



Title of Project:

English-medium Instruction in French Higher Education:
Competing Ideologies, Policies and Practices

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Project Summary:

In 2013, a law (known as the 'Fioraso law') was passed in France intending to facilitate EMI in French universities. This controversial measure immediately sparked passionate debates in Parliament and the media. While on the surface this announcement signifies a historical shift in French language policy, a closer analysis signals a more complex picture.

My research examines language policy trajectories and the related processes of policy creation, interpretation and appropriation. By conducting a case study of the University of Grenoble, the goal is ultimately to understand how the Fioraso law has been locally recontextualised.

The first part focuses on the drafting process of the policy by studying the parliamentary debates and textual transformations of the law. Through discourse analysis and interviews with policy makers I highlight the sensitive issues and recurring topics that surfaced during the EMI debate.

The second part aims to investigate the processes of interpretation and appropriation involved in local enactment. In-depth interviews were conducted with key university administrators and EMI professors to understand some of their practical and ideological concerns. Classroom observation enabled me to gain insight into how EMI courses were delivered.

By presenting a multi-layered analysis of the Fioraso law I portray the discrepancies between the official discourse, institutional policies and actual practices. Few studies have so far empirically explored the contentious debate about the place of English in French higher education. The way in which English is negotiated alongside a discourse promoting French reflects some of these tensions.