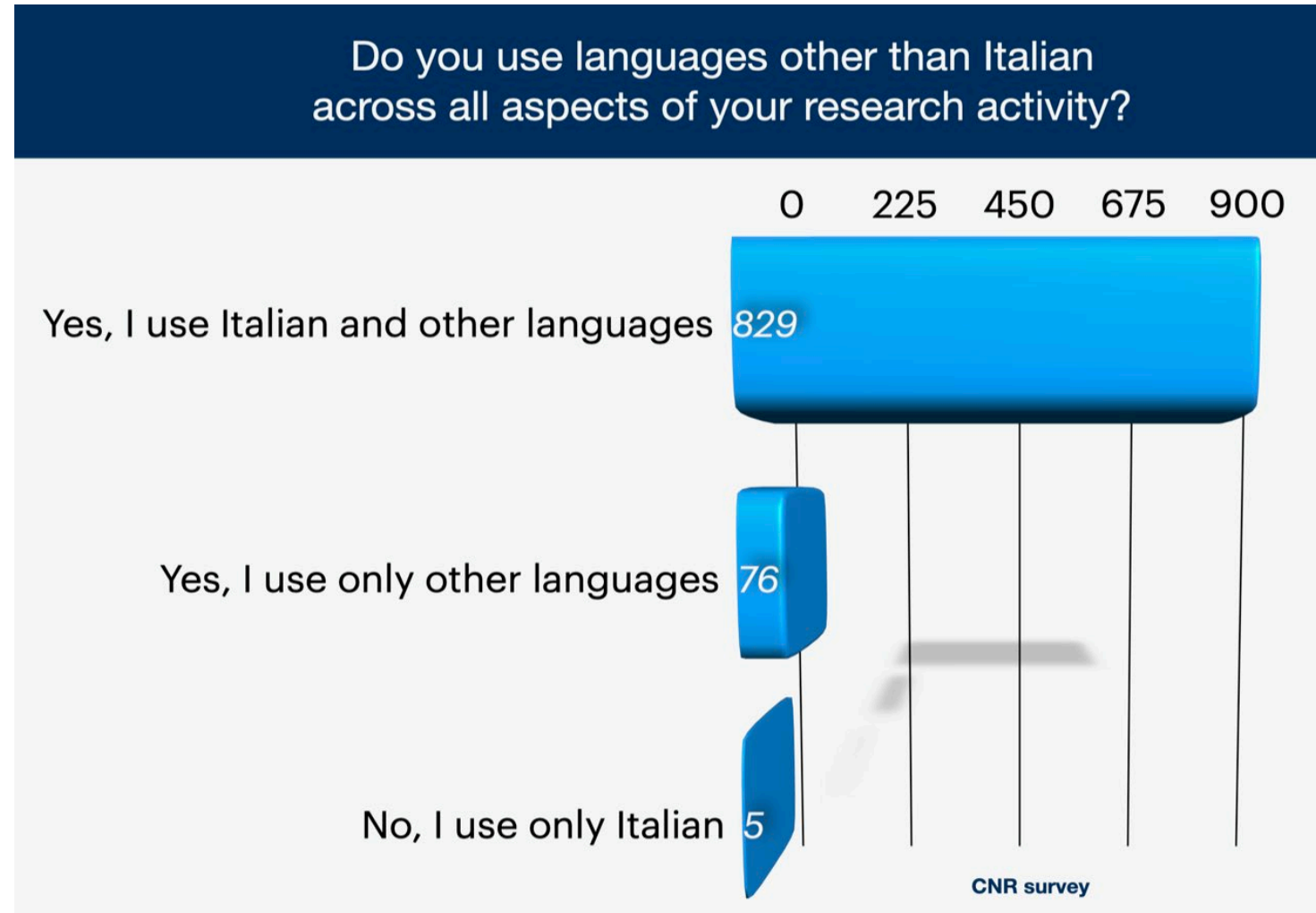
Section B: Tools and services

Section C: The use of English language

Section D: Perceptions of the research community on issues related to multilingualism

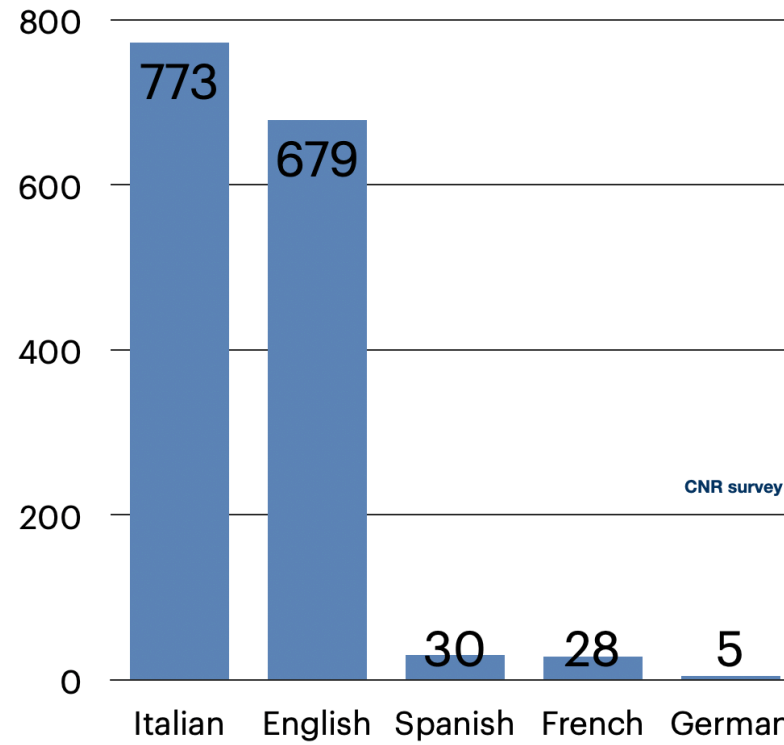
Use of non-Italian languages in research activities: practices and barriers

- Only 5 researchers use exclusively Italian, mainly in Social Sciences (3 in Humanities and 2 in Law)



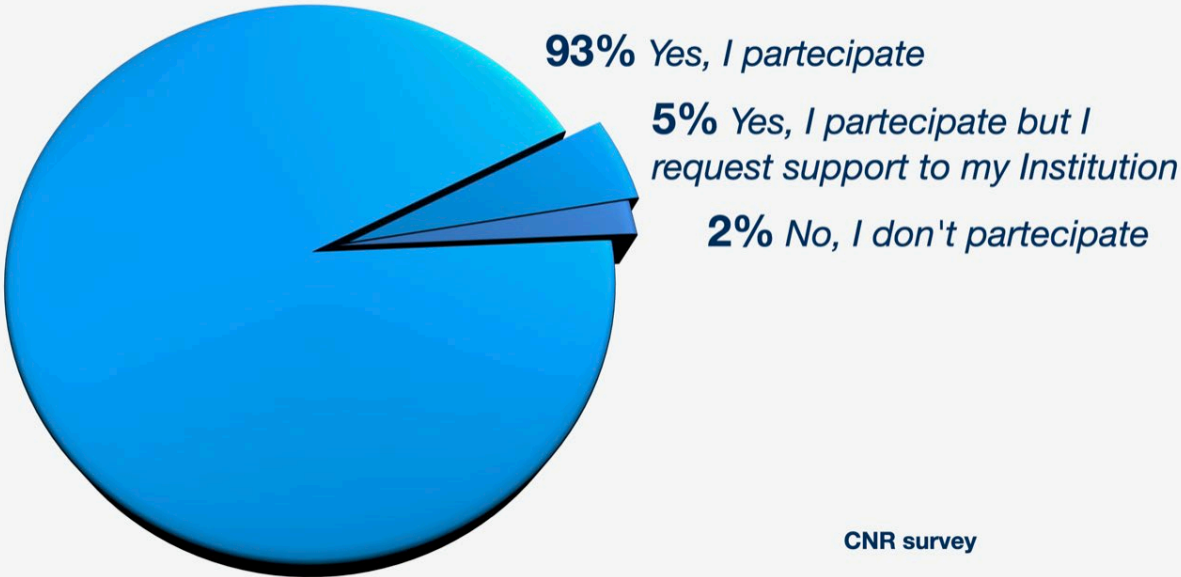
Languages used in oral outreach activities

When you engage in outreach activities, which language(s) do you use for your oral communication activity [presentation, discussion]?

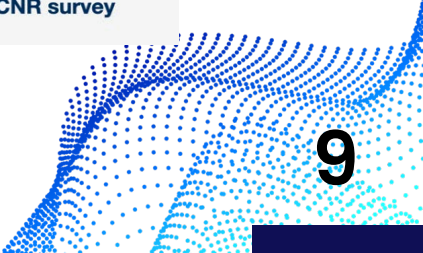
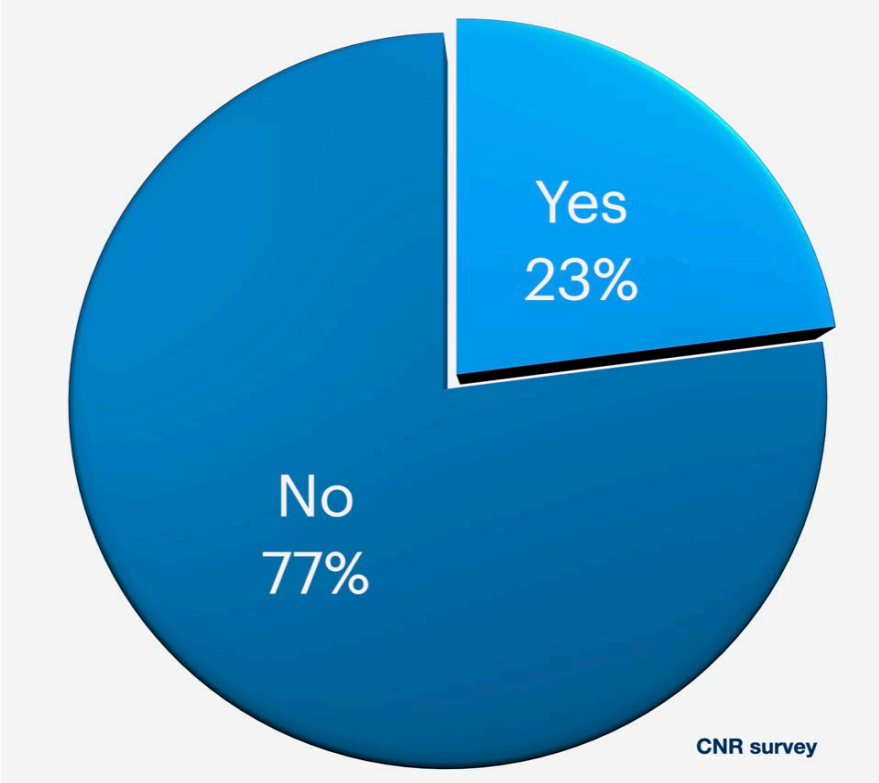


Impact of language barriers on participation in bids and grants

Do you participate in bids and grants when the use of a language other than Italian is required?

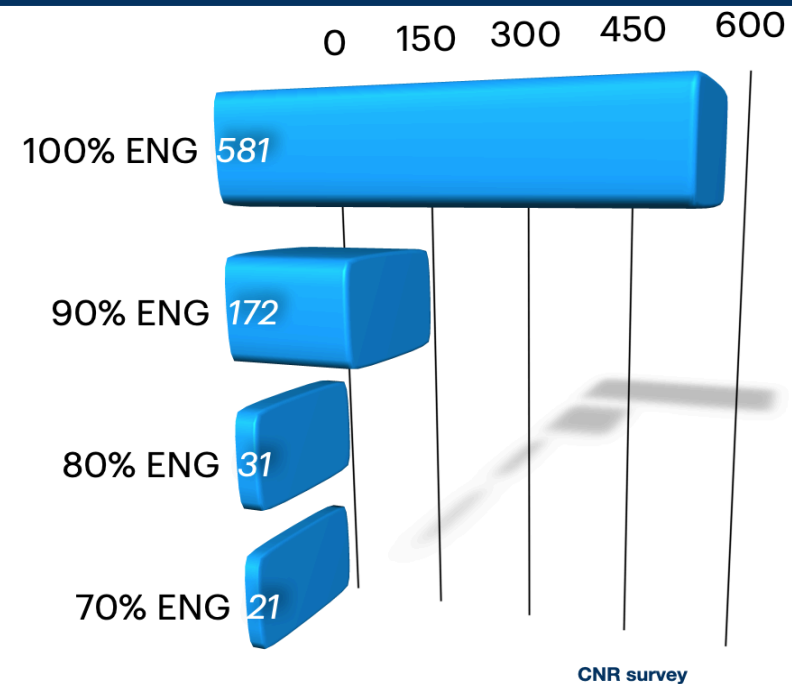


Do you feel disadvantaged when you are required to submit a bid or grant application in a language other than Italian?



Distribution of peer-reviewed manuscripts by language

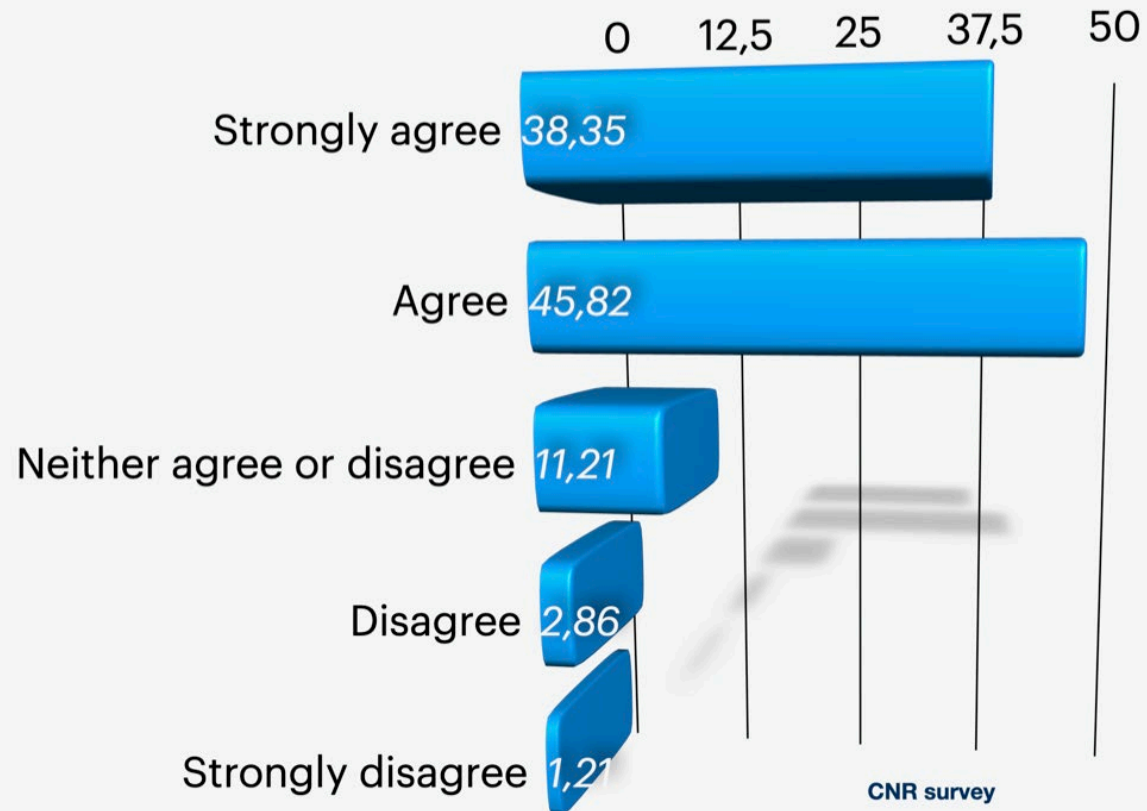
How would you describe the distribution of your peer-reviewed manuscripts throughout your career, distinguishing between those in English and those in languages other than English?



- 100% + 90% English: majority from LS and PE sectors

Academic freedom and use of languages

I acknowledge that using languages other than one's own may present challenges, but I view it as an opportunity for intellectual growth and global collaboration, rather than a threat to academic freedom



Some free comments: critical issues

I am concerned that the choice of multilingualism may risk **isolating** both research works and researchers, **rather than enhancing** their visibility in the international arena.

We hope that future advancements in AI will enable reliable translation from Chinese; otherwise, the **emergence of two scientific and technological lingua francas in a bifurcated world could place the West at a significant disadvantage.**

In Italy, the **limited presence of international researchers** diminishes the daily need for English, reducing its potential as a tool for professional growth. This issue also affects foreigners learning Italian, which can deter short-term stays due to the need to learn an additional language.

The choice of language in publications often reflects a **survival strategy for researchers, essential for accessing prestigious funding opportunities.** Over the past thirty years, publications in Italian and other languages have significantly declined.

Additionally, interactions with **native English-speaking** colleagues can be challenging due to **disparities in skills.** Their lack of awareness regarding the difficulties faced by non-native speakers further complicates collaboration.

THANK YOU!

Ginevra Peruginelli & Sebastiano Faro (IGSG-CNR)

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