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"Improvisation is not allowed in a second language": A survey of Italian lecturers' concerns about teaching their subjects through English

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Abstract: English-medium instruction (EMI) is increasingly being introduced not only in universities in northern Europe but also in central and southern countries, such as Italy. However, the competences and concerns of the lecturers involved are not always considered when such developments are introduced, and support or training may not be offered. This paper reports on a survey on EMI to which 115 lecturers in a public university in northern Italy responded. The survey was carried out by the university's Language Centre as part of the LEAP (Learning English for Academic Purposes) Project, which was developed to support lecturers in EMI. The survey sought to identify what the lecturers perceived as their strengths and weakness in English, their concerns, and also their evaluations of the experience of teaching through English if they had any. The findings discussed in this paper shed light on the needs of lecturers who are involved in EMI, which relate to methodology as well as language issues. The implications of this for European university language centres intending to support EMI at their universities are discussed in the conclusion.

Keywords: English-medium instruction (EMI), internationalization, higher education needs analysis, academic staff training

1 Introduction

University lecturers are key players in the internationalization of higher education institutions and, as van der Werf (2012) has pointed out, they have to take on new tasks which require a series of different competences. For lecturers in

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non-English speaking countries, particularly in areas where English is not commonly used, such as many central and southern European countries, one of the most onerous tasks is teaching their subject through the medium of English (EMI). This paper reports on a survey to which 115 lecturers in a public university in northern Italy responded. Before discussing the findings, the paper provides a brief introduction to EMI and looks at the way English has been introduced into the Italian higher education system and at the University of Padova in particular.

Most studies on EMI have been carried out in universities which have a longer history of teaching through English, and which are located in countries where English is a more "integrated" foreign language, e.g. Denmark (Harder 2009), Finland (Mauranen 2006), Sweden (Söderlundh 2013), and The Netherlands (Wilkinson 2013). The Italian context is quite different, as English has only recently begun to be taught throughout primary and secondary education, and it is not commonly used outside school (European Commission 2012). This article considers the needs of EMI lecturers in a single large Italian public university, thus responding to the claim that "every institution should carry out its own research, which ideally will lay the foundations of the most appropriate language policy for them" (Doiz et al. 2013b: 219). After describing the context of the study, the article discusses the main findings of the survey which sought to identify what the lecturers perceived as their strengths and weakness in English, their concerns, and also their evaluations of the experience of teaching through English if they had any, as well as their expectations about training for EMI.

2 English-medium instruction

The issue of introducing courses taught through English in European universities is complex and requires careful consideration and analysis, particularly in contexts where English is not the medium of instruction or even a commonly used language. The introduction of EMI is often the result of a top-down process, an implicit part of universities' internationalisation policies. According to Costa and Coleman (2013: 3), who carried out a survey of EMI in Italy, "the need for its implementation is not usually felt by the lecturers but rather derived from a solely economic-political choice by the university". The same impression is shared by Shohamy (2013: 198), according to whom EMI is often promoted for economic reasons and not by the concrete interest in maximizing academic knowledge through a foreign language.

The expansion of EMI has, rightly, aroused concerns and doubts among lecturers and academics both on a macro and on a micro-level. On a macro-level, English can be seen to be contributing to "the attack on universities as a public good" (Phillipson 2006: 17): with this drive towards internationalisation, education, and also English, is increasingly being commodified; social and economic inequalities are being exacerbated; and there is risk of domain loss and linguistic dispossession. On a micro-level, issues include not only negative attitudes resulting from the perception of English as a threat to the native language, but also the marginalization of the institution's language specialists, "inadequate language skills" on the part of staff and students, unwillingness of local staff to teach through English, loss of confidence and "failure to adapt" of local students, or lack of a critical mass of international students (Coleman 2006: 6–7). Looking at teaching staff in particular, van der Werf (2012) signals that the internationalisation of education has consequences for the competences that lecturers need to develop and put into practice. In his words, teaching staff in internationalized institutions need to undertake a much wider variety of activities that are not limited to teaching through a different language. These include "internationalising curricula aimed at a domestic student population, counselling and supervising (domestic and international) students in preparation for and during study abroad periods, and maintaining collaborative relations with partner institutions abroad" (van der Werf 2012: 1). This variety of tasks may make staff feel inadequate to perform their role within the institution and in need of stronger competences.

Teaching methodology is mentioned as a key issue in EMI by several scholars. According to Klaassen and de Graaff (2001: 282), switching the language of instruction may affect "the lecturers' didactical skills in the sense that they are less flexible in conveying the contents of the lecture material, resulting in long monologues, a lack of rapport with students, humour and interaction". Ball and Lindsay (2013: 49) argue that teaching in a language other than the mother tongue, particularly at advanced conceptual levels, demands a higher focus on methodology and practice than in the past, when pedagogic skills were not an essential prerequisite for a successful university career. Yet, as noted by Cots (2013), the lecturers' lack of training in language teaching is often accompanied by the scant attention they pay to language for the students. As a result, for many lecturers, the shift from L1 to EMI is reduced to a mere change in the medium of communication, and does not take into account the need to adapt teaching methods to this new context. In Cots's view (2013: 117), such a shift in methodology consists in a "process of decentering of the focus of pedagogic action from the instructor to the students, giving the latter a much more predominant space during the class". This implies that

lecturers themselves change the way they perceive their role, moving away from a top-down approach of knowledge transmission and helping students to construct knowledge by themselves (Cots 2013). In this light, as Klaassen and de Graaff put it (2001: 282), EMI also requires that lecturers become aware of the difficulties of their students, who may need support and guidance to access and negotiate knowledge.

3 EMI in Italy's higher education system

As in many other southern European countries (Doiz et al. 2013a: 97), EMI is a recent development in Italy (Costa and Coleman 2013). Although first introduced in Italian higher education as early as in 1992, it was not until 2004 that universities began to offer entire degree courses in English (generally called English taught programmes or ETPs), usually at post-graduate level. ETPs were then reinforced by a new law on universities (the so-called Legge Gelmini 240/2010), which called for increased cooperation between universities, more student and lecturer mobility, as well as for the introduction of study programmes taught in a foreign language (Costa 2012). Though Italy is still considered by the OECD (2014) as one of the countries which offers no or nearly no courses in English, the number of ETPs is increasing rapidly across the country. At the time of writing (April 2014) 142 ETPs are offered in 39 universities, that is 50% of universities, across the country (Universitaly 2014). Of these, 6 programmes are offered at bachelor's level, while the remaining 136 are at master's level.

A survey carried out by Costa and Coleman (2013) remains the most recent and complete study of the state of the art in Italy. For the purposes of their study, the authors sent a questionnaire to 76 Italian universities, both private (14) and public (62). The answers that they received from 38 universities (7 private and 31 public) helped to shed light on the main issues that characterize EMI across the country. One of the findings reported in the study was that language is viewed simply as a different vehicle for delivering the same subject content, so the same teaching methods are used as in the past, predominantly lectures. In Italy, as in many other contexts (de Wit 2011; Jenkins 2014; Phillipson 2006; Saarinen and Nikula 2013), it seems that internationalisation is largely equated with EMI, yet paradoxically, the issue of language mastery, on the part of both lecturers and students, has not been problematized by university administrations. Improving language proficiency in English ranks 4th in the list of reasons for introducing ETPs in public universities and follows economic reasons such as improving the

university's international profile, preparing students for global markets and attracting foreign students. There has, however, been scepticism amongst academics and in the public sphere as regards both the desire and the ability of Italian lecturers to teach their subjects through English (Argondizzo et al. 2007; Costa 2012). In Italy as in other countries across Europe, lecturers who have strongly opposed this phenomenon seem to have drawn more attention than those who have engaged with it (Costa and Coleman 2013; Jenkins 2014). In 2012, for instance, a furious debate among Italy's policy makers and scholars was sparked when the rector of the Politecnico of Milan, one of the country's top-ranking universities, announced that from 2014 all its 34 graduate courses would be taught in English only. 150 lecturers from the Politecnico filed an appeal in the regional administrative court: in their view, obliging students and lecturers to adopt English would limit their freedom and marginalize the national language (La Repubblica 2013). The court accepted their view and condemned the decision of the Politecnico. At the time of writing, the issue is still far from being resolved. At the beginning of 2015, the Council of State declared that it will be up to the Constitutional Court, Italy's highest legal body, to decide whether teaching through English prevents students from freely accessing knowledge (Corriere della Sera 2015).

Costa and Coleman's study did not directly address lecturers, but rather obtained data through administrative offices such as international relations departments and university language centres and departments; hence – as the authors state – it is not possible to say whether these views are shared by lecturers or not. The marginal role of the language in Italian EMI appears to be reinforced by the fact that, as reported in Costa and Coleman's study, the lecturers involved in ETPs, 90% of whom had Italian as their mother tongue, were often "forced to teach through English regardless of their target language competence" (2013: 11). Interestingly, 30% of the universities that responded to the survey affirmed that the greatest difficulty in implementing ETPs was the lecturers' insufficient English language competence (Costa and Coleman 2013: 13). Yet hardly any universities saw a need to offer support or training courses for lecturers, with 77% of the responding institutions answering that they provide no teacher training (Costa and Coleman 2013: 12), 15% saying that they provide lecturers with one language course, and 8% answering that they provide methodological training. Looking at the issue from a teacher's perspective, authors such as Costa (2012) in Italy and Aguilar and Rodríguez (2012) in Spain, remain sceptical as to whether university lecturers would accept any form of training, be it methodological or English language training.

4 EMI at the University of Padova

In 2009–2010 the University of Padova started to introduce individual EMI courses so as to attract foreign students and promote the internationalization of the institution. To encourage lecturers to embrace EMI, a financial incentive was approved by the university Senate. In 2011–2012 the Senate promoted the introduction of entire programmes to be taught in English, alongside the already existing individual courses. The reasons given for fostering the introduction of courses and programmes held entirely in English (Martin 2013) are not unfamiliar to the scenario of Italian universities as described in Costa and Coleman's (2013) survey.

Currently (academic year 2013–2014), the University of Padova offers eight second-cycle degrees entirely held in English, nine ETPs at PhD level, three first-level master's programmes, and six second-level master's programmes. In addition to these postgraduate programmes, the School of Economics and Political Science also runs a bachelor's degree in Economics and Management whose three-year curriculum is entirely in English. Besides entire ETPs, the university also offers a large number of individual courses given in English. Table 1 shows the number of ETPs and individual EMI courses offered by each School (academic year 2013–2014).

Table 1: Number of English Taught Programmes (ETPs) and individual EMI courses at the University of Padova 2014–2015.

School	Number of ETPs	Number of individual EMI courses
Agronomy and Veterinary Sciences	0	45
Economics and Political Science	9	9
Engineering	7	88
Human and Social Sciences and Cultural Heritage	2	25
Law	0	7
Medicine	5	21
Psychology	1	13
Science	3	67
Total	**27**	**275**

Of all the Schools that constitute the University of Padova, the School of Engineering and the School of Economics and Political Science are the ones which offer the highest number of ETPs (nine and seven respectively).

In addition, the School of Engineering provides a wide range of individual English-taught courses, which appears to be in line with the results of Costa and Coleman's survey (2013). Interestingly, the Law School and the School of Agronomy and Veterinary Sciences do not currently have any ETPs, but provide individual EMI courses as part of their various Italian-taught programmes.

5 The LEAP project

Before the beginning of the academic year 2013–2014, the University Language Centre (CLA) of the University of Padova, in collaboration with the International Relations Office, launched the LEAP Project (Learning English for Academic Purposes). The project had three main objectives: to identify the needs, concerns and expectations of lecturers involved in EMI at the university; to design and offer professional development and support for lecturers who held/were going to hold courses in English in the same academic year; and to assess the quality and impact of the support courses offered in order to develop a long-term support programme. The professional development options organized by the CLA consisted of: an International Summer School to be held in July 2013 at Venice International University on the island of S. Servolo; an intensive Summer Course at a university in Dublin, Ireland;[1] a 100-hour blended course (60 hours face-to-face; 40 hours online) to be held at the CLA over a five-month time-span; and individual, personalized language advising provided by the CLA teaching staff.

An e-mail was sent to all the university's lecturers through the university's official mailing list informing them about the four options available, and those interested in participating were asked to complete a survey. The survey was used to select participants and identify the lecturers' needs and expectations with regard to EMI. A total of 115 lecturers responded to the questionnaire, from across the university's eight Schools. The distribution of respondents across the schools (see Figure 1) reflects quite closely the number of courses and ETPs each school offers.

This article focuses on the first objective of the LEAP project and considers the results of the needs analysis that was conducted at the preliminary stage of the LEAP project.

1 This course was set up in partnership with three other European universities, each of which sent a group of lecturers to follow this course, which was designed specifically for EMI lecturers.

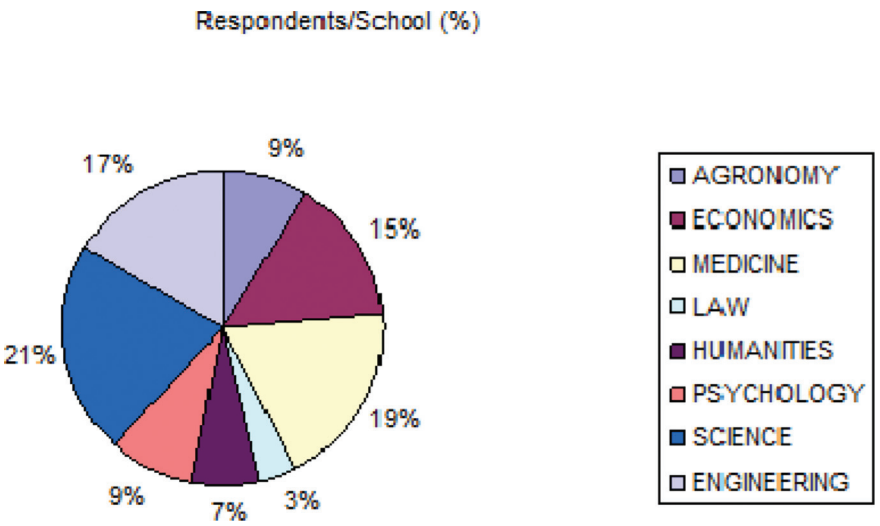

Figure 1: Percentage of survey respondents organized by school.

6 Research questions and methodology

The questions we were seeking to answer in this study were the following:

1. What are the lecturers' main concerns when having to teach their subjects through English?
2. What do lecturers perceive as their strengths and weaknesses in English?
3. What expectations do they have regarding courses organized by the University Language Centre to support them in this task?

In order to investigate these issues, an electronic questionnaire[2] was devised using Google Forms and made available to all the lecturers who were applying for the CLA's professional development options. The open questions of the questionnaire were analysed and coded using a Grounded Theory approach (Glaser and Strauss 1967), based on an inductive process that explores and identifies patterns across texts by various types of actors. As this analysis relied on the exploration of data and the development of categories and codes, the software package NVivo (QSRInternational 2013) was adopted to support the qualitative side of the research project. The open-ended answers to the

2 The questionnaire is available at https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1yGCntScousx0s21AetUqqn6tTBlZS1to97-v8YjsV3k/viewform

questionnaire were imported into NVivo and coded so as to identify recurring themes and patterns. In NVivo, codes are stored in nodes, in other words "points at which concepts potentially branch out into a network of subconcepts and dimensions" (Bazeley and Jackson 2013: 75). For the purposes of this research, nodes were created inductively for each theme that was identified and coded while analysing the texts. As most of the themes that emerged from the analysis appeared to be composed of interconnected concepts, the main nodes were organized into a hierarchical structure in which subcategories captured all the nuances of each particular theme.

7 Findings

7.1 Lecturers' previous experience with EMI

Of the 115 lecturers who answered the questionnaire, 86 taught at second-cycle degree level, 19 at undergraduate and 11 at doctoral level. Nearly half (48) had taught several courses through English, 27 had taught just one course and 40 had never taught through English. However, the majority (86) were going to be teaching through English in the following academic year, that is 2013–2014. Asked to outline their previous experiences, the lecturers who had already taught in English pinpointed both positive and challenging aspects of EMI. In particular, 21 asserted that their experience with EMI was completely positive, 21 pointed out both negative and positive aspects, and six admitted that EMI was a fully negative experience for them.

Those who described the experience of teaching through English in positive terms used adjectives such as *exciting*, *stimulating*, *rewarding*, *interesting* and *positive*. In addition, EMI was seen as having beneficial effects on the university's internationalization process and visibility. A few lecturers also observed that teaching through English offered a fruitful experience to students (see Table 2).

In describing the difficulties they had encountered while teaching a course through English, the lecturers adopted adjectives such as *challenging*, *not easy*, *time-consuming* and *difficult*. Two respondents also expressed their concerns about offering EMI to an audience of mostly Italian students: one respondent in particular explained that, after delivering the first two courses in English, the third time he decided to switch to Italian since there were no foreign students in the audience. In response to the same question, ten lecturers attributed their difficulties with EMI to the need to improve their language skills and/or teaching

Table 2: Lecturers' evaluations of their experience with EMI.

	No. of mentions	Examples of coding reference
Positive experience		
Exciting, stimulating, rewarding, interesting	27	"I found this experience interesting and rewarding" (B18)
Good for the internationalisation of the university	9	"… it is a good way to open our University to international students and help to build a reputation in teaching abroad" (D06)
Productive for students	6	"Students need practicing their professional competences in English. English is considered the vehicular language that will allow them studying and working abroad" (SS17)
Challenging experience		
Challenging – not easy – difficult – time consuming	11	"it is an hard work and it takes much more time than an Italian course" (D06)
Difficulties or drawbacks related to internationalisation	2	"… there were few foreign students" (B21)
I feel I need to improve language skills and/or teaching methodology	10	"I realized that my lesson organization was not good enough." (B11)
Students had different levels of English	4	"… the English level of the students was not the same for all so to avoid any problems for some to follow the lessons I decided to repeat in Italian the most relevant concepts of each lesson" (B23)

methods: interestingly, such an awareness was expressed by eight respondents who had taught in English several times, but only two who had taught once, thus suggesting that a growing involvement in EMI may lead to an increased awareness of the complexity it entails. Finally, four respondents also identified the students' different levels of English as a further cause of the difficulties they had encountered while teaching through EMI.

7.2 Concerns about EMI

In the questionnaire, the lecturers were asked to respond to three questions that focused on their concerns about EMI ("Do you have any concerns about teaching

in English? If so, what are they?"), and their perceived strengths and weaknesses in using the language ("What do you feel are your strengths and weaknesses in English?"). In response to the first question, quite a wide variety of concerns emerged, though 10% of respondents stated they had none. Interestingly, the most frequently mentioned concern relates to teaching methods, and indicates therefore an awareness of the challenges and different approaches that teaching in English may entail. For some it is the loss of spontaneity and perhaps fear of not being in control that is a great concern, as reflected in the statement made by a respondent and used in the title of this paper: "improvisation is not allowed in a second language". This inability to improvise when teaching through English as one would when teaching in one's first language, has also been highlighted by Klassen and de Graaff (2001).

In relation to their language ability, most of their concerns were related to speaking skills (see Table 3) while lecturing but especially when interacting with students at a more informal level. This finding seems to be in line with previous

Table 3: Lecturers' concerns about EMI.

Concerns	No. of mentions	Sample quotes
Comprehension	3	"improving my pronounce and comprehension would be great" (B1)
Correctness and/or grammar	6	"Being not a mother tongue, both my accent and my grammar could be improved a lot" (B18)
English level of students	7	"I am worried by the possibility that the students would find the course too difficult or …" (R16)
Speaking skills	4	"don't speak good English, I am able to read and understand in English, but not to speak well" (D5)
Fluency	15	"mantening fluency in English, that is really important to have efficient and effective lectures, is sometimes difficult" (LA2).
Interaction	16	"I have limited experience with 'social' English" (B14)
Pronunciation	9	"my main issue is pronunciation but this is less of a problem with italian students" (B20)
Teaching	32	"I have to prepare carefully my lessons. Improvisation is not allowed in a second language" (LA12)
Vocabulary	12	"my concerns deal both with the richness and pertinence of my vocabulary" (R23)
No concerns	18	"Not serious concerns" (SS12)
Uncertainty about one's own English level	4	"am supposed to assess such level without having ever had my level of English assessed formally" (D08)

studies on EMI: Lehtonen et al. (2003), for instance, found that instructors generally felt confident using English except when it came to conversational episodes in class and formal writing. Informal exchanges with students were also found to be a concern for Danish lecturers (Tange, 2010), who were worried about the students' criticism of their communicative competence and the results this would have on their status within the faculty. Fluency and pronunciation are also speaking-related concerns, and at times the notion of correctness of accent or grammar is introduced with an orientation to native-speaker norms, as the following quote from one respondent illustrates: "Being not a mother tongue, both my accent and my grammar could be improved a lot" (B18). This is a common issue but a paradoxical one, considering that their audience does not consist of native speakers, as Jenkins (2014) emphasizes.

As regards language skills in general, the answers to the questionnaire show that the lecturers' main concerns about teaching in English relate to vocabulary, attention to "standard" forms and grammar, the students' level of English, and the lecturers' uncertainty about their own level of English.

7.3 Weaknesses and strengths

In the questionnaire, the lecturers were asked to outline their weaknesses in English. Unlike the question about concerns, which focused specifically on teaching through a foreign language, this question was designed to identify what the lecturers perceived as their weak points in their overall knowledge and use of English. In the responses (see Table 4), several aspects emerged that they felt were problematic, once again largely related to oral skills. The use of English in social and informal situations was confirmed as one of the main issues the lecturers felt unsure about, as well as general speaking skills, pronunciation, fluency and oral comprehension. The same can be said for vocabulary and the issue of formal and grammatical correctness. Issues relating to teaching methods were also mentioned by a few lecturers, as were writing skills and lack of self-confidence.

What was a weakness or source of concern for some lecturers was a strength for others. Thus, for instance, vocabulary was considered by some respondents as something they felt confident about while, as noted above, it was seen by many others as a problematic issue. A similar observation can be made in relation to oral comprehension and speaking abilities, which were indeed felt as weaknesses by many lecturers, whereas for a few they represented a strength. A further interesting aspect is that a considerable number of lecturers felt their knowledge of academic English and its use in conferences or for research

Table 4: Lecturers' perceived weaknesses and strengths.

Theme	Weakness (no. of mentions)	Strength (no.of mentions)	Sample quote
Oral Skills			
Pronunciation	20	6	"I have a poor pronunciation" (SS01_weaknesses)
Social English and informal interaction	21	7	"I would say that my 'scientific English' is rather good, while I am less strong in everyday conversation. This is probably due to the fact that I never spent more than few weeks in an English-speaking country" (LA01_weaknesses)
Fluency	12	7	"… my English (…) is not as fluent as I would" (R09_weaknesses)
Speaking skills	22	9	"my strength in English is speaking" (B17_strengths)
Accent	5	0	"I feel I have to (…) correct my accent, which is definitively not good" (D10_weaknesses)
Aural comprehension	21	19	"I'm very good at understanding people talking" (R04_strengths)
Vocabulary	23	16	"lack of voicabulary and ways to express solmething precisely as in my own language" (B06_weaknesses)
Teaching methodology	6	0	"lacking formal training in teaching in English" (R37_weaknesses)
Correctness of form and grammar	22	8	"I would like to improve my grammar in order to speak more correctly" (LA12_weaknesses)
Writing skills	6	24	"I can write well in English" (R38_strengths)
Reading skills	0	13	"There are no problems with reading" (B12_strengths)
Academic English	0	21	"I would say that my 'scientific English' is rather good" (LA01_strengths)
Lack of self-confidence	4	0	"weaknesses: a certain lack of self-confidence" (LA19_weaknesses)
Self-confidence	0	8	"I can manage a class I need just to improve few details" (R14_strengths)
Motivation	0	13	"… my strength is my wish to speak and learn English" (R35_strengths)

purposes was a strength. This seems to imply that for many lecturers cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) is not the issue when engaging with EMI, but rather their basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) (Cummins 1984), in particular the informal interactions which surround and are embedded within EMI.

In the questionnaire, the respondents pinpointed further aspects of language use that they felt to be non-problematic. Among these, writing is certainly the activity that the lecturers seem to be more confident with. In addition, respondents also mentioned reading skills and motivation as strengths. Self-confidence, attention to standard forms and grammar, fluency, and pronunciation appear to be felt as non-problematic by a more limited number of respondents. This seems to confirm the findings reported above, according to which these aspects were mostly described as weak points or sources of concern. Table 4 shows the frequency of occurrence and provides examples for each of the themes mentioned here.

7.4 Expectations about English language courses

After summarizing their strengths and weaknesses with the language and outlining their concerns about EMI, the lecturers who responded to the questionnaire also indicated their expectations about the language courses they were applying for. In line with the findings illustrated above, teaching methods represented the aspect that most lecturers expected to improve through the courses offered by the CLA. This seems to mirror Klaassen and de Graaff's observation that most of the lecturers participating in one of three EMI training workshops organized at a Dutch university expected, first of all, "to learn more effective teaching skills" (2001: 285). Interestingly, of the 47 respondents from Padova who expressed such an interest, 20 had taught several EMI courses before, 10 had taught through English once, and 17 had no experience with EMI. This appears to suggest not only that there is a strongly felt need to modify teaching style when teaching through English, but also that this increases in those who already have some experience with EMI. There is perhaps an assumption when first approaching EMI that it will simply mean translating their course from Italian to English. However, once lecturers engage in EMI they come to a realization that other factors come into play. There seems to be a recognition that many of their students are also learning in a foreign language and may need support or a more student-centred approach to learning and knowledge construction (Cots 2013). This finding also confirms that the lecturers who responded to the questionnaire were indeed willing to learn about different

teaching approaches, which (as suggested above) appears to contrast with Costa's (2012) observation that university professors are not interested in any training in teaching methods.

Besides mentioning teaching methods, some respondents expressed their wish to improve their overall English skills, without actually specifying the set of abilities they wanted to focus on most. Other respondents made it clear that they had a specific interest in improving their oral skills including, in particular, speaking abilities, fluency, the ability to use English in informal situations, pronunciation, and oral comprehension. In addition to these results, some lecturers wrote that they had a specific interest in vocabulary, others wanted to improve their grammar or to become more confident with the language, while a few were interested in developing their writing skills. Table 5 sums up these findings and provides examples for each of the coding categories:

Table 5: Lecturers' expectations about support courses offered by the CLA.

Theme	No. of mentions	Sample quotes
Teaching methodology	47	"It would be very important for me to receive guidance on how to organise my lectures (...), on the way I can involve more the students in the course (I am trying to implement a more active and participating modality of teaching)" (D04)
English skills in general	21	"To improve my English" (B13)
ORAL SKILLS, including:		
Oral comprehension	5	"Improve my pronunciation" (R27)
Pronunciation	5	"... greater awareness in using English in social situations and in interaction with students" (B15)
Social English and informal interaction	13	"Improving my English in order to be more fluently during conversation" (R01)
Fluency	20	"An improvement in spoken language" (LA08)
Speaking skills	21	"I expect to improve my Inglish in general, the level of communication and the comprehension" (R30)
Correctness of form and grammar	17	"To increase my skills in the correct use of English" (SS08)
Vocabulary	11	"... to enhance my vocabulary and phrasing" (LA11)
Self-confidence	10	"... most of all I expect the course will much increase my confidence and therefore my fluency in English" (D08)
Writing skills	6	"Improve my written english" (R39)

8 Conclusions

Though this study focuses on a very specific local context, we believe that the number of respondents in the survey and the different disciplinary areas they represent mean that some of the findings may be of general relevance to higher education institutions and university language centres, particularly in countries where English is not commonly spoken and where EMI is a new phenomenon.

Our findings indicate that lecturers perceive their language competence, particularly their spoken fluency and informal interaction skills, as a weakness and a cause for concern with regard to their teaching through English, thus confirming what Klassen and de Graaf (2001) had found. Our findings also reveal that many lecturers with experience of EMI are aware that it entails more than foreign language competence and mention some of the other competences mentioned in van der Werf's (2012) International Competences Matrix. It is interesting to note that there was no significant difference in the responses between lecturers in different disciplines. The fact that many respondents recognize the need to adapt their teaching methods to their EMI context, and were expecting to learn more about this in the language courses they were applying for, reflects a recognized need on the part of lecturers to develop didactic competences in an international context and openness to training courses. This seems to stand in contrast to the notion that lecturers see EMI as merely being a change in the medium of communication and not requiring an adaptation of methodology (Cots 2013) or the view that lecturers would not be open to development or training for teaching through English (Costa 2012; Aguilar and Rodríguez 2012). Whilst we do not wish to suggest that all lecturers would be open to methodological and/or language training, particularly if it were to become a requirement, our findings reflect a perceived need on the part of some lecturers, particularly those working in a context where EMI has recently been introduced and English is not a commonly spoken language.

It is important to point out also some of the important issues in EMI that respondents did not mention at all in their responses, such as the relationship between the national language(s) and the language of instruction and their possible combinations in teaching (Phillipson 2015). Other issues which were rarely mentioned, if at all, were students' needs or difficulties in terms of learning through a different vehicular language, as well as language choice in formal assessment and the weight given to language competence in assessing students' learning. Also lacking are references to competences mentioned by van der Werf (2012) such as academic counselling for foreign students, understanding the education systems of

different countries, or competences linked to the international labour market. These omissions may be a reflection of the fact that EMI at the University of Padova is still very much in its early phases and lecturers' immediate concern is with the practicalities of their own teaching and with the switch to English, rather than the relation between English and the national language, and between teaching through English and student learning. This is also no doubt a reflection of the survey that was administered, and this brings us to some of the limitations of the study.

The study is limited in various respects. First of all the questionnaire was part of an application form lecturers had to fill in when applying for support and language courses which were part of a pilot project. Whilst the aim of the researchers in drawing up the questionnaire was to explore the lecturers' concerns, strengths and weaknesses, this was necessarily directed towards the need to design suitable training and support services. Clearly this entails a bias in the respondents: only those lecturers who were interested in receiving support and professional development at that particular time; it does not include those who feel they do not need support or do not have time for it. There were a few issues in the design of the questionnaire that led to a degree of ambiguity, such as including strengths and weaknesses in the same open question. This was dealt with by the researchers as they coded the data through comparisons and discussion. The survey also failed to address intercultural issues, the relation between English and lecturers' L1, and assessment. Finally, this study is limited to one particular context with all its specificities; hence the findings cannot be generalized. However, we feel that the number of respondents indicates that teaching through English is an important concern for lecturers in contexts where English is not commonly spoken, and that there is a strongly felt need for support in this endeavour.

Though most university language centres' activities are focused on students, they are well placed within universities to offer support to lecturers in EMI; indeed, they may be the lecturers' first port of call. A recent survey on the training and accreditation of lecturers in EMI carried out by O'Dowd (2015) found that universities are beginning to offer training to lecturers engaging in EMI, and this is above all "in-house" training. If this is the case, language centres potentially have a key role to play, but it is important for them to gain an understanding of lecturers' needs in order to offer appropriate support, which, as we have found, may concern not only language but also pedagogic approaches. This need was addressed by the CLA in several ways in the design of the professional development courses for the lecturers in the LEAP project (Ackerley et al. forthcoming). First of all, the two courses run by the CLA (San Servolo and the blended course) were based on student-centred learning

(Jones 2007), which is characteristic of the language teaching approach offered by the CLA's teachers. The courses were also based on principles of CLIL (Coyle et al. 2010), integrating content and language teaching. Internationalization and EMI methodology, issues common to all the course participants who came from a range of disciplines, provided the content component of the course. The approach was also experiential (Kolb 1984), an approach frequently adopted in teacher training courses whereby the participants have first-hand experience of a variety of teaching approaches (such as pair and small group work, project-based learning, problem-solving, role play, group discussions, micro-teaching, peer evaluation, debate) and the opportunity to discuss and reflect on them.[3] Furthermore international speakers and trainers specialized in these issues were invited to give talks both to Language Centre staff and to the lecturers engaging in EMI. As a result of the participation of lecturers from the field of education in the LEAP courses, the Language Centre was also invited to collaborate with them in the PRODID project (Preparazione alla professionalità docente e innovazione didattica; http://www.unipd.it/progetto-prodid), which is concerned with the training of future university lecturers.

The project provided an opportunity for the university Language Centre to establish contacts with lecturers from departments across the university. Many of them were not familiar with the Centre and the resources it offers to students and university staff. The project has also led to greater collaboration with the international relations office and the Education Department of the university. Several issues still remain to be resolved, however, such as the very limited number of permanent English language teachers (14 for around 60,000 students, 2,000 lecturers and 2,000 administrative staff). It is hoped that a recognition of the important role the Language Centre can play in the internationalization of the university will also lead to greater investment in and recognition of the university's language teaching staff.

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3 See Guarda and Helm (forthcoming) for the impact of the training courses on the lecturers.

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Bionotes

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