

Bibliography of Italian Studies in Poland: Project Description and Statistics

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Résumé de l'article

The aim of the Bibliography of Italian Studies in Poland (BISP) project is to create a complete database of scientific publications written by scholars employed by Italian studies departments of Polish higher education institutions. This article presents a detailed description of the project and the results of a thorough bibliographic analysis of the publications included in BISP, which encompasses texts from three disciplines: linguistics, literary studies, and cultural and religious studies. The analyzed data concern the publications of Italian studies researchers who are currently active at Polish universities: 149 monographs, 113 edited volumes, 1,151 journal articles, and 1,415 chapters in collected monographs—a total of 2,828 publications, written by 145 authors. Our objective is to identify any discernible trends in terms of publishing research results by the analyzed group of researchers.

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BIBLIOGRAPHY OF ITALIAN STUDIES IN POLAND: PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND STATISTICS*

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Abstract: The aim of the Bibliography of Italian Studies in Poland (BISP) project is to create a complete database of scientific publications written by scholars employed by Italian studies departments of Polish higher education institutions. This article presents a detailed description of the project and the results of a thorough bibliographic analysis of the publications included in BISP, which encompasses texts from three disciplines: linguistics, literary studies, and cultural and religious studies. The analyzed data concern the publications of Italian studies researchers who are currently active at Polish universities: 149 monographs, 113 edited volumes, 1,151 journal articles, and 1,415 chapters in collected monographs—a total of 2,828 publications, written by 145 authors. Our objective is to identify any discernible trends in terms of publishing research results by the analyzed group of researchers.

Introduction

Publishing represents an essential element of scholarly practice. The primary aim of authors is to share their research results and enter into dialogue with the academic community. Scholars who study literatures and languages other than their native ones form a very interesting group in terms of readership profiling and research writing at the stage of both the development (the choice of language) and the publishing (the choice of how and where to publish) of articles and books. These researchers are faced with a range of problems. If a scholar does not write in English, their text is likely to be edited in their native language (*x*) or

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in the language of their research (y). The choice of language tends to be bound up with the place of publication, because a text in language x is not likely to be published outside the country of language x (unless x is an international/conference language), while access to a text written in language y and released by a local publisher may have difficulty circulating in the country of language x , with the readership of this text only including individuals who are speakers of language x with an interest in y . Consequently, for example, Maltese publications on the morphology of English are not to be expected, whereas, *au contraire*, studies on the morphology of Maltese published in English are accepted, or rather desired.¹

Research communication is undoubtedly a highly complex phenomenon, whether “to communicate” is taken to mean “to share information with others,” or whether it is supposed to mean “to talk about your thoughts [...] and help other people to understand them” (“Communicate,” def. 1a and 1b). In the former sense, communication primarily means all the modes of reporting research findings (publications) and, in the latter, covers experience sharing, the organization of scholarly events (e.g., conferences, open lectures), and constructive critique—in brief, genuine academic discussion. Language studies disciplines, like all other disciplines, are known to encompass an array of coexisting, though dissimilar and sometimes divergent, paradigms.² Communication among adherents of different research schools can be thwarted by the Popperian myth of the framework (i.e., the view that a fruitful discussion is only possible within one paradigm),³ so the number of the potential discussants is often limited by the paradigm itself. Presumably, research on so-called niche subjects that is not communicated in an internationally recognized language and is published by a local publisher (rather than in a specialized journal or dedicated monograph) will simply fail to find its way into the hands of its intended readers. To return to the previous example, how many people can rationally be expected to read a Maltese text on the morphology of English as conceived from the cognitivist perspective?

¹ The domination of English in science and scholarship has already been widely studied; see, e.g., Lillis and Curry; Tardy.

² The multiplicity of linguistic discourses has been explored, for instance, by Bobrowski (107–22); for a discussion of paradigms in literary studies, see Waugh.

³ Popper’s notion of the framework is often juxtaposed with Kuhn’s paradigm; while the former highlights methodological motivations, the latter delves into the social conditions of research (Bobrowski 112).

Social factors in and aspects of scholarly practice are by definition studied by the sociology of science,⁴ which can be divided into a general sociology of science and sociologies of individual disciplines. In language studies, Polish researcher Aleksander Kiklewicz has proposed establishing a corresponding subdiscipline for linguistics, whereby he has observed that the “Teoria predykatów powinna uwzględniać instytucjonalną strukturę dyscypliny naukowej, jaką jest językoznawstwo, tzn. Działalność ośrodków badawczych, redakcji czasopism, rad i towarzystw, fundacji popierania nauki, centrów badawczych, instytucji państwowych i inn.” (“theory of paradigms should take into account the institutional structure of linguistics as a scholarly discipline, that is, the operations of research facilities, editorial boards of journals, councils and societies, foundations for the support of scholarship, research centres, state institutions and others”; 35).⁵ Kiklewicz argues that to examine this group of factors in linguistic research should be the responsibility of the sociology of linguistics (or the sociology of linguistic knowledge or of language sciences),⁶ and that such a discipline should undertake, among its other pursuits, a bibliometric investigation of linguistic publications (35).⁷ Such an investigation is what we will offer further in this article.

⁴ The traditional questions asked in and by the sociology of science are: “How did this unique tradition of modern science emerge and become institutionalized? How is it maintained and controlled? How is research organized? What determines changes in scientific organization, and how are these changes related to research?” (Ben-David and Sullivan 203).

⁵ All translations are our own.

⁶ The term “sociology of linguistics” was earlier used in Polish linguistics by Tomasz Zarycki to depict a critical analysis of the discourse of linguistics. In Zarycki’s view, the critical sociology of linguistics should “ujawnić nieoczywiste, polityczne uwarunkowania reguł posługiwania się językiem opisywane, czy też raczej często tworzone, a przynajmniej legitymizowane przez językoznawstwo” (“reveal latent political factors behind the rules of language use that linguistics describes and often establishes or at least legitimizes”; 62–63).

⁷ Other responsibilities of the sociology of linguistics enumerated by Kiklewicz include the examination of the themes and content of journals, conferences, and PhD and habilitation dissertations; the analysis of grant politics (e.g., themes of grant-winning projects); the scrutiny of the publications of scholarly authority figures—that is, authors boasting the highest research performance rates (such as h-index); and the inspection of university and other curricula (42). The sociology of linguistics is one of the meta-linguistic disciplines, besides the history, philosophy, and methodology of linguistics and the critique of linguistic texts (see Słapek 14–24). In a narrow understanding, meta-linguistics is dedicated to the critique of linguistic ideas and texts (Żmigrodzki).

Reliable bibliometric research requires extensive and, in the first place, complete bibliographic repositories and databases. Such a comprehensive scientific bibliography is being developed for Italian studies in Poland, and an initial analysis of its current status is presented here.

The Bibliography of Italian Studies in Poland

The Bibliography of Italian Studies in Poland: Digital Repository, Text Digitization, Bibliometrics (BISP) is a project that is currently being implemented at the Jagiellonian University as part of its Excellence Initiative program in the DigiWorld priority research area. The project's three-fold aims are

1. to compile a complete research bibliography of Italian studies in Poland in the form of an open-access digital repository, with the data in CSV, BibLaTeX, and RDF formats, as those can be handled by most spreadsheets and reference management tools (such as, for example, Zotero);
2. to digitize research publications of Italian studies scholars affiliated with the Jagiellonian University and make them available on the project website (the website will also include DOIs and links to numerous publications by authors from other universities, providing access to their texts as well); and
3. to carry out a bibliometric analysis of the data.

These pursuits are aligned with the field of digital humanities and involve the digital study of language and literature (and, on the meta-scientific level, reflection on the study of Italian language, literature, and culture), the qualitative and quantitative analysis of data, the establishment of a digital archive of cultural heritage (in this case, a bibliographic database), and the development of tools for the achievement of goals consistent with the DigiWorld research area.⁸

In line with the underlying ideas and goals of the Excellence Initiative program, the BISP project is (1) innovative, (2) interdisciplinary, and (3) possessed of an international potential, three features highly relevant in today's world. In terms of innovation, the project undertakes what has not been done before—specifically,

⁸ For a comprehensive overview of the Excellence Initiative, see <https://id.uj.edu.pl>, and on the DigiWorld research area, see <https://id.uj.edu.pl/digiworld>.

a bibliometric analysis of the totality of research publications in a selected discipline⁹ on the macro level (i.e., for the entire country; cf. Raan 21). As an additional innovative aspect, we propose a bibliometric analysis model for modern language studies (neophilological) publications that takes into account the interrelatedness of the language of publication and the place of publication. In terms of interdisciplinarity, the study will encompass all the publications by Polish Italian studies scholars, which means texts embedded in three disciplines (linguistics, literary studies, and cultural and religious studies). Additionally, this study has a meta-scientific level to it, as it employs statistics to investigate philological sciences. In terms of its international potential, the BISP project is being implemented with a view to founding a Bibliography of Global Italian Studies for all the interested Italian studies hubs across the world.

The publications included in the bibliography meet three basic criteria: (1) publication type: monographs, edited volumes, journal articles, or chapters in collected monographs; (2) Polish affiliation of the writer; and (3) subject matter: the texts broadly concern Italian studies (e.g., language, literature, contrastive studies) and theory (e.g., general linguistics, literary theory).

Statistics

The analysis covers publications by professionally and academically active authors; that is, those who (1) were employed or PhD candidates at a Polish higher education institution (HEI) in 2021; and (2) have published on their research in Italian studies in the last three years (our assumption is that authors without publications of this kind are not currently employed as research workers or only engage with Italian studies incidentally). The analysis includes a total of 2,828 publications by 145 authors: 149 monographs, 113 edited volumes, 1,151 journals articles, and 1,415 chapters in collected monographs. The first analysis of the data, which only covered texts on Italian linguistics and literary studies produced between 2000 and 2020, was published elsewhere (Słapek and Biernacka-Licznar). The data presented in this article are more extensive because they concern the entire bibliography.

Our examination below takes into consideration each of the following:

⁹ At this point, we use the term *discipline* in its conventional meaning in reference to Italian studies.

1. The language in which a given text was published: Italian (IT), Polish (PL), or other.
2. The place of publication: Italy (IT), Poland (PL), or other.
3. Possible authorial collaboration: texts by one author/editor (1), and text produced collaboratively (≥ 2).
4. Affiliation: internal (Int.), if a text was published by the institution with which it is affiliated; external (Ext.), if a text was published by another institution; and local (Loc.), if a text was published by an institution based in the same city as the institution with which the author is affiliated, or if the editor of the volume/journal containing the text is employed by the same institution as the author of the text.

On this last point, since all the authors have Polish affiliations, the texts published abroad should by definition have an external affiliation; however, it does sometimes happen that a Polish Italian studies scholar is invited to be a guest editor of a foreign journal or of a multi-author monograph, with such cases considered in a separate part of our analysis. The figures below contain microdata, whereas our commentary offers calculations of percentages and proportions (cf. Słapek and Biernacka-Licznar).

For books, there are two major languages: Italian (50.3% of single-author monographs and 50.4% of edited volumes) and Polish (45% of single-author monographs and 23.9% of edited volumes), where the texts have mostly been published by Polish publishers (82.6% of single-author monographs and 68.1% of edited volumes). The proportion of multi-author monographs containing contributions in various languages is relatively considerable—twelve collections (10.6% include texts in Italian and Polish; they are put in the “other” category¹⁰—while books published in Italy are rather scarce in the bibliography (12.1% of single-author monographs and 15.9% of edited volumes).¹¹ Multi-author monographs stand out against the other categories in having largely been collaboratively co-edited (61.1%)¹² and published outside of the editors’ affiliations (60.2%). The detailed microdata are presented in figure 1.

¹⁰ Thirteen collections also contain texts in other languages; four collections have been published in English.

¹¹ Three collections have been published jointly by an Italian and a Polish publisher; similarly, three volumes have been published in Italian–French collaborations.

¹² In most cases, co-authors and co-editors are affiliated with one HEI.

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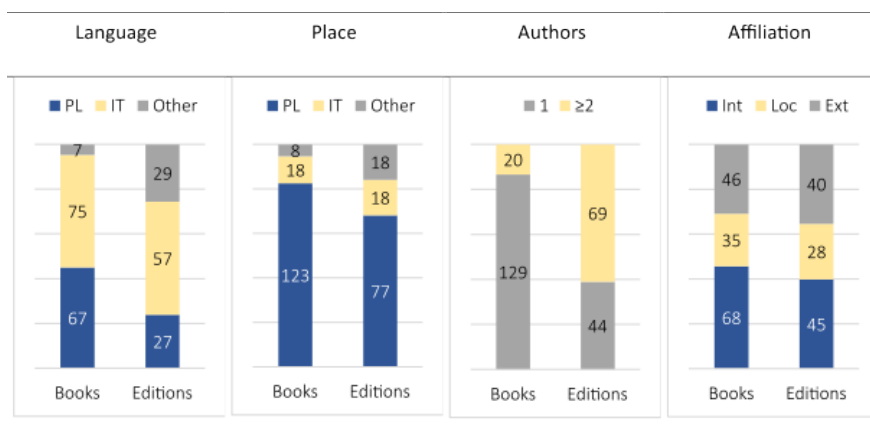


Figure 1. Microdata on single-author monographs and edited volumes.

Most of the books published in Poland (205 items; i.e., 78.2% of all the books) have been released by university presses or in collaboration with them (120 items; i.e.; 58.5% of this category). The most frequently appearing Polish, non-university academic publishers are based in the same cities as the HEIs with which the authors/editors of the publications are affiliated (five out of twenty-nine such publishers have published 55% of all items in this category).¹³ Most of the books published outside of Poland have been released in Italy or in collaboration with Italian publishers (40 items from twenty-nine publishers; i.e., 15.2% of all the books). Only three foreign publishers have released five or more books.¹⁴

In recent years, there has been a noticeable trend towards the internationalization of book publishing. Even if publications released in Poland still dominate, they are increasingly being published abroad (in 2016, international publications accounted for 55%). The curves in figure 2 show the percentage ratio of publications released in Poland, Italy, and other countries since 2000 (the number of publications released in prior years did not exceed two books annually). Under

¹³ These publishers are Universitas Press, DiG Publishing, Collegium Columbinum, Księgarnia Akademicka, and Sempre, which collectively published a total of forty-four books, forty of which are labelled as “Loc.”

¹⁴ These are German publisher Peter Lang (which has its supporting office in Warsaw), and Italian publishers Aracne and Franco Cesati (they have published a total of twenty-five books).

the curve representing publications in Poland, numerical values are provided for each year.¹⁵

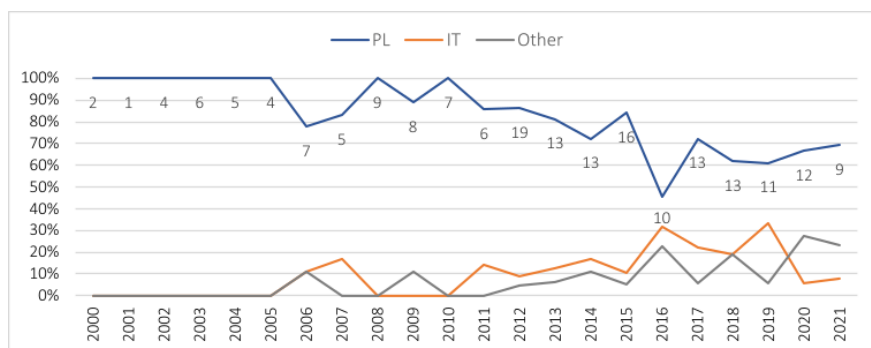


Figure 2. The place of publication for monographs: a percentage ratio.

Similarly, in the category of “short” texts, publications in Italian (64.8% of journal articles and 62.7% of chapters) and Polish (respectively, 27.1% and 30.2%) released in Poland are dominant (75.7% of journal articles and 59.2% of chapters; in Italy, respectively, 14.2% and 26.3%).¹⁶ Texts in English are relatively rare (a total of 109 items; i.e., 4.2%),¹⁷ as are co-authored short texts (3.9%). The number of publications released outside of locations with which the authors are affiliated is increasing, but internal publications still account for a considerable proportion of the texts: 36.2% of papers and 20.8% of chapters. For the publications released in Poland alone, the percentage of internal texts is even higher: 47.5% of journal articles and 32% of chapters. As many as 13.7% of foreign short publications are classified as locally affiliated publications, meaning that the editors of the volumes in which the texts appear come from the same HEIs as their authors. The detailed microdata are shown in figure 3.

¹⁵ To make the figure clearer, no numerical microdata are given in the curves representing foreign (Italian and other) publications.

¹⁶ The countries in which ten or more texts have been published are (1) for journal articles: Czechia, 24; France, 16; Spain, 11; Slovakia, 11; and (2) for chapters in collected monographs: Germany, 43; Spain, 36; Croatia, 14; France, 13; Belgium, 10. Twenty-one texts have been published in multi-author monographs released by international publisher Peter Lang.

¹⁷ The fourth most frequent language is French, with sixty-one published articles and chapters (which accounts for 2.4% of “short” texts).

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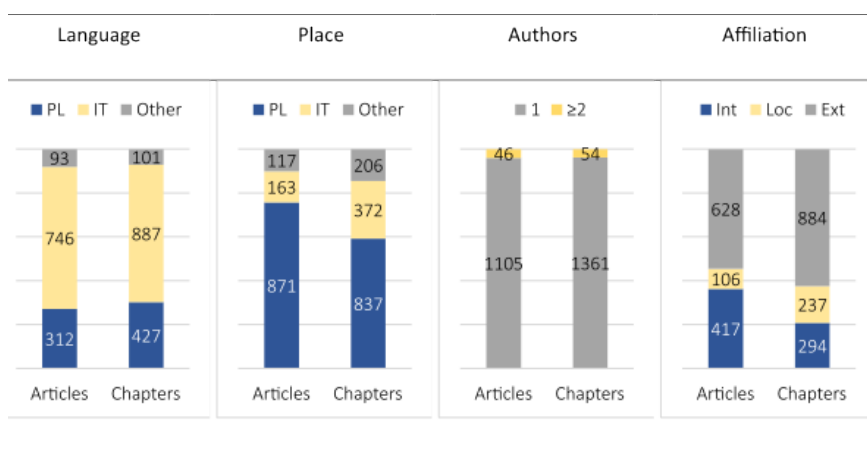


Figure 3. General data on journal articles and chapters in collected monographs.

The percentage ratio of journal articles and chapters across years is presented in figure 4 (the figure only includes data from 1997 on, because the number of previously released short publications is lower than ten in BISP). The data suggest that the metric values vary widely and do not warrant charting any consistent, periodical changes. For example, there has been no observable increase in the number of journal articles as compared to chapters in collected monographs since the coming into force of the ministerial regulations on the assessment of research performance that put more value on the former kind of publications.

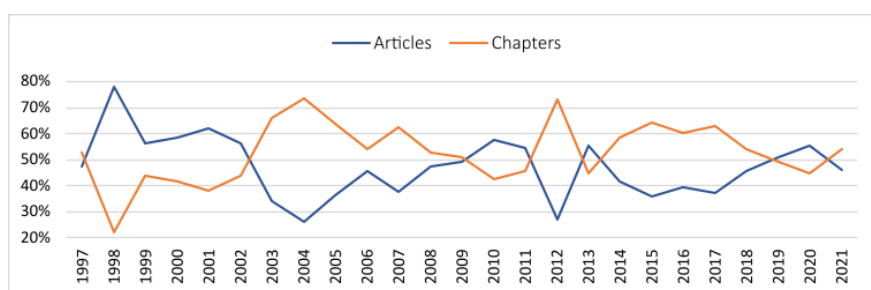


Figure 4. The ratio of journal articles and chapters in collected monographs.

As stated above, a significant portion of short texts has been published in Poland. The proportion of these texts compared with foreign publications (both Italian and others) over the past two decades is shown in figure 5 (for journal articles) and figure 6 (for chapters in collected monographs), with both figures including the numerical microdata per year below the curve representing the Polish publications. The figures include the statistics for 2000–20, as the number of articles and chapters published prior to this timeframe is less than ten, while the index of publications released in 2021 may still be incomplete. For book chapters, the tendency for the percentage of foreign publications to increase has been observable since 2014, with their proportion oscillating around 50% today.

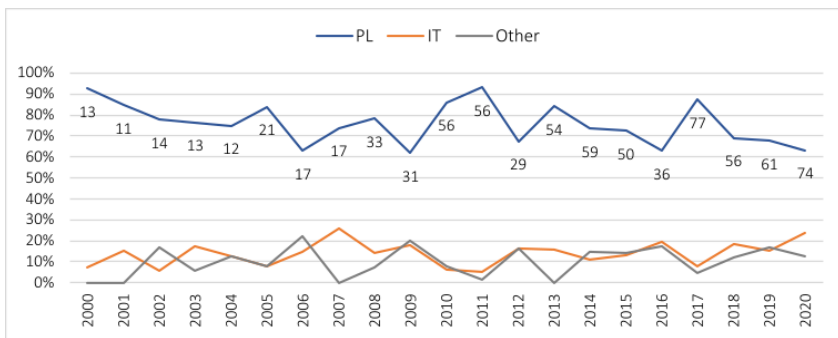


Figure 5. The place of publication of journal articles: percentage ratio.

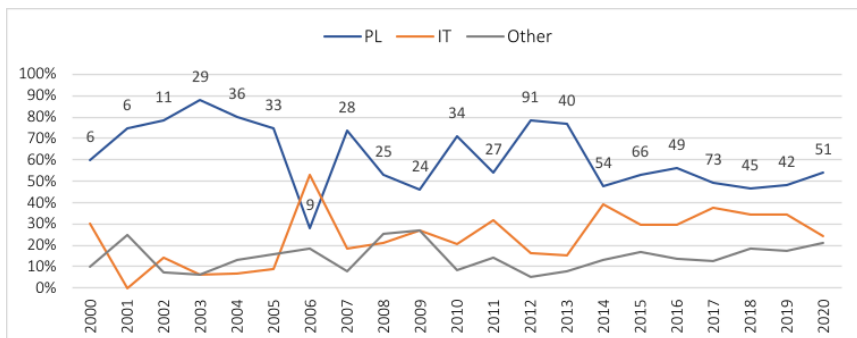


Figure 6. The place of publication of chapters in collected monographs: percentage ratio.

For the articles published in Poland, there is a group of journals in which the authors of the texts under study tend to communicate their research findings. In fact, more than half of all the texts in this category (51.6%) have been published by as few as nine out of a total of 151 journals.¹⁸ Notably, however, journals in this group first and foremost include the publications labelled as “Int.,” which account for up to 83% of all publications in a given journal.¹⁹ In this group, *Italica Wratislaviensia* (76%) and *Studi Polacco-Italiani di Toruń* (65%) are the only journals where in articles by external authors prevail.

Merely three out of seventy-six Italian journals and five out of sixty other foreign journals in which the articles listed in BISP have appeared contain texts by five or more Polish Italian studies scholars. Like in Polish journals, the texts are largely labelled as “Int.,” which means that the guest editor of a given issue comes from the same HEI as the author of the paper.²⁰

Conclusion

Research carried out in modern language studies is rooted in (at least) two traditions of scholarship: that of the authors’ respective home countries, and that of the language/literature they study. The data presented above imply that the authors of the publications analyzed in this article have not adopted any consistent publishing strategy, so to speak. On the one hand, their texts are predominantly written in Italian (and thus presuppose an Italian or Italian-speaking readership), but on the other hand, they are mostly published in Poland and quite often locally (given an author’s affiliation relative to the place of publication or to the affiliation of the

¹⁸ The nine journals are *Kwartalnik Neofilologiczny*, *Italica Wratislaviensia*, *Acta Philologica*, *Studia Romanica Posnaniensia*, *Romanica Cracoviensia*, *Neophilologica*, *Romanica Silesiana*, *Studia de Cultura: Annales Universitatis Paedagogicae Cracoviensis*, and *Studi Polacco-Italiani di Toruń*, with a total of 450 articles between them.

¹⁹ *Acta Philologica* is a journal with fifty-four articles published, forty-five of which are labelled as “Loc.” Importantly, since only Italian studies texts are considered here, this does not mean that a given journal mostly publishes authors with internal affiliations.

²⁰ Italian journals: *Studi Italiani di Linguistica Teorica e Applicata*, *Nuova corrente: Rivista di letteratura e filosofia*, and *PL.IT: Rassegna Italiana di Argomenti Polacchi* (a total of twenty articles, fifteen labelled as “Loc.”). Other non-Polish journals: *Études romanes de Brno*, *Studia Scientifica Facultatis Paedagogicae Universitas Ružomberok*, *Rivista di Studi Italiani*, *Narrativa: Nuova Serie*, and *Cuadernos de Filología Italiana* (a total of thirty-seven articles, seven labelled as “Loc.”).

editor of the volume in which the text appears). Of course, having a text published in Poland is not necessarily an obstacle to the international dissemination of research findings. Today, access to research publications is promoted by numerous databases, digital libraries, and the open-access system. However, locally published texts with no open-access option are still at risk of having their readerships severely limited.

For the texts included in BISP, certain trends can be identified in the publishing of research results by the analyzed group of researchers:

1. Monographs were primarily published by Polish university presses.
2. Most edited volumes were edited by several editors and published outside the editors' affiliation(s); this reflects the nature of these texts, as they are largely conference proceedings published as peer-reviewed thematic monographs.
3. Chapters in collected monographs are the type of text with the highest, though not predominant, percentage of externally affiliated and foreign publications. These data may suggest that most chapters in multi-author monographs are, in fact, part of conference proceedings.
4. Journal articles usually appear in Polish journals published by the universities where the authors of the texts work.
5. Journal articles published in international Italian studies journals outside of Poland and Italy are the rarest kind of text.

The explorations presented above are of a meta-scientific nature. Bibliography is a basis for a detailed analysis of an academic discipline, which makes it possible to show selected aspects of research activity (publications) in a specific academic system. In addition to helping analyze the formal structure of scholarly publications, bibliometrics can provide an overview of any discipline, indicating whether preferred thematic foci, long-term projects, or salient (often cited) authorities are noticeable in a given field. We hope the results of our research will have an impact on the actual publishing practices of Italian studies scholars (encouraging publishing in international journals dedicated to Italian studies) and that BISP will increase the visibility of the publications included in it, not only among Polish scholars of literature and language but also in the wider international academic community. We believe that our project can facilitate international collaboration, promote new research initiatives, and support the establishment of new research teams. In the long run, the Bibliography of Italian Studies in Poland project is

designed to initiate a series of national bibliographies, thanks to which the rich heritage of Italian studies will become a common treasure.

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