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EC2U WP5 Conference, Sept. 1-3, 2026, University of Pavia

Virtual Institute of Quality Education (VIQE)

Dealing with Biases in Language and Culture: Interdisciplinary Perspectives

In an era where information is easily accessible and shared, the ability to critically assess information with respect to potential biases and misinformation is essential, particularly in a higher education setting. The conference aims to bring together researchers working on the pervasive presence of biases and misinformation in texts, (Wardle and Derakhshan, 2017) and on related practices and consequences in educational and professional contexts — from misleading headlines like “New study proves coffee cures cancer”, where sources are omitted and vague language is used (Rodrigo-Ginés et al 2024), to stereotypes such as “Elderly people are not interested in technology”, based on anti-elder prejudices (ageism) in cultural contexts (Fiske 2017).

Biases have a long tradition of study in psychology, intercultural studies, media studies, discourse studies and linguistics, among other fields. Recently, bias studies have proven essential in artificial intelligence, due to the tendency of large language models to inherit biases from their training data and amplify them through their technology; however, as noted by Blodgett et al. (2020), while AI studies have laid vital groundwork, many fail to critically engage with what constitutes bias in the first place. More generally, most authors do not engage with the relevant literature outside of their discipline, which constitutes a significant theoretical and methodological drawback.

Against this background, the conference encourages an interdisciplinary approach aiming to combine perspectives from linguistics, discourse studies, intercultural communication, psychology, cultural and literary studies, social and political sciences, and law, with the goal of uncovering common ground and finding synergies to study the phenomenon of biases, and foster the engagement of the academic community in promoting a critical information culture and awareness that safeguards accuracy and fairness, through appropriate dissemination actions and best-practices.

CONFERENCE TOPICS

Contribution from different fields is welcome. Relevant topics for the conference include, but are not limited to:

- Analysis of cultural biases, stereotypes, prejudices and clichés
- Bias taxonomies from different contexts and fields
- Linguistic markers (i.e., syntactic, pragmatic, etc.) of biased language
- Cognitive bias (also from an evolutionary perspective)
- Unintended (internalized) and unconscious bias
The role of biases in education and training
- Critical awareness of bias in digital and media literacy practices
- Bias, social interaction and social identities
- Counteracting bias: ongoing practices in educational and institutional contexts
- Biases in AI and Natural Language Processing tasks: detection, mitigation, measurement
- Ethics and fairness concerning different types of biases

ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

The conference will feature oral and poster presentations and a round table. The distribution of accepted contributions across both formats (oral presentation or poster) will in no way reflect the quality of the proposal, but will be based on the extent to which the content adapts to each format.

Proposals for oral presentations (between 3,000 and 4,000 characters, excluding references) must be submitted by **April 20th** to ec2u@unipv.it, with the subject line "**Bias 2026 Contribution Proposal**" in the email subject.

Proposals must be submitted in anonymized .pdf format, specifying the presentation format (oral presentation or poster). Notifications will be sent by **May 6th**.

CONFERENCE DATE AND VENUE

1-3 September, 2026

University of Pavia, Aula Bottigella, Palazzo San Tommaso, Piazza del Lino 2, Pavia

INVITED SPEAKERS

TBC

SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

Chair: Prof. Elisabetta Jezek, EC2U WP5 Representative, University of Pavia

Prof. Ilaria Fiorentini, University of Pavia

Prof. Clara Keating, University of Coimbra

Prof. Silvia Monti, University of Pavia

Prof. Christoph Vatter, University of Jena

LOCAL ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

Prof. Elisabetta Jezek

Prof. Ilaria Fiorentini
PhD Antonella Orologiaio
Dr. Costanza Marini
Dr. Serena Coschignano

References

- Blodgett, S.L. Barocas, S., Daumé III H. and H. Wallach. 2020. Language (Technology) is Power: A Critical Survey of "Bias" in NLP. In *Proceedings of the 58th Annual Meeting of the Association for Computational Linguistics*, pages 5454–5476, Online. Association for Computational Linguistics.
- Fiske, S. T. Prejudices in cultural contexts: Shared stereotypes (gender, age) versus variable stereotypes (race, ethnicity, religion). In *Perspectives on Psychological Science* 12 (2017) 791–799.
- Rodrigo-Ginés, F. J., Carrillo-de-Albornoz, J., & Plaza, L. (2024). A systematic review on media bias detection: What is media bias, how it is expressed, and how to detect it. In *Expert Systems with Applications*, 237, 121641.