

## ITALY AND XENOPHOBIA: THE CASE OF 'GYPSIES' AND THE ITALIAN ATTITUDE TOWARDS FOREIGN PEOPLE

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### Abstract

Within the last decade there has been a growing number of immigrants in Italy, which has resulted in a series of issues regarding mainly illegal immigration. Integration seems to be very difficult to achieve due to several violent episodes involving foreign people. The Italian Government has enacted a series of laws to prevent illegal immigration but the Italian attitude towards foreigners and in particular towards 'gypsies' has given rise to several debates and widespread criticism mainly by foreign media and the European Union which has condemned Italy for being a xenophobic country.

The study presents a linguistic analysis of news reports in the British newspaper the *Guardian* and aims to investigate the role of the central modals SHOULD and WOULD. It also establishes rhetorical analogies, taking into account the Italian Government's decisions and the European approach towards the phenomenon of immigration which include conventions, treaties, directives, programmes and laws. It considers why and how this new Italian identity, reminding us of an historical analogy, has been created and developed, taking into account the data of the Italian *Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione* and the work of 'Opera Nomadi'. 'Opera Nomadi' is a public association whose duty is to create better conditions of life for the Italian nomadic people and to guarantee their rights to life, study and work facilitating their linguistic communication, since language represents an important obstacle for a full integration.

In 2006 the 'Osservatorio nazionale per l'integrazione degli alunni stranieri e la loro integrazione' (National observatory for integration of foreign students), was created in order to enable collection of data about the integration of foreign students. On 23 October 2007, the document 'La via italiana per la scuola interculturale e l'integrazione degli alunni stranieri', (The Italian way for an intercultural school and integration of foreign students), was drafted. It contains important data on actions and activities that have been implemented to achieve the full integration of foreign students, and helps us to develop a view of integration of foreigners in Italy.

The linguistic analysis is supported by WordSmith Tools 3.1 software (1998) and is based on critical discourse analysis and pragmatics.

**Key words:** Gypsies, media, integration, Italy, xenophobia.

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