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English as a medium of instruction at the University of Padova: interaction in the classroom

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INTRODUCTION

The aim of the present dissertation is to analyse the increasing adoption of English as the language of instruction and, in particular, the implementation of English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) in the university context. Moreover, the present work aims at explaining the importance of interaction in EMI programmes. EMI refers to the use of English to teach subject contents in a country where the first language of the students and lecturers is not English. This work studies the spread of English across the world, but a special focus is given to the situation in Europe. In fact, higher education in Europe is increasingly using this programme to teach subject content in various fields, such as Economy, Engineering, Psychology and many other subjects.

The dissertation is divided into two parts. The first is more general and it describes the various reasons for the spread of English in the university context. A special focus is given to the situation in Europe and to the various advantages but also problems related to the implementation of EMI programmes. This first part will also talk about the importance of interaction in English-Medium Instruction lectures, especially as regards the use of questions. The second part is more specific and it is based on a research conducted at the University of Padua, an Italian university situated in the North of Italy. The focus is on interaction and above all, on the use of questions in the teaching process.

Before speaking about the importance of interactivity in English as a Medium of instruction programmes, I have spoken about EMI in general. In fact, the first chapter aims at explaining the reasons why English is become the language of instruction in places where English is not the first language of the majority of the population. After having developed this point, I have described the main characteristics of EMI, trying to compare it with other learning programmes, such as CLIL, ICLHE and EMEMUS. Then, I have spoken about where EMI comes from. In fact, I have focused on the Bologna Process (1999), a European declaration signed in the Italian city of Bologna, whose principal aims are to harmonize Higher Education across Europe and to foster the development of English in Higher Education. In Europe, EMI has been implemented to fulfil the aims of the Bologna Process and, in particular, of the European Union. Moreover, I have listed the various reasons for the introduction of EMI at university,

such as the attractiveness of more national and, especially, international students and lecturers and the improvement of the public image of institutions. Several experts have studied the reasons for the implementation of EMI programmes, such as Coleman (2006), Wilkinson et al. (2013), Björkman (2011) and others. In the first chapter, I have also focused on the situation of EMI programmes in Europe, trying to explain the North-South divide in the implementation of it. In fact, EMI has spread more in Northern European countries than in Southern European countries. In order to explain the different spread of EMI across Europe, I have described the situations in various European countries, where English is used as a language of instruction, such as the Netherlands, Finland and Spain, but especially Italy. In fact, I have used a significant part of this chapter to talk about the situation in Italy, where the implementation of EMI is in its earlier stages and where controversies are not absent (i.e. The case of the Politecnico di Milano). In this occasion, I have also reported data from a study conducted by Costa and Coleman (2012), who carried out a survey among Italian university institutions in order to shed light on the state-of-art of EMI in this country. Talking about the Italian context, I decided to focus on a particular Italian university: the University of Padua. This decision has been taken because the third and fourth chapter will focus on a study conducted at the University of Padua and, in my opinion, it was useful to have a general idea about the situation in this specific context. In this part of the chapter, I have reported some data of a study conducted by Helm and Guarda (2015) and one conducted by Ackerley (forthcoming), about the situation at Padua University. Finally, I have spoken about the various dilemmas and problems concerning the increasing implementation of university programmes with English as a medium of Instruction, I will talk about the various problems related with the lecturers and the students, but also about the various implication for the local language or the local languages and the university programmes' quality.

The second chapter focuses on the importance of interactivity in the learning process and, especially in Higher Education. After having introduced the various advantages of an interactive class and the various trends in university contexts, I have listed the various strategies that lecturers could use to help their students to understand more easily lessons in a language that, in many cases, it is not their own first language. Lecturers should use these strategies in class because students' comprehension of the

lecture may be affected by the language of instruction. For this reason, students should be helped in the learning process. In particular, I have pointed out the importance of questions in EMI lectures and, as questions will be one of the focus of my empirical research at the University of Padua, I have tried to analyse them in details. In order to do this, I have given various classifications of questions. The main derives from Thomson's (1998) study, who has distinguished the questions into audit-oriented and content-oriented. But also the classifications of Dalton-Puffer (2007) and Crawford Camiciottoli (2008) have been given. Moreover, I have talked about other linguistic strategies, such as the negotiation of meaning and the repetitions. At the end, I have focused on some studies about interaction, such as those of Morell (2004), Navaz (2013), Dafouz Milne and Sánchez García (2013) and Ackerley (forthcoming).

After having described the situation of EMI in some European contexts and after having explained why interaction is important in Higher Education, I have decided to focused on the situation of EMI programmes at the University of Padua. In order to do this I have divided my work into two parts. The first one aimed at investigating the nature of interaction in lectures in this University. The second one focused on the results of a questionnaire conducted among students at the university of Padua and of some interviews with lecturers of this university.

The first part will be developed in the third chapter of this dissertation and it consists of the observation of five lectures of the Schools of Engineering, Business Administration and Forest Science. In this section I have analysis the role of communication in the learning process, focusing on the role of questions. I have also reported some pieces of transcriptions, where communication, in the form of questions, took place. I have used the transcriptions of lectures to analyse the use of questions and also to compare these use with other studies, such as those of Dalton-Puffer (2007) and Dafouz Milne and Sánchez García (2013), who have observed some university lectures.

The fourth chapter of this dissertation will focus on the second part of my research: the questionnaire among students and the interviews with lecturers. In this part I have decided to do an empirical research in order to obtain real data from the participants of EMI programmes: students and lecturers. The classes that have taken part at the survey were the same classes that were observed for the research about

interaction. The survey is composed by a general part about what students think about the introduction of courses with English as a medium of instruction and students were also asked to state whether EMI lectures are useful or not. The other part is more specific and it is composed by a survey about the use of questions in class, both asked by lecturers and students. In particular, I have analysed the reasons why students tend not to answer or ask questions in class. Moreover, I have tried to understand what are the preferences of the students about interaction. For example, I have asked them if they would prefer the teacher to use more simple language in class or to use Italian for some explanations. Furthermore, I have also asked them if they like when their teachers ask them questions. At the end of the chapter, I have also reported the results of some interviews conducted among lecturers, in order to understand if they aim at creating an interactive atmosphere in class.

Thus, this worked aimed at specifying the importance of interaction in EMI lectures and at understanding if university lectures are interactive at Padua university.

FIRST CHAPTER: *English as a Medium of Instruction*

1.1 EMI: what is it?

English-Medium Instruction or, as I will also refer to it, EMI, can be defined as “the use of the English language to teach academic subjects in countries or jurisdictions where the first language (L1) of the majority of the population is not English” (Dearden, 2015:4). This means that EMI is used in generally non-English-speaking countries and these are, referring to Kachru’s (1992) three-concentric-circle model, those countries belonging to the Expanding Circle, where English is a foreign language, and those countries where English is a second language, belonging to the Outer Circle.

It is important to take into account that the spread of English in the world, is inseparable from globalization, as Hüppauf (2004; in Coleman, 2006:1) has affirmed. Globalization is resulting in the formation of a new global order affecting many societies on an unprecedented scale (Marsh, 2006:29). Moreover, Block and Cameron (2002; in Coleman, 2006:1) have stated that globalization is a complex phenomenon, with positive and negative social impacts, embracing economics, culture, identity, politics and technology. Due to the fact that globalization affects all these sectors, there is the need to have a shared linguistic medium and English has assumed its place as the language of communication within the new linguistic global order (Marsh, 2006:29). Also Phillipson (2015) has affirmed that English is increasingly projected as a language that is universally needed, an opportunity to be grasped and it is now of global significance. It is the language that is much used in the world’s communicative exchanges and EMI is the “obvious choice to participate in the international community” (Wilkinson and Walsh, 2008:32). Due to its relevant position in the world, “English is used as a global lingua franca in an enormous range of domains, from international politics to entertainment, from air traffic to academia, trade, diplomacy and social media” (Mauranen, 2010:6).

As regards Higher Education (HE) in particular, Block and Cameron (2002; in Coleman, 2006:1) have affirmed that globalization influences both language use and the economics of this field. In particular, Wilkinson and Walsh (2008:2) have affirmed that universities have always been interested in internationalization, that is described as “the

process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education”. This interest in internationalization involves both the academic staff and the students. As regards the academic staff, “collaboration with colleagues in other institutions is a basis for most academics, including through staff exchange, academic visits, and congress” (Wilkinson and Walsh, 2008:2). As regards students, they have also been involved in this process of internationalization, for example through the participation in programmes which called for spending a period of time abroad in a foreign university (e.g. Erasmus +, Erasmus Mundus). In order to facilitate the relationships between academics and students from different nationalities, English has become a global commodity in HE (Phillipson, 2015:22-23) and the universities have started to provide courses in a language that is different from the language of the country where the institution is based (Wilkinson and Walsh, 2008). For this reason, EMI programmes have become a contemporary feature of Higher Education (HE) in Europe, but also worldwide (Wilkinson, 2013).

Therefore, English has become the main language of communication between people from different nationalities. But researchers seem to have different opinions about the spread and the importance of this language. For example, Coleman (2006) has affirmed that today the language of Higher Education is clearly English and the inexorable global dominance of English across a majority of linguistic domains makes it the inevitable preference in the specific and influential domains of academe. But this statement is criticized by Phillipson (2015, in Dimova et al., 2015:26), who has affirmed that “there is no justification for his [Coleman’s] categorical statements. English is not the only language of Higher Education, nor is it used globally. English is not “inevitably” preferred throughout continental European academia”.

These are two different types of views, but, as Doiz et al. (2013) have affirmed, the reality of the facts indicates that it is English which is preeminent and it has certainly become the main foreign language that it is used as a means of instruction at universities in Europe and worldwide, even if the introduction of these types of programmes is primarily linked to the promotion of learning a wide range of languages, as I will explain in the next chapters. On the contrary, it is English that prevails and such a choice testifies, in van der Walt’s (2013, in Guarda and Helm, 2016:1) view, that

“the academic system is directed towards and by English, a language increasingly seen as the inevitable instrument for successful internationalization”.

Moreover, “English is the language of science. That it is the language we have to use if we wish to prepare our students for an international career in a globalized world” (Kruseman, 2013:7; in Coleman, 2006:4). This is the same concept expressed by Graddol (1997), who has affirmed that it is more easy to obtain up-to-date text books and research articles of sciences in the English language than in other languages. As a result, it is rather accepted that “universities not offering English courses to their students risk exclusion from the scientific and academic worlds” (Costa and Coleman, 2013:5).

Finally, the spread of English in Higher Education can be well explained in the words of Coleman (2006:4), who observed that “while the global status of English impels its adoption in HE, the adoption of English in HE further advances its global influence”.

1.2 Some terminology: CLIL, ICLHE, EMI, EMEMUS

Different terminology is used to talk about different approaches, when learning through a language different from that of the native place where a student is born.

First of all, I want to mention the CLIL approach. The main characteristic of CLIL, which means Content and Language Integrated Learning, is the integration of content and language. Therefore, Marsh (1994, in Ament and Pérez-Vidal, 2015:49) has argued that “in CLIL the learning of language and other subjects is mixed in one way or another. This means that in the class there are two main aims, one related to the subject, topic or theme and one linked to the language”. Ament and Pérez-Vidal (2015) have mentioned some particular examples of CLIL. Some of them are elementary students in Switzerland, who are taught partially in German or French and the Basque Country’s multilingual schools. They are particular examples because they show that CLIL is not only used to teach in a foreign language, but also “to maintain and spread regional languages” (Ament and Pérez-Vidal, 2015:50).

The term CLIL is mostly used at the primary and secondary education, however, the closest synonym of it at the tertiary level is ICLHE, or Integrating Content and Language in Higher Education (Costa and Coleman, 2013). CLIL and ICLHE reflect a “dual-focused educational approach in which an additional language is used for the teaching of both content and language” (Guarda and Helm, 2016:2).

On the other hand, EMI is the teaching of a subject through a specific vehicle, namely English (Guarda and Helm, 2016). This is the characteristic that establishes a difference between EMI and ICLHE. In fact, EMI uses explicitly the English language, while ICLHE could be used for many other languages (Smith and Dafouz, 2012, in Ament and Pérez-Vidal, 2015).

Then, EMEMUS (English-Medium Education in Multilingual University Settings) is a term that “does not specify any particular pedagogical approach or research agenda” (Dafouz and Smith, 2014:3). In particular, EMEMUS indicates the “growing multilingual nature of higher education worldwide” and it refers to English-Medium education because English plays a key role both in the teaching and learning (Dafouz and Smith, 2014:3)

Many studies (Coyle, Hood, and Marsh, 2010; Aguilar and Rodríguez, 2012) has been conducted to understand if it is better a CLIL approach or an EMI approach, while studying a subject content through English. It has resulted that many are convinced that CLIL is better because “it entails support for both content and language” (Guarda and Helm, 2016:3). However, Van Der Walt (2013:45, in Guarda and Helm, 2016:3) has argued that “researchers have doubted that lecturers see their role as supporting students in acquiring academic language proficiency”.

1.3 Bologna Process

As I have mentioned in the first sub-chapter, the role of English is increasingly important in HE around the world and the European response to the international marketisation of tertiary education results in the so-called “Bologna Process”, a

Declaration¹ signed on 19th June 1999 in the Italian city of Bologna, which was initially formalized by 31 European countries. Actually, it derives from the Sorbonne Conference and Declaration of 1998 (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2015). It aimed at creating a borderless and democratic European Higher Education Area (EHEA) by 2010 (Coleman, 2006) and the countries that have officially signed it are, nowadays, 48. Among others Italy, Spain, Latvia, Greece, Finland, Lithuania, Cyprus, Estonia, Ireland, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Andorra, Moldova, Netherlands, Denmark, France, United Kingdom and Croatia² are included. Another member is the European Commission, and there are also **consultative members**, namely the Council of Europe, UNESCO, EUA, ESU, EURASHE, ENQA, Education International and BUSINESSEUROPE.

As Costa and Coleman (2013) have affirmed, this Declaration was designed to harmonise Higher Education across Europe and to provide mutual recognition of qualifications with the “adoption of a system of easily readable and comparable degrees [...] in order to promote European citizens employability and the international competitiveness of the European higher education system” (Bologna Declaration, 1999). Costa and Coleman (2013) have added that the Declaration aimed also to enhance mobility among students and graduates and to enable European Higher Education institutions to attract international students more easily. In fact, the Bologna Process proposed to create an area in which students could move freely between countries, “using prior qualifications in one country as acceptable entry requirements for further study in another” (Dimova et al., 2015:2). Moreover, the Declaration proposed a university system based on two main cycles, undergraduate, lasting a minimum of three years, and postgraduate and the establishment of a system of credits (such as ECTS) to promote student mobility (Bologna Process, 1999). The aim has been also to increase competitiveness with other educational strongholds in the world such as the US and, increasingly, China (Dimova et al., 2015:2).

Following the decision to enhance mobility and to avoid obstacles to free movements, the European Commission has launched different programmes (e.g.

¹ The text of the Declaration:

http://www.ehea.info/Uploads/Declarations/BOLOGNA_DECLARATION1.pdf

² The list of the 49 Countries; <http://www.ehea.info/countries-search-results.aspx?SearchString=>

Erasmus, Erasmus Mundus, etc.) in order to improve the internationalization of Higher Education (Doiz et al., 2011). The mobility of people and the Bologna Process require the development of new language policies and the first universities to provide changes in language instruction were concentrated in the north of Europe, as I will explain later. Then, EMI became establishment as a trend also in other parts of Europe (Ament and Pérez-Vidal, 2015:49).

1.4 Reasons for introducing EMI

Several scholars, such as Phillippon, Costa and Coleman and Wilkinson, have observed that the adoption of English in Higher Education embodies both economic and linguistic reasons. Among the economic ones, firstly, there is the fact that English-Taught Programmes have been implemented to attract more national and international students and lecturers (Guarda and Helm, 2016). This could be useful to attract “Brain Gain”, that is the recruitment of academic staff, top talents and students from outside the country, who could become a future work force (Wächter and Maiworm, 2014). Secondly, EMI programmes are important to prepare domestic students for the global labour market and thirdly to raise the profile of the institution (Doiz et al., 2011). According to Doiz (2011), one obvious way for non-English-speaking Higher Education destinations to compete is exactly to include English-medium instruction in their academic offer. In this way, they can improve their public image (Björkman, 2011:77) and “gain visibility at the international level, thus emulating and even competing with the world’s top universities located in Anglophone countries such as the USA and the UK” (Guarda and Helm, 2016:1). This is also confirmed by Wilkinson (2013:3), who has affirmed that the advent of ranking organizations generated “an atmosphere of competitiveness between institutions”. Senior administrators pay lot of attention on them and “note with pleasure and anxiety the relative ranks of their own institute and those with which they most wish to compare, i.e. their assumed competitors” (Wilkinson, 2013:3). Also in Wilkinson’s opinion (2013), even more institutions want to achieve high positions in the rankings and they try to reach the top-ranking universities (which are situated mostly in United States and Britain). In order to do so they try to put in practise what these top-universities do well and this results in the

implementation of courses in English. Moreover, another economical reason is the fact that the funding received by universities depend also by the performance of each university, and internationalization is one of the main performance indicators, as Helm has pointed out (2015).

Notwithstanding, Wilkinson et al. (2013), have argued that there are also idealistic and linguistic reasons, such as promoting multilingualism, creating world-citizens and strengthening internationalization at home. In order to achieve these goals, cooperation between students from different national and cultural backgrounds, who could work together in class, is important. Furthermore, Coleman (2006) has cited the participation of students in Higher Education exchange programmes as a further reason. In countries whose national language (or languages in some cases) is little taught in other national contexts, bilateral exchanges are only possible if courses are delivered through English. Therefore, the introduction of these types of programmes could abolish language obstacles for foreign students (Wächter and Maiworm, 2014). This is also stated by Ackerley (forthcoming: 1), who, speaking about the Italian context, affirms that “Italian students may be more prepared for study abroad if they have prior experience of following courses in English”. On the contrary, non-Italian students “are more likely to select a university if it offers courses in a language other than the host country’s language” (Ackerley, forthcoming:1).

Furthermore, Coleman (2006) has argued that the reasons for the introduction of EMI programmes range from the ethical and pedagogical to the pragmatic and the commercial. He has also listed seven categories of reasons that have impelled Higher Education Institutions to introduce programmes and courses taught through English. These seven categories are the following: CLIL (Content and Language Integrating Learning), internationalization, student exchanges, teaching and research materials, staff mobility, graduate employability and the market in international students.

To sum up, “this expansion in the use of English has a number of important advantages: with a common language, student and staff exchanges are much easier, collaboration between universities is livelier than ever, and job opportunities are more numerous” (Björkman, 2011:77). Therefore, English-medium courses are “a profitable enterprise for universities” (Björkman, 2011:77) and due to this fact, Shohamy (2013, in

Helm and Guarda, 2015:3) has argued that, EMI is often implemented for economic reasons and not by “the concrete interest in maximizing academic knowledge through a foreign language”.

On the whole, also Ackerley (forthcoming) reflects on this issue and sums up some studies, which all report benefits due to the introduction of EMI. I have just mentioned some of them in the previous paragraph. For example, students could improve their English language skills (Tatzl, 2011; Wilkinson, 2013), there could be an enhancement competitiveness on the job market (Al-Bakri, 2013; Kym & Kym, 2014) and students could prepare in a better way for an international career (Tatzl, 2011).

Finally, it is possible to say that, while the debates continue in many places, the use of English as a lingua franca has become accepted as a fact of life in European Higher Education (see e.g. Jakobsen, 2009).

1.5 EMI in Europe

1.5.1 Introduction

It is clear that European universities have been undergoing transformative changes centred on internalization and standardization and this is viewed as a process of “Enlishization”, that is an increased use of English (Dimova et al., 2015:1). In fact, European Higher Institutions have started offering courses, modules or complete degrees taught in English (Doiz et al., 2011:345).

“Although it is difficult to obtain comparable and up-to-date data numbers on English-medium programmes at universities in non-English dominant countries in Europe, most sources appear to document an unequivocal rise in the provision of English-medium instruction” (Dimova et al., 2015:3). For example, Doiz et al. (2011) have mentioned, in their work, some data derived from a study conducted by Wächter and Mainworn (2008). These data revealed how many courses are taught in Europe and they have reported that more than 2400 programmes were taught entirely in English in 2007, with an increase of 340 per cent of those in 2002 (only 700 programmes were taught in English in 2012). This study refers to both Bachelor courses and Masters

programmes. However, Wiseman et al. (2014) have reported some data about the increase on the number of Masters programmes taught in English in Europe. They wrote that there were 560 Masters programmes delivered in English in 19 EU countries (excluding the UK and Ireland) in 2002. By 2012, the courses had risen to 6,800 in 11 EU countries (excluding the UK and Ireland). As regards the educational level, “it is well-documented that EMI is significantly more widespread at master’s level than at undergraduate level” (Doiz et al., 2011:4).

The data mentioned above confirmed that the spread of these types of courses in Europe in the last two decades has reached figures previously unheard of (Doiz et al., 2011). However, this is a phenomenon that is clearly appearing globally and there is little doubt that the number will continue to rise (Wiseman et al., 2014).

In the following paragraphs, I will discuss about the situation of EMI programmes in Europe in more details. I will talk about the differences in the implementation of these programmes in the various parts of Europe and I will discuss separately about the situation in North European Country and in Southern European countries. Then, I will focus on the situation in Italy and, in particular, at the University of Padua.

1.5.2 A north-south divide

The accelerated introduction of EMI at university in the intervening years has led ever more European students into a bilingual existence, where English is the language of academic study (Costa and Coleman, 2013:3). However, the introduction of these types of courses has given rise to different reactions in different contexts. In some parts of Europe, it has been met with strong resistance, such as in Italy (with the case of the Politecnico di Milano, that I will discuss in the paragraph 5.3) and France, where EMI is viewed by some as a threat to the national language. In other parts of Europe, EMI has been introduced with less resistance, such as in Croatia and Germany. But the part where EMI seems to have been implemented without much resistance is the North of Europe (Dimova et al., 2015:2). As a result, although EMI has become common practise in European Higher Education, it is unequally spread across the continent (Mauranen,

2010) and this is confirmed by a study conducted by ACA³ (Academic Cooperation Association), in 2014, which has taken into account three indicators: institutions offering ETPs, study programmes fully taught in English and student enrolment in those programmes. According to this study, the leaders in providing EMI programmes are the Netherlands, Denmark and Sweden, followed by Finland, Cyprus, Switzerland, Lithuania and Latvia. On the contrary, the countries that score poorly are situated in South Europe (Wächter and Maiworm, 2014). Figure 1 illustrates the distribution of EMI courses in HE in Europe. The darker colours reveal where there is a higher percentage of EMI programmes.

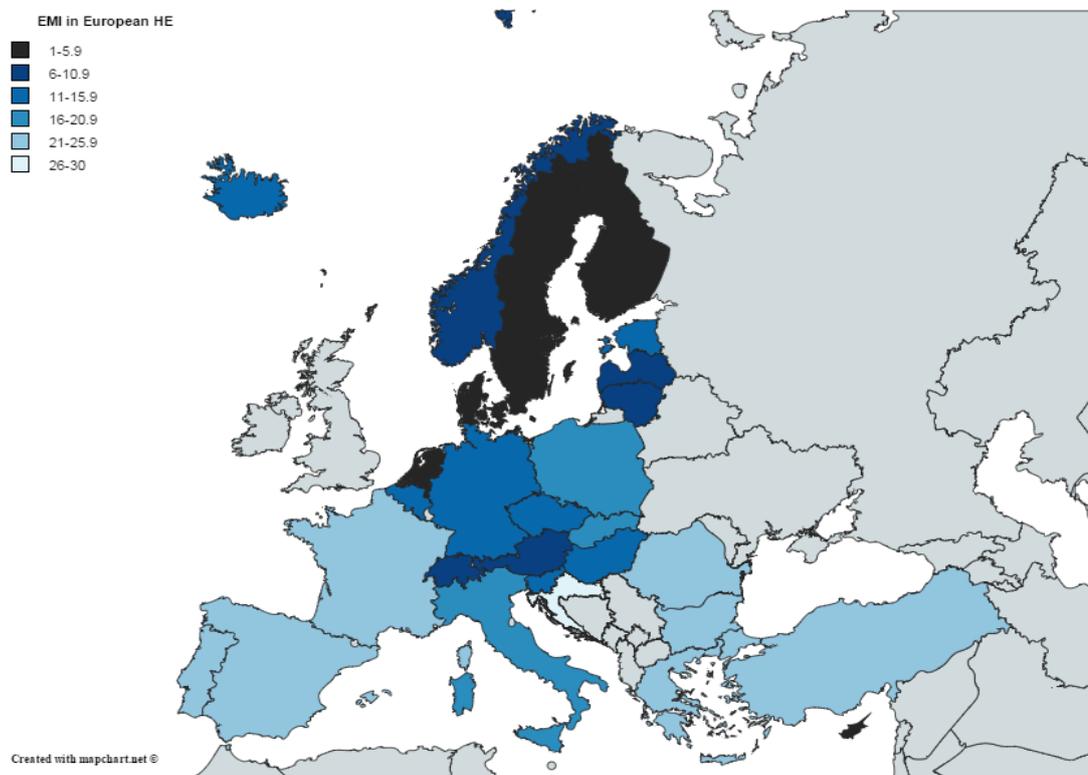


Figure 1: The spread of EMI in the European Area (Wächter and Maiworm, 2014)

I will talk about the different situation of EMI programmes in the followings paragraphs. I will start talking about the situation in the Northern European Countries and then I will discuss about Southern European Countries, focusing on the situation in Italy and, in particular, at Padua University.

³ For more information about ACA: <http://www.aca-secretariat.be/>

1.5.2.1 EMI in Northern European Countries

Northern European Countries have a stronger tradition in offering whole degrees in a language, mostly English, different to the students' native language. The Netherlands started pioneer work in EMI and now it stands out as the country with the largest number of master's programmes in English, followed by German and Sweden. As regards the average number of English-taught master's programmes per institution, the Netherlands is again at the forefront, followed by Denmark and Sweden (Wilkinson, 2003; Brenn-White and van Rest, 2012, in Dimova et al., 2015), as I have just mentioned in the previous sub-chapter. Graddol (2007) is convinced that the role of English in Nordic countries is so strong that it will become a second language in a short time). In the followings paragraphs I will discuss about the situation of EMI programmes in some particular North European Countries.

First of all, as mentioned before, one of the best examples of the implementation of EMI in the Northern European context is the Netherlands, and in particular the Dutch University of Maastricht. It has started to offer courses in English since 1987, opening a degree in International Management. The programme started in a prospective of bilingualism (Coleman, 2006), with some lectures delivered in French and German. However, this choice has proved to be not good for students, who seemed to have some problems with French and German, especially non-Dutch students. As a result, contents delivered in these two language have been ceased and courses have continued to be taught only in English. By the 1990s, other EMI programmes have been introduced and the number of students enrolled were surprisingly high. Other faculties, such as Arts and Culture and Psychology, started to offer EMI courses and, following the example of Maastricht university, other institutions in the Netherlands, such as Groningen, Rotterdam and Tilburg, started to offer these programmes (Wilkinson, 2013).

Secondly, Norway is another North European Country that is leading in the implementation of EMI courses. O'Driscoll (2004) has affirmed that some courses have been taught through English for 15 years in Norway. Moreover, Ljosland (2003, 2004, in Coleman, 2006) has argued that English in Higher Education has started to be taught also in other fields and this, in his opinion, would probably put Norwegian in a lower position with respect to English.

Thirdly, Finland is another particular example due to the fact that it has the largest number of English-medium programmes in HE compared to non-English-speaking countries. In many articles it is called “Little England”, because nowadays it is the second choice for that students who wanted to study in the UK as exchange students, but they failed to obtain it (Airey, 2004; Lehtikoinen, 2004; in Coleman, 2006).

Finally, Sweden is another interesting case. In this country there are high levels of English language competency around the population and it is at the forefront of EMI (Maiworm and Wächter, 2002, 2008, in Dimova et al., 2015). It was the Swedish Ministry of Education and Research that, in 2001, has promoted the implementation of these types of courses in a document, the white paper *Den öppna högskolan* [The Open University], arguing that EMI would have brought positive developments (Dimova et al, 2015).

1.5.1.2. EMI in Southern European Countries

As we have seen above, Nordic European countries have a long history and an high percentage of English-Taught programmes. However, the same it is not possible to be said as regards Southern European countries. Dafouz, Camacho and Urquia (2014) have argued that the level of English in Southern Europe is very low and this is the reason why there is a small rate of students involved in English-Taught programmes. Also Pulcini and Campagna (2015) have pointed out that “Mediterranean citizens have an average lower level of communicative competence and academic skills in English with respect to Northern Europeans” and this is confirmed by several local (Dafouz, 2007) and comparative studies (Berns and De Bot, 2008).

One example of Southern European Country is Spain, which is slow in the process of implementing EMI courses. However as Fortanet (2012:48, in Morell et. al, 2014) has affirmed “today, more and more universities in Spain are starting to design language policies, usually including Spanish and English”. One example is the University of Alicante, which is one of the five public universities that we can find in the Valencian Community. It is a bilingual university, where both Spanish and Catalan are used to teach. This university is undertaking a process of internationalization

(Morell et al., 2014) and this process is the result of the introduction of subject taught in English and the attitudes towards EMI have resulted to be very positive.

Another example is Italy, that is a newcomer to English-Medium Instruction in Europe. For this reason, Italy is certainly behind many Northern European Countries as regards the implementation of English-Taught Programmes (ETPs), as courses in English have recently begun to be taught and this language is not generally used outside the school (European Commission, 2012; in Helm and Guarda, 2015). As well as Spain, despite these facts, the situation is evolving rapidly and, nowadays, the number of these courses is increasing fast (Helm, 2015). As the situation of Italy is distinctive, I will talk about it in details in the next chapter.

In sum, there are not doubts as regards the better situation of Nordic European countries in the implementation of EMI courses. However, there are some changes, even if they result to be very slowly (Coleman, 2006).

1.6 EMI in Italy

1.6.1 Introduction

Costa and Coleman (2013) affirmed that the situation of EMI courses in the Italian context is distinctive, but it is representative of Southern Europe. In fact, as I have just mentioned in the previous chapter, EMI is a new phenomenon in Italy and “the turn towards English as a medium of instruction, which started in the 1990s, is only in its early stages” (Pulcini and Campagna, 2014:182). The introduction of a new law about universities, the *Legge Gelmini 240/2010*, represented a crucial stage in the implementation of EMI course in Italy. This law aims to increase cooperation between universities as regards study and research, to improve students’ and lecturers’ mobility and to introduce study programmes or teaching programmes taught in a foreign language (Costa and Coleman, 2013). Anyway, as Helm and Guarda (2015:5) have stated, “English is still quite far from being the language of Higher Education in Italy” and the reasons for the introduction of EMI are, as in many other parts of Europe, economical rather than educational (Costa and Coleman, 2013). As a matter of fact,

Costa and Coleman (2013) have described EMI as a top-down phenomenon and this means that it derives from the needs of the institutions rather than from a need felt by lecturers.

Moreover, Italy does not seem to be very international. In fact, on one hand, Helm (2015) has affirmed that the teaching staff is represented by 99% of Italian lecturers and only 1% are non-Italian. The data given by Helm (2015) are in line with a survey conducted at the Politecnico of Turin in 2013. Analysing the data of this survey, Pulcini (2015) has argued that all the lecturers are Italian speakers and 53% of them studied English at school, 22% of them affirmed to have improved their language skills during research projects abroad, 10% of lecturers studied it privately, 8% at university, 5% during post-university courses and only 1% of lecturers have studied it abroad. Moreover, few universities require lecturers to have some kind of certification to teach in English and only recently some reforms have tried to encourage institutions to engage international lecturers (Helm, 2015). On the other hand, also the student population is not very international in comparison to countries such as the UK or Germany (Helm, 2015). However, the number of students seems to increase and Italy is involved in the ERASMUS project with a high percentage of sending and receiving students, with 2589 sending and 4859 receiving students during the academic year 2013/2014 (European Commission, 2014). Therefore, there is the desire to attract more and more international students across Europe and the rest of the world and this is one of the driving forces of EMI in Italy (Helm, 2015).

1.6.2 The Italian context

Italy is mainly monolingual, with Italian as the official language, and bilingualism is present only in the Trentino Alto Adige region and in the Val d'Aosta region. Costa and Coleman (2013:6) have stated that “despite the growing international role of English, Italy lags behind other European countries in terms of multilingualism and in particular the learning of English”⁴. This is the reason why, since the 1990s several educational reforms have been introduced to improve English language skills,

⁴ For more information: http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/index_en.htm

for example the introduction of English from the beginning of the elementary school, as a subject. Moreover, the Lombardy region has introduced bilingual primary state schools as a pilot project, in collaboration with the British Council and the Ministry of Education. Most recently, primary and secondary school reforms and documents (Legge Moratti 53/2003; DL 17.10.2010 n.226) have been introduced to modernize the educational system. They call for the teaching of one subject in English for one or three years, depending on the type of secondary school (Costa and Coleman, 2013:6) and this programme is called CLIL (See sub-chapter 2 of this Chapter). Instead, the so-called Riforma Gelmini, approved in 2010, has given “autonomous status” to universities, among other innovations. This means that each university is free to offer degree programmes in line with social and local needs, to set specific educational goals, to adopt admission prerequisites, to apply innovative teaching methods and to offer opportunities for vocational experiences such as job placements (Pulcini and Campagna, 2015). Despite these reforms, Italian university students seem to have generally poor levels of English for EMI and they also admit it (Costa, 2016, Costa and Coleman, 2013). This is also argued by Pulcini and Campagna (2015), who have affirmed that English as a subject, is taught everywhere in Italy during compulsory education, but most university students have only a basic knowledge of English, with serious problems in the comprehension and communicative skills. They have added that an excellent level of knowledge in English is an utopia in the Italian context of HE.

As regards the numbers of EMI programmes in Italy, Costa (forthcoming) has affirmed that there have not been many studies regarding the number of ETPs in Italian universities. The data about the Italian situation came from three studies, which are the study conducted by the CRUI (Conference of Italian University Chancellor), the data of the Ministry of Education’s *Universitaly*⁵ website and the study of Costa and Coleman (2013).

First of all, the study conducted by Costa and Coleman (2013) describes the situation of English-medium programmes in Italy, revealing the results of a survey conducted in 2010. For this study, a questionnaire was sent to 76 Italian universities and 38 of them answered (comprising 7 private and 31 public and 21 coming from the

⁵ More information about *Universitaly* at: <http://www.universitaly.it/#null>

North, 8 from the Centre and 9 from the South). The survey has revealed that most of the universities involved in the study (74%) were offering English-taught courses and these were generally situated in the North and Centre of Italy. As regards the subjects that are most taught, the Economic and Engineering faculties had the majority of courses. These data did not surprise the authors of the survey, as they are subject which by nature are international. Moreover, English-Taught Programmes are more frequent at Master's level (Costa and Coleman, 2013) and, again, this is not something new in the European scenario.

Secondly, the data of the Ministry of Education's University⁶ website demonstrated that in 2015 fifty-two Italian universities were offering a total of 245 English-Taught Programmes, with an increase of 72% with respect to 2014, when 142 ETPs were offered in thirty-nine universities. The majority of these courses (90%) were at Master's level. Moreover, these data show that the universities in north Italy were those with the highest number of courses, such as the Politecnico di Milano, the university of Bologna, Trento, Padua and Tor Vergata. As regards the subject areas, most of the programmes were in Engineering and Economics (Helm, 2015). On the other hand, data (Wächter and Maiworm, 2008) revealed that fewer courses were taught in a foreign language in Psychology, Medicine, Environmental science, Biotechnology, Art and Design (Costa and Coleman, 2013). According to Costa (forthcoming), these data highlight a changing situation, but it would be useful to have new studies on the number and the characteristics of EMI in the various institutions involved.

Thirdly, a more recent student was conducted by the CRUI in 2006. The survey has revealed the number of Master's programmes, PhD and Winter and Summer Schools for the year 2016/2017. The survey was conducted in 80 Italian Universities and it has revealed that 60 out of 80 universities will offer a total of 682⁷ English-Taught Programmes next year. Pulcini and Campagna (2015) have argued that the data presented by the CRUI report over the past few years shows that Italy is trying to "catch up with the European trend and standards in the promotion of English-Medium

⁷ For more data about this survey: <http://www.crui.it/component/k2/item/2521-corsi-in-lingua-inglese-master-universitari-dottorati-e-winter-summer-school.html>

Instruction in higher education”. This is a study that differs from the study of University, which takes into account only Bachelor’s degrees and Master’s degrees.

The reasons for the introduction of EMI programmes in Italy do not seem to be very different from the reasons that have risen from other several studies (for example those conducted by Phillippson, Costa and Coleman, Wilkinson, etc.), which I have mentioned above. In fact, the most common motives which have risen from Costa and Coleman’s survey (2013:11) are the improvement of the international profile of the university, the attractiveness of foreign students and the preparation of students for the global market. Instead, the improvement of English language proficiency and the promotion of interculturality obtained a low score and this shows that economical reasons are more strong than didactical and cultural ones. For a more specific overview, the figure below (Figure 2) shows the main reasons and the relative percentage obtained in the questionnaire.

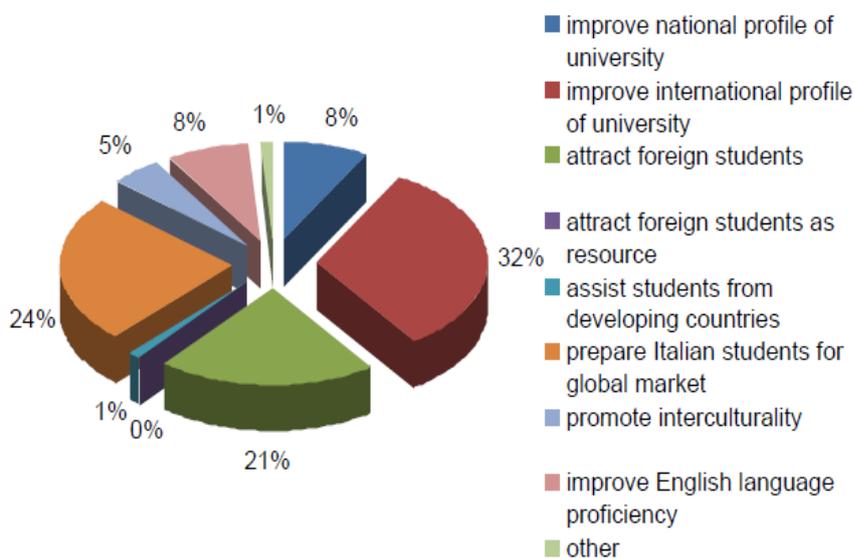


Figure 2: Reasons for the introducing EMI in Italy (Costa and Coleman, 2013)

1.6.3 The case of the Politecnico di Milano

A recent event which illustrates the controversy about EMI in Italy is the case of the Politecnico di Milano. The Rector of the Politecnico di Milano, Giovanni Azzone, announced, in February 2012, that all post-graduate and doctoral courses would be taught entirely in English from the academic year 2014-15. The Rector was convinced that “such a choice would attract more foreign students and lecturers, thus providing the students with the chance to widen their cultural awareness within an international setting, and to become more competitive in the job market” (Corriere della Sera, 2012). He has added, in an interview of BBC news, that the classes at the Politecnico should be international and the only way to have international classes it to use English. Moreover, he has argued that universities are in a more competitive world and the implementation of English is the only alternative “if you want to stay with the other global universities” (BBC news, 2012). Furthermore, he has stated that he would have preferred that Italian was the common language, instead it is English that is the language of Higher Education now, and in his opinion we have to accept it as a matter of fact (BBC news, 16th May 2012). The idea of the Rector has caused a strong debate in Italy: on one hand, the former Higher Education minister Francesco Profumo supported the introduction of EMI and hoped that also other universities would have followed the example of the Politecnico. On the other hand, several scholars and lecturers were against to this choice (Helm and Guarda, 2015). Tullio De Mauro, a linguist, affirmed that it is not correct to exclude Italian from university programmes because it would have effects on the students’ intelligence. Also Luca Serianni, another linguist, claimed that it is correct to promote internationalization, but if this does not represent a danger for the language spoken in the country (Corriere della Sera, 2012). Another opponent of the English-only formula is the Accademia della Crusca, an Italian institution that represents and promotes the Italian language and culture, as Pulcini and Campagna (2015) have remembered. Of the same idea were also hundreds of professors of the Politecnico, who have filed an appeal at the Regional Administrative Tribunal (TAR) because they thought that the decision of the Rector would have been detrimental effects. The court has accepted the opinions of these professors and has condemned the decision of the Politecnico affirming that this choice would have affected the freedom of teaching and the right to study (Corriera della Sera, May 24th 2013). The reasons why the TAR

rejected English-only programmes were the following. First of all, Pulcini and Campagna (2015:69) have reported that “obliging lecturers to teach in English against their will is an infringement of article 33 of the Italian Constitution ratifying the freedom of teaching”. Secondly, the decision “clashes with the principle of equality stated in article 3 of the Italian Constitution to which no discrimination should be made in terms of various socio-cultural parameters including language”. Thirdly, it contradicts the statement of the Royal Decree of 31 August 1993 that “prescribes that the official language of courses and examinations is Italian in all the public universities in Italy”. Finally, it is also against the university reform law 240/2010 which “foster the integration of cultures, not the imposition of one culture over another, a fact that will restrict and not increase the educational offer”, as affirmed by the TAR. The Politecnico is now waiting for the decision of the Constitutional Court (Pulcini, 2015).

This case has caused not only the reaction of many experts, but also of many journalists and people in general. Among these, Pulcini (2015) has mentioned Nicoletta Maraschio, who was the Academia della Crusca’s President. She wrote the book “Fuori l’italiano dall’università? Inglese, internazionalizzazione, politica linguistica”. In this book Maraschio reports the opinions of many experts about the choice of giving up the national language in Higher Education. Pulcini (2015) has confirmed that the prevailing position is that English is a fundamental tool for scientific and professional exchanges, but its imposition is not correct. Moreover, she has highlighted the necessity to teach the Italian language and culture at foreign students, even those who follow an entirely degree in English.

This case is an “exception to the rule”, given the fact that it is the only public university which has tried to transform all of its Master’s degrees courses from the Italian language to the English’s one and most other universities in Italy have a relatively small percentage of courses in English, even if they are growing, as Helm (2015) has pointed out. However, this case was a clear warning sign and the first recognition by Italian academics, that EMI was beginning to spread in a pervasive manner in Italian universities (Costa, forthcoming).

1.7 EMI at the University of Padua

The University of Padua started to introduce EMI programmes from the academic year 2009/2010, even if it offered only individual courses in that moment. Therefore the presence of English in Higher Education in Italy represents a fairly new phenomenon and this decision was taken to follow the same trends of other European institutions. The main reasons for the introduction were precisely to attract foreign student and promote the internationalization of the institution (Helm and Guarda, 2015). Then, the university started to promote entire programmes in English during the academic year 2011/2012 and, again, the reasons for their implementation were not as different as those found in the Costa and Coleman (2013) survey, such as to attract foreign students and to promote international mobility. According to Helm and Guarda (2015), the University of Padua offered 27 English-Taught Programmes and 275 individual EMI courses in the academic year 2013/2014. The same authors affirmed that it is not a big number, with respect to the total courses, but the number is growing rapidly. In fact, the University of Padua offered 914 individual EMI courses in the academic year 2014/2015 and it will offer 39 ETPs and 923 individual courses the next academic year (2016/2017).

Anyway, international students represented a low percentage in this university (4% of the student population) in the year 2015 and 90% of the 2300 lecturers are Italian. This confirms that the number of international teaching staff is low, as in most Italian universities (Guarda and Helm, 2016).

1.7.1 The LEAP Project

One of the most important entities which helps the development of EMI programmes at the university of Padua is the CLA⁸ (Centro Linguistico di Ateneo), that is the University Language Centre. During the academic year 2013/2014 it launched, in collaboration with the International Relations Office of the University of Padua, the LEAP (Learning English for Academic Purposes) Project. This was created to help lecturers in the new experience of teaching in English, giving them both language and

⁸ For more information about the CLA: <http://cla.unipd.it/>

pedagogical support. Its aim is to ensure high quality and effective EMI, to identify the need of lecturers involved and to assess the quality of the programmes (Helm and Guarda, 2015). Moreover, it wanted “to identify the experiences and concerns of these lecturers so as to design and deliver ad-hoc training options which could respond to their need” (Guarda and Helm, 2016:4). In fact, in order to fulfil these objectives, some training activities were offered, such as an International Summer School in June 2013, an intensive Summer Course at a university in Dublin and individual Language Advising (Helm and Guarda, 2015). A selection was made because of the limited number of places and the precedence was given to those lecturers who were already teaching through English. In fact, one of the primary aims of the International Relations Office was to improve the quality of existing courses (Guarda and Helm, 2016).

7.1.1.2 The point of view of lecturers

In order to understand needs, expectation and, general opinions about EMI programmes, a questionnaire was sent to all professors at the university. The answers to this survey were very important for the CLA, as it shows lecturers’ attitudes towards this programme. The study involved both lecturers with previous experience in teaching through English and those who had never taught in this language. The majority of respondents affirmed that their experience with an English-Taught course was generally positive, labelling it as “exiting and stimulating”, or “both positive and negative”. Only a few lecturers pointed out that their experience was a fully negative one (Helm and Guarda, 2015). Lecturers were also asked to reflect on their concerns and their strengths and weaknesses about EMI. Most of the respondents seemed to be aware of the challenges that the teaching through English has and the majority of lecturers were also aware of the need to have a different approach when teaching in a language different from their own. As Helm and Guarda (2015:19) pointed out in the conclusions of their work, this kind of lecturers’ awareness “reflects a recognized need on the part of lecturers to develop didactic competences in an international context and an openness to training courses”. These data are very significant because they are in contrast with some other studies conducted by Aguilar and Rodríguez (2012), Cots (2013) and Costa (2013) (in Helm and Guarda, 2015:19), who have affirmed that lecturers “see EMI as merely

being a change in the vehicle of communication and not requiring an adaptation of methodology” and that they are not willing to accept training courses. When the professors were asked to list their weaknesses in using English, aspects such as lack of fluency, vocabulary, speaking skills, pronunciation, accent and lack of a specific methodology and self-confidence, have risen. Moreover, the lecturers of Padua university affirmed that they have difficulties especially in dialogic episodes and, as Helm and Guarda (2015) have affirmed, these results are in line with other studies, such as those of Lehtonen et al. (2003) and Tange (2010). As regards the strength, the writing seemed to be the activity that lecturers are more confident with. In conclusion, Helm and Guarda (2015) have discovered that lecturers consider spoken fluency and informal interaction skills as the major weaknesses and they generally admit that they may need training courses in order to change their teaching methodology and their pedagogic approach. However, the findings cannot be generalize because this was a study conducted in a specific national context, a single institution, but they are very interesting because they found that “English is an important concern for lecturers in contexts where English is not commonly spoken” (Helm and Guarda, 2015:20).

As I mentioned before, different types of training courses were offered for lecturers already involved in English-Taught programmes and at the end of them survey questions, both closed and opened, and feedbacks were collected in order “to evaluate the success and appropriateness of the professional development offered by the language centre [...] and to feed into the design of future programmes” (Guarda and Helm, 2016:5). Moreover, interviews were carried out at the end of the same academic year, when teaching training were offered. One of the most significant thing that has emerged from these surveys was the fact that several lecturers found pedagogy training as an unexpected part of the course. This may be linked to the fact that these course were organized by the Language Centre, which typical deliver language courses (Guarda and Helm, 2016). Moreover, another interesting issue that has risen is the fact that lecturers feel the need to receive support and guidance. This finding is again in contrast with Costa’s (2012:43) observation, who has argued that “it is difficult to image that experienced subject specialists with high social status (such as Italian university lecturers) will accept any form of training.

1.7.1.2 The point of view of students

Several studies have been conducted about the attitudes of students about EMI's programmes around the world. More generally, Troudi and Jendli (2011:34) has argued that there is a "general acceptance and recognition of the international status of English and its role in development, economy, and global communication" among students. As regards the reasons why students choose to attend an EMI course, the most common seems to be the necessity to improve the knowledge of English. For example, the survey conducted by Kym and Kym (2014:53-54) has showed that 53% of the students chose to learn in an EMI programme "to improve their English communicative ability", followed by only 17% who decided to follow these types of degrees or courses for their future job. As a result, students appear to be more interested in their language competence and career than improving their knowledge of the subject they are studying (Ackerley, forthcoming). But, what do students think at the University of Padua? Ackerley (forthcoming) carried out a survey among 111 students of the university, 98 of them were from Italy and 13 from other countries, in order to find out what students think about the introduction of EMI. As regards students' perception about the disadvantages of these programmes, the survey shows that a minority of students (2) think that there are not advantages when someone follows a course in English. On the contrary, 18 of students (20) affirmed that there are not disadvantages. However, the most significant data shows that students were worried about the problems related with their poor linguistic skills (73.9% of the students). On the other hand, the major advantage (with a percentage of 74.7%) of EMI, seems to be the learning of English. Moreover, students were also asked to say how much they had understood when they began the EMI course. Data show that 56.7% of students understood most of the lessons, 26% students affirmed that the lessons were easy to understand, 16.2% reported that they understood a little part of the lesson and only one student stated that he/she have understood anything. These data have resulted relevant when they were compared with the level of understanding of the lessons, achieved by students at the end of the course. Ackerley (forthcoming:15) has found that "students who already had a high level of comprehension at the beginning of the course did not improve much, whilst most of those who reportedly only understood some of the lessons at the beginning made considerable improvements". To sum up, the results of this questionnaire proved

that attitudes towards EMI are generally positive. However it is not possible to ignore the negative responses (Ackerley, forthcoming).

1.8 EMI: Dilemmas and Problems

Plentiful studies have confirmed that EMI is an effective way to improve students' English proficiency "by capitalizing on their experience of using English to acquire their subject knowledge" (Joe and Lee, 2012:201). However, Doiz et al. (2011) have affirmed that while the number of programmes in English offered by European universities has increased dramatically, their implementation poses various questions and also Mauranen (2010) agreed with this statement, saying that the recent linguistic developments in the university would have not been without criticism. In the paragraphs I will discuss about different problems concerning EMI programmes. In particular, I will talk about problems related to lecturers' and students' competence, to universities as institutions and to the local languages.

1.8.1 Lecturers' competence

Lecturers play a crucial role in the learning process, therefore they should be prepare to teach in a language that, in many cases, is not their own or that it is not the native language of the majority of students. According to some studies, some problems of EMI programmes are linked to lecturers' language competence. For example, Doiz et al. (2011:347) have argued that the "adequacy of the teachers' linguistic competence to deliver the courses in English" is an important factor in the EMI programmes, because these courses, generally taught by non-native speakers of English lecturers, may result in inefficiency in content delivery and lack of lecturers English proficiency. In fact, EMI classes, held by teachers "who have probably been accustomed to teaching in the majority of cases in their native tongue to native speakers" (Klassen and De Graaff, 2001:281), may result in "lack of clarity, redundancy and expressiveness of the lecturers" (Vinke, 1995, in Klassen and De Graaff, 2001:282). In the same way, there might be problems with pronunciation, accent, fluency and a lack of non-verbal

behaviour. In fact, in these kinds of classes, lecturers tend to focus on language production and this may “affect the lecturers’ didactical skills in the sense that they are less flexible in conveying the lecture material, resulting in long monologues, a lack of rapport with students, humour and interaction” (Klaassen and De Graff, 2001:282).

Moreover, as Ackerley (forthcoming) has pointed out, the quality of English of the lecturers may be an additional problem for students, who should already face the challenge of following a lesson in a foreign language. Also Kym and Kym (2014), who have studied students’ attitudes towards native English speaker lecturers and Korean and Chinese speaker lecturers, have found that that the quality of English of lecturers is important. In fact, they have discovered that students were more satisfied when the teacher was a native speaker of English because communication in class might not be weak, if the lecturer is a native speaker of English. On the other hand, this does not happen if the lecturer is Korean, because students may not be motivated to sustain communication in English in class, as they share the same native language.

In sum, there is the risk that, the lecturer’s English, although good, may not be specialized enough (Wiseman et al., 2014). Therefore, this kind of teaching needs “a higher focus on methodology than in the past, where pedagogic skills have not been an essential prerequisite to a successful university career (Ball and Lindsay, 2013; in Helm and Guarda, 2015:4).

1.8.2 Students’ competence

According to Doiz et al. (2011), another important issue is the students’ understanding of the content knowledge. In fact, as Joe and Lee (2012) have argued, students can face with problems with theory conceptualization. Therefore, there is the necessity of higher level of concentration on the part of the students than in a mother tongue situation, mainly when the lecturer’s explanation is not clear (Klaassen and De Graff, 2001). In this case, Klaassen and De Graaff (2001:282) have added that “students’ attention span and listening comprehension skills may not be sufficient to meet the demanding task of listening to long stretches of talk”. Therefore, teachers should address the needs of their students, trying to make content matter more

accessible (Klaassen and De Graaff, 2001). In order to avoid the problems of comprehension, European universities have started to introduce entry requirements for international and even local students, who want to attend an English-Taught course (Jenkins, 2014, in Guarda and Helm, 2016). This is what commonly occurs in the UK, where international students take entrance tests in order to assess their English competence (Guarda and Helm, 2016).

1.8.3 Problems for the quality of university programmes

Another problem related to English-medium instruction programmes may be the fact that some subjects, such as law, require the acquisition of a specialized terminology in the domestic language of students, in prevision of a future work in their own country (Wächter and Maiworm, 2014). Therefore, if students learn in a language that is not their own, they might have problems with their future job, because they did not have acquired the specific terminology of their subject. However, this would not be a problems for those students who think to go abroad after their studies. In fact, students who learn in English would be facilitate if they will work in a English-speaking country.

According to Doiz et al. (2011), there is also the possible detrimental effect on the quality of the programmes at the universities, due to the establishment of English-medium courses. This could be a result of all the problems listed above, concerning with lecturers and students' competence, but not only those. For example, according to Vinke (1995, in Klaassen and De Graaff, 2001:282), “in a second language lecturers are likely to cover less material in the allotted time as opposed to lecturers teaching in their native taught” and this could result in a worse preparation for students involved in these programmes.

1.8.4 Problems for local languages

As Preisler at al. (2008, in Mauranen, 2010) have argued, the adoption of English as the language of instruction in Higher Education may cause even nationally well-established majority languages to suffer domain loss. In fact, there can be implications

for the local languages and EMI can be seen as a threat to the status and development of it (Wiseman et al., 2014).

Moreover, the introduction of teaching in English has added to the attractiveness of many European Universities. Notwithstanding, in this way, English has become the academic lingua franca in European Higher Education, despite the will of the European Commission and the European Action Plan to boost multilingualism and multiculturalism at university (See Paragraph 2 of this Chapter). These two authorities also consider the European Higher Institutions as promoters of language learning and linguistic diversity (European Commission, 2004, in Doiz et al., 2011). However, with the spread of English, the countries belonging to Kachru's Inner Circle (English-speaking countries) are for the most part monolingual (Doiz et al., 2011). Therefore, Costa and Coleman (2013:17) have affirmed that the Bologna Process has undermined the will of the European Union to boost multilingualism, as the internalization process is not possible to be separate from the Englishisation of Higher Education. However, as regards local languages, Madsen (2008, in Mauranen, 2010) has affirmed that some studies have produced evidence indicating that the use of the local language has not been reduced as a consequence of English-Medium Instruction. Also Dimova et al. (2015) agreed with this view, affirming that English has become the international lingua franca, especially in the HE, but it is not responsible to the detrimental of other European languages. Interestingly, the strongest fears about the detrimental effects of English-medium programmes on learning have been abated in the course of the last few years, possibly with increasing experience of these programmes in action (Wächter, 2008, in Mauranen, 2010).

1.8.5 Conclusion

Finally, taking into consideration all these concerns and problems, researchers agree with the fact that it is necessary to do more research on English-Medium instruction because “little empirical research has been conducted on the relationship between students' English proficiency and academic performance [...]” (Joe and Lee, 2012:202). Notwithstanding, language competence of students and lecturers is an

important problem that affects several countries where English-Taught programmes are being introduced (Dearden, 2014; in Guarda and Helm, 2016). Therefore, it is clear that English-Medium Instruction poses challenges both for students and for lecturers and it is also necessary that the latter become aware of the difficulties of their students, who may need support and guidance to access knowledge in a language that it is not their own (Helm and Guarda, 2015).

SECOND CHAPTER: *The importance of interaction in the learning process*

2.1 Introduction

As I have explained in the first chapter, there is a trend toward internationalization in the tertiary level of education not only in Europe, but also worldwide. This phenomenon results in the introduction of even more English-Medium Instruction programmes in non English-speaking countries. After the Bologna Process, even more classes at university in Europe are characterized by the fact that they are taught in English. The switch to native language-taught programmes and English-taught programmes represents a challenge, especially for the reason that English is often no-one's native language in a class (Björkman, 2010). For this reason, different issues may arise in these type of classes, especially in those where the lecturer and students are both non-native speakers of English and “both need to meet the challenges caused by a lecturing language different from [their] own” (Björkman, 2010:78).

In this second chapter I will talk about the importance of interaction in a classroom context, focusing especially on English-Medium Instruction classes or on English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) classes. As Mariotti (2007) has pointed out, English-Medium Instruction courses are characterized by the fact that students are evaluated on the subject knowledge they have acquired during the course rather than on their proficiency in the second language and this could motivate students to interact, even in traditional classes. I will then speak about the various pragmatic strategies used by lecturers to help students in the understanding of the lecture, taking into account that communicative effectiveness is not always ensured by high proficiency in the language. In fact, as Björkman (2010:87) has argued “lecturers who are highly proficient in English do not necessarily make good lecturers unless they make frequent use of communication-enhancing pragmatic strategies”.

Then I will briefly speak about the factors that could influence interaction in a classroom. In particular, I will focus on some interaction techniques, especially on the importance and role of questions in the teaching process. I will try to give different

classifications of questions, which derived from different studies, such as that of Thompson (1998), Dalton-Puffer (2007), Fontanet Gómez (2004) and Morell (2004). I will also explain briefly some other techniques.

Moreover, in order to look at interaction in some specific contexts, I will introduce some studies that have dealt with the role of interaction or, in particular, the role of questions in the classroom, giving one example of a study conducted in Sri Lanka and then other examples of studies conducted in Europe.

2.2 The importance of interaction in class: a general overview

2.2.1 Typology of classes

In order to understand the relevance of interaction is significant in classroom contexts, it is important to give some classifications of different types of classes. I will introduce the distinction proposed by Björkman (2010) and Morell (2004).

Firstly, there is the difference between a monologic class and a dialogic class. The monologic classes “require listeners to focus on long stretches of talk with few opportunities, if any, to negotiate meaning” (Björkman, 2010:79). Dialogic classes, on the contrary, “allow itself to the negotiation of meaning”. (Björkman, 2010). Moreover, Björkman (2010) has affirmed that “monologic events, where the listener has very few opportunities, if any, to check his/her own understanding, are where misunderstandings and general comprehension problems are most likely to occur” (Björkman, 2010:85). In addition, as Mauranen (2006) has affirmed, there might be a high percentage of misunderstanding in lingua franca communications, when the participants do not share a native language and this happens because the command of the language of the speakers might be imperfect.

Secondly, Morell (2004) has mentioned two types of lectures in his study: conventional non-interactive and interactive. On one hand, Goffman (1981, in Morell, 2004) has defined non-interactive lectures as “institutionalized extended holdings of the floor in which one speaker imparts his views on a subject [...]. The style is typically serious and slightly impersonal, the controlling intent being to generate calmly

considered understanding, not mere entertainment, emotional impact or immediate action”. On the other hand, Northcott (2001, in Morell, 2004:327) has described interactive lectures as lectures “[...] primarily controlled and led by a lecturer and including subject input from the lecturer but also including varying degrees and types of oral participation by students”. Therefore, as Morell (2004) has argued in one of his previous works, the distinction between the two types of lectures can be found in the number of student interventions and also in the degree of formality of them. For example, Morell has considered a lecture to be interactive when more than half of the students intervene in a university classroom of fifty minutes (Morell, 2007).

2.3 The importance of interaction in class

Several studies have focused on the benefits of interaction as a way to improve comprehension and enhance the communicative competence of students. Some studies, such as those of Gass (1997), Gass and Madden (1985), Long (1981) and others have studied this topic from a psycholinguistic perspective, focusing on the importance of interaction and negotiation of meaning in conversation and also on the carrying out of language learning tasks. However, Brenn (2001), Morell (2002) and others have studied it from a socio-cultural perspective, focusing on the importance of interaction to facilitate language development (Morell, 2004).

In contrast, Morell (2004) has argued that the interpersonal factors (those related with the establishment of relationships between lecturers and students) have not been studied very much. But, some ethnographic studies (e.g. Benson, 1989; Northcott, 2001; Rounds, 1987) have revealed that the lecture cannot only be described as a spoken text, but also as a social event “where the lecturer can enhance participation and facilitate comprehension” (Morell, 2004:326). These studies put emphasis on the lecturers’ function of “not only knowing what is to be transmitted through the discourse but how it is to be conveyed, so that an appropriate environment for interaction and learning is created” (Morell, 2004:326).

2.4 The importance of interaction in a university lecture

2.4.1 The university class

Fontanet (2005) has affirmed that university lectures have the form of expository classrooms and this is the model that is traditionally present in the university instruction. Bamford (2005) has also argued that lectures are typically characterized by one speaker and a group of students that only listen to the lecture and sometimes ask questions, laugh or murmur to show approval or disapproval. However, there is the need to take into account the role of the listener in a university classroom. For this reason, Bamford (2005:125) has added that lectures “constitute language events in which students are initiated into a discourse community where problems are presented as solvable and where relations are established with a person who has solved these problems personally”.

In contrast, the effectiveness of the traditional model of university teaching is under discussion in the last years because there is a rejection of the passive way of instruction, where “learning takes place by acquiring and storing information” (Crawford Camiciottoli, 2007:3). For example, Gold et al. (1991) have affirmed that the learning process could have other forms, such as that of a discussion or a reflection. Another example is that of Lave and Wenger (1990), who have pointed out that “effective learning is not achieved through the transmission of knowledge, but through processes of social co-participation that transform newcomers into member of a community of practice, as occurs in apprenticeship”. Moreover, Blich (2000) has affirmed that the audience’s attention decreases after twenty or thirty minutes since the beginning of the lecture and the transmission of information by lecturers may result difficult due to longer stretches of talk.

In some cases, lectures are preferred to seminars, or, in general, to more interactive teaching methods. One reason for this preference is the fact that they are the only possible teaching method in classes with an high number of students, as typically occurs in today’s academic world. Moreover, it is easier for students to have the content prepared than finding it for themselves, because, in this way, students could streamline the learning of the subject (Crawford Camiciottoli, 2007).

In order to give a response to the various critics about the lecture style, various studies suggest how to improve the structure of a class. Some studies analyze various ways to structure lecture content, others focus on the use of reinforcement strategies to help students in assimilating content. The former indicates technological devices (such as PowerPoint) as good tools to structure and present information. The latter refers to the “repetition of key concepts and important points, or short review tasks or quizzes incorporated directly into the lecture” (Crawford Camiciottoli, 2007:4). Moreover, some researchers have affirmed that questions, asides and inclusive personal pronouns are other important tools to engage students into the learning process in a better and more productive way (e.g. Bamford, 2005; Zorzi, 1999; Rounds, 1987; in Crawford Camiciottoli, 2007).

2.4.2 Interaction in a university class

In general, university lectures have always been monologic and teacher-fronted (Goffman, 1981), as I have already affirmed. In this way, Bamford (2005:124) has affirmed that one important problem of most analyses and studies about academic lectures is “that they consider lecturers and students as two non-interactive participants in the lecturing process”. However, recent studies, such as those of Morell (2007) and Crawford Camiciottoli (2004), have found that university teachers are gradually assuming the role of facilitator in the learning process, shifting away from being a “knowledge-provider” and “an institutionalized extended holding the floor” (Dafouz Milne and Sánchez García, 2013:132). The main focuses of the studies conducted on academic lectures have focused on lecture introductions (e.g. Lee, 2009), the interactive nature of lecture discourse (e.g. Rounds, 1987), discourse markers and signalling cues (e.g. Dunkel and Davis, 1994). Moreover, a study conducted by Cheng (2012) has revealed that lecture closing is also important.

In the academic world, the shift from a monologic to a dialogic type of class is represented with an increase in the level of interaction in class, an element that plays a key role in the learning process. In fact, according to Dafouz Milne and Sánchez García, (2013:131) “learning is viewed not only as an individual cognitive learning process but

also as a social one, and learning occurs during the interaction that take place between individuals”. In this view, interaction is a fundamental part of the learning process and its correlation with learning is very significant. Moreover, lecturers should promote student participation and negotiation of meaning in class in order to give an opportunity to students “to develop their cognitive ability, improve their linguistic skills and boost their learning process” (Dafouz Milne and Sánchez García, 2013:132). In addition, interaction also gives the opportunity to learn and develop the foreign language in which the lecture is taught (Dafouz Milne and Sánchez García, 2013).

However, even if the class has a monologic structure, interaction could be present in various forms. For example, there could be the presence of features that commonly belong to all spoken interaction: Turn-taking and cooperation are two of them. Turn-taking depends on the lecturer, who decides to hold the floor when he/she wants. Otherwise, turn-taking is present in dialogues between students and lecturers, which could be activated or not during a lecture. Instead, interaction and cooperation may be present even if the teacher is talking in front of the students and follows a monologue structure of the discourse. In fact, the lecturer may involve their students asking them questions.

2.4.3 Interaction in the EMI classroom

EMI classes may be effective programmes that bring lots of benefits for the students involved in the learning process, but they may also bring some problems (see chapter 1, section 2). Among the various concerns and problems that I have listed in chapter 1, one of the most important issues is the student’s understanding of the content knowledge when the lecture is given in a language that is not the native-language of the learner. In recent years, many studies have focused on the variables of the academic discourse that are significant for the improvement of content’s understanding. Morell (2000) has found that “lecture schemata, speech modification, use of visual aids, note-taking and interaction” are some of these variables. Therefore, one way to resolve the problem of comprehension is it to “transform” the typology of a class from a monologic to a dialogic class, where dialogic interaction between lecturer and students takes place.

In addition, if students are allowed to interrupt the lecture to ask questions, comprehension will obviously improve (Morell, 2007).

Despite the traditionally monologic nature of university classes, Morell (2007) has affirmed that the use of English in academic communication has led to some changes in the traditional lecture style. In fact, lectures given with an informal style, characterized by a certain amount of interaction between the lecturer and the students, are increasing at university, especially in those lectures where non-native students, both ESL (English as a Second Language) and EFL (English as a Foreign Language), are present.

Studies have been conducted to investigate how to improve the comprehension of L2 students and they suggested that lecturers should use, for example, repetitions (Chiang and Dunkel, 1992), a suitable speech rate (Griffiths, 1990) and negotiation of the meaning (Lynch, 1994; Morell, 2004, in Morell, 2007:223) in order to enhance the understanding.

Therefore, interaction is a key element in EMI programmes and if it is not present in class, the learning of content and language may be prevented (Ackerley, forthcoming). In fact, some studies, (e.g. Griffiths, 1990; Morell, 2000) conducted in universities based in countries where English does not have the status of official language, have found that interactive lectures are beneficial for ELF students “not only in so far as their comprehension is concerned, but also in terms of improving their linguistic and communicative competence”. In other words, students should not only be exposed to the language that needs to be improved, but they should be also encouraged to participate because, in this way, they will foster their linguistic and communicative competences (Morell, 2007). In this view, the role of the lecturer is significant because he/she should encourage, with different strategies, interaction (Ackerley, forthcoming). Thus, the lecturers should establish a comfortable context in class to encourage participation (Morell, 2007). The survey conducted by Morell in 2007 has revealed that “ELF students’ participation is dependent on the activities that the lecturers allow them to take part in and on the receptiveness of the students, which is determined by the lecturers’ sense of empathy” (Morell, 2007:235). Therefore, lecturers should focus not only on present content in a effective way, but they should also try to establish a good

relationship with the students involved in his/her classrooms to create an interactional atmosphere.

In the light of the importance of interaction in EMI context, Morell (2007) has affirmed that the interest in this field has increased thanks to online classroom and non classroom corpora, such as the MICASE (Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English), the BASE (British Academic Spoken English) and the ELFA (English as a Lingua Franca) corpora (which contain transcripts of academic speech events), which enable to research easily the academic spoken English, thanks to a wide range of materials available.

2.5 Interaction strategies

Costa and Coleman (2012) have affirmed that a lecturer can use various ways to help students to understand better the content of a lecture, when a class is taught via a language that is not the language of the majority of the students. Some techniques used by lecturers to facilitate the comprehension in these types of classes are: using discourse markers, repeating concepts, using examples, using synopsis, re-using lexis, using synonyms, asking for questions, slowing down the pace of speaking, emphasizing through intonation, and articulating words clearly (Coonan, 2012). Moreover, Suviniitty (2010) has indicated other types of interaction strategies. For example, lecture organization is assumed to be an important device in the study of Young (1994). In addition, the number of student-lecturer dialogues could increase interactivity in class, as some studies (e.g. Csomay, 2002; Morell, 2004) have discovered. However, Suviniitty (2010) has admitted that even when the lecture is composed by little dialogue between lecturer and students, it may be very useful for students. In addition, Morell (2004), who has conducted a study about interaction in the classroom, has taken into account linguistic strategies, such as personal pronouns, discourse markers, questions and negotiation of meaning as linguistic aspects that could foster interaction in a class.

2.5.1 Questions

As mentioned above, interaction in a class could be enhanced in various ways. One of the most useful is the use of questions. This is because questions stimulate interaction between people and they usually presuppose an answer (Goody 1978, in Chang, 2011). Moreover, Thompson (1998) stated that taking into account that a question “needs” an answer, there is a clear relationship between answer and interactivity. However, in monologic class contexts, questions do not always presuppose the active participation of the lecturer and students, because there is often no specific response to them, unlike other types of spoken situations (Crawford Camiciottoli, 2008).

As affirmed by Crawford Camiciottoli (2008), questions are fundamental tools in the learning process and this is well known since antiquity. In fact, questions have always interested linguistics, “regardless of their analytical approach or the context of the language under investigation” (Crawford Camiciottoli, 2008:1216). Furthermore, this type of strategy is considered to be very important also by Sánchez García (2010, in Dafouz Milne and Sánchez García, 2013:132), who has pointed out that they are fundamental in the communicative exchange, as they “ensure a natural and equal interaction in the classroom”, whatever the level or the educational context is.

In classrooms, questions activate the “expert-to-novice relationship”, with the lecturer demanding information for various reasons (Crawford Camiciottoli, 2008:1217). However, questions are described in various ways by experts. For example, Sinclair and Coulthard (1992) have described them as a sort of elicitation form, which can be used by lecturers to verify learning and they are composed by three steps: the initiation (by the lecturer), the response (from the students) and the feedback (from the lecturer). In Young’s (1994, in Crawford Camiciottoli, 2008) study, questions are considered to be part of an interactional phase and the aim of the lecturer is to create a contact with students. Moreover, Chuska (1995, in Crawford Camiciottoli, 2008:1217) has affirmed that “all learning begins with questions. Questions cause interaction: thought, activity, conversation or debate”. In Chuska’s view (1995), they are a guide in the learning process because they define issues and stimulate thought and, in this way, students “may discover answers through mutual reflection and reasoning”. Furthermore,

questions are considered to be very important in the learning process. As Rojas-Drummond and Mercer (2003:101, in Navaz, 2013:119) have affirmed, questions “should exploit students’ present understanding and make explicit their thoughts, reasons and knowledge through appropriate use of questions”.

In a university class, in particular, questions are used by the lecturer for many different reasons: to simplify comprehension, give a support to students during the learning process, obtain information, test the knowledge of students, avoid breakdown in the communication, create meaning-making and many others (Dafouz Milne and Sánchez García, 2013).

To sum up, questions are an important device in class. However, it is surprising that the use of them has attracted the attention of few researchers, such as Bamford, 2005; Crawford Camiciottoli, 2008 and others (in Chang, 2011). Among them, a study that focused in a specific way on the use of questions in university classes taught in English is that of Bamford (2015). However, in recent years, researches has been conducted in order to understand how lecturers use this particular device in class.

2.5.1.1 Classification of questions

We have seen that questions are very important in a classroom. For this reason, attention to them has risen in recent years and they have been classified according to their function. For example, Thompson (in Hunston, 1998:140) has classified questions taking into account their functions: audience-oriented questions and content-oriented questions. The former refers to those questions “in which something appears to be demanded by the presenter of the audience, and which at least symbolically allow the audience an opportunity to provide verbal or non-verbal response”. In this kind of question, the lecturer expects a response and this may be answered either by all or part of the audience or by someone nominated by the speaker. However, content-oriented questions refer to questions where “no audience response occurs or seems to be expected” (Hunston, 1998:140). Furthermore, Thomson has divided the two above mentioned categories in other sub-categories, according to more specific functions of questions. On one hand, audience-oriented questions include those used to “check

whether something has been received and understood by the audience, to evoke audience response and to seek agreement” (Crawford Camiciottoli, 2008:1218). On the other hand, content-oriented questions are used to raise issues and introduce information. The figure below (Figure 3) represents in a clear way the classification of Thompson.

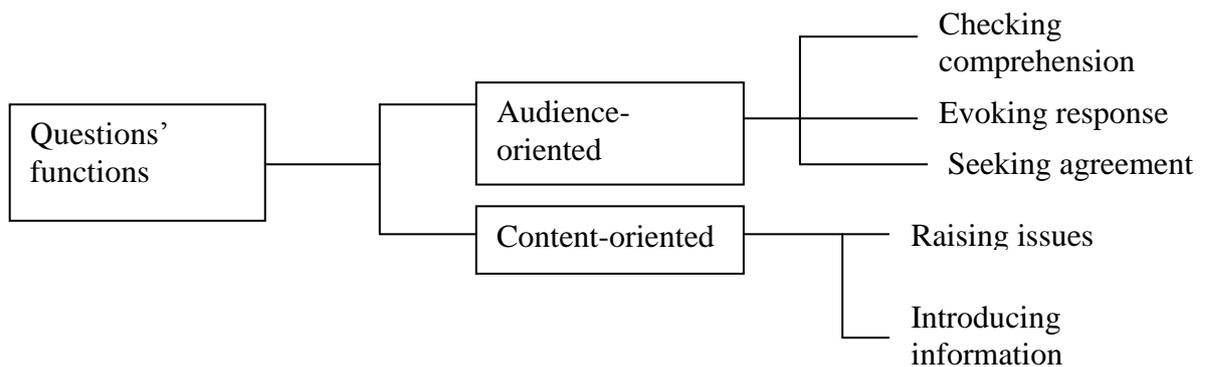


Figure 3: Thompson’s classification of questions (Thompson, 1998)

It is important to say that every sub-category has its own features. Firstly, Thompson (1998) has pointed out that the types of questions that are made in order to check comprehension are used to check if the audience has already understood what the speaker has been saying or to check if the audience is able to see some visual information. Moreover, the speaker may use the word-tag *OK, right, etc.*, which are important “interactional signals” and they are a symbolic and not a real invitation for the listeners to take part to the conversation. In fact, they may be answered both verbally or nonverbally. More precisely, question to check comprehension “are used to ensure that the audience are able to perceive and understand the speakers’ message” in order to avoid “possible problem in comprehension” (Huston, 1998). Secondly, the questions to evoke audience response are elicit questions, used to get a reaction or information from the listeners. This type of strategy is used to address all the audience, but only few people may respond and the monologue may be transformed in a dialogue only for a certain amount of time. Thirdly, questions to seek audience agreement are typically tag questions. They are asked to check if the presenter is saying a correct assertion or to persuade the audience. In this case, the presenter has no more the role of information-

giving but he/she acquires an equal status with the listeners, who are asked to evaluate and confirm what the presenter has said (Hunston, 1998).

On the other hand, taking into account content-oriented questions, those used to raise issues are described by Thompson (in Huston, 1998) as a strategy used to set up questions or problems to be managed with the incoming part of the talk. However, with questions to introduce the speaker asks a question and then he/she suddenly answer it by him/herself. These types of questions are “essentially metalinguistic” because “they signal information to come” (Hunston, 1998:144). Moreover, Thompson has added that “it appears in these questions, then, the presenter is taking on the role of the audience in questioning him or her, before immediately stepping back into his or her own role of information-giver by answering the question” (Hunston, 1998:144). Table 1 suggests some examples given by Thompson (in Hunston, 1998), of every typology of question.

Type of question	Example
Audience-oriented questions:	
- <i>Checking comprehension</i>	Can you see. And this is the carbon carbon bond OK.
- <i>Evoking response</i>	Where would you expect more references.
- <i>Seeking agreement</i>	And I think it's fair isn't it.
Content-oriented questions:	
- <i>Raising issues</i>	The question is is are these calculations actually correct.
- <i>Introducing information</i>	Well what is that band That band is characteristic of aromatic species which are present on the surface in a flat-lying orientation

Table 1: Examples of questions (Thompson, 1998, in Hunston, 1998:141-144)

As Chang (2011) has affirmed, lots of researchers think that content oriented questions may be considered to be rhetorical. However, as Crawford Camiciottoli

(2008) has argued, they are not rhetorical questions, because, as is well explained in Bamford's (2005) words: "in the context of a lecture, even questions to which answers from students are not expected have been raised precisely for the purpose of discovering the answer, although this may actually be provided by the lecturers themselves".

Another distinction is that of Dalton-Puffer (2007), who divided questions into display and referential questions and open versus closed questions. With display questions the answer is known by the questioner while with reference questions it is unknown by him/her. Open questions, on the other hand, appear when the answers are linguistically elaborated and closed questions when the answers are limited to a "yes" or "no".

More precisely, display questions obligate students to show whether they know something about a certain topic or not. Therefore, "the teacher is interested in gaining new information not on the subject matter itself but on the state of mind of the student" (Dalton-Puffer, 2007:95). He/She wants to understand what the student knows about the topic that he/she is presenting. Instead, referential questions are asked to obtain information that the lecturer does not know and, as this is considered to be the "normal" aim of a question, they are also called "real" or "authentic" questions (Dalton-Puffer, 2007:95). As they are considered "natural" (and even the answers to them are considered in this way), referential questions should be more present in a discourse than display question, but this does not always happen. In fact, they are relative non-frequent in classroom discourse, as confirmed by some studies, such as that of Long and Sato (1983) and Musumeci (1996). Also Dafouz Milne and Sánchez García (2013:133) have revealed that "a high number of referential questions are ideally expected in classrooms", but the teacher usually use more display than referential questions, as confirmed some studies (such as Long and Sato, 1983 and Musumeci, 1996).

The other distinction proposed by Dalton-Puffer (2007) is that between open and closed questions. Closed questions are described as having an answer limited to one work, "which make them [the answers] quick and easy to answer and leaves the conversational control with the questioner" (Dalton-Puffer, 2007:97). However, open questions give the student more space to answer and the answer itself is long and

complex (Dalton-Puffer, 2007). I have proposed some examples given by Dalton-Puffer (2007) in Table 2, to illustrate better her distinction between questions.

Type of question	Example
Display questions	What kind of city do you know about in the east of America. What is it in German.
Referential questions	Why didn't you do your homework. Did anybody of you try to drive already.
Open questions	Did anybody of you try to drive already. Was that a four-star hotel.
Closed questions	Who fought against whom in the First World War. Who are the rich men in an early society. Why the cold war was going so long.

Table 2: Example of different types of questions Dalton-Puffer (2007)

Moreover, Dalton-Puffer (2007:123-255) has added other classifications, which refer to the goals of questions in a class context. For example, questions for facts, questions for reasons, questions for explanation, meta-cognitive questions and questions for opinion. These last typologies of questions can be asked both by lecturers and learners.

Fontanet Gómez (2004, in Crawford Camiciottoli, 2008) has proposed another distinction. Questions to which an answer is possible, non-rhetorical, and question to which an answer is not expected, rhetorical.

Another distinction was proposed by Crawford Camiciottoli (2008) while conducting a study about questions in academic lectures and also in written text material. Following the classification of Thompson (1998), she has divided questions into content-oriented questions and audience-oriented questions, but then she has classified these two categories into different sub-categories with respect to Thompson. In fact, content-oriented questions have been divided into questions with the specifics

functions of focusing information and stimulating thoughts. The former refers to those questions used to introduce new information and they combine “the related functions of framing, introducing, organizing and predicting into one category” and they have the form of an answer to a question (Crawford Camiciottoli, 2008:1222). The latter is used to “encourage reflection on the part of the reader without providing an explicit answer (at least not immediately) (Crawford Camiciottoli, 2008:1222). On the other hand, audience-oriented questions were classified into three types: eliciting response, soliciting agreement and requesting confirmation/clarification. Some examples of this category and of the previous one are listed in the following table (Table 3).

Type of question	Example
Content-oriented questions:	
- Focusing information	What is Sales Revenue? Sales revenue is the total amount of money that the firm has earned from the sale of all its goods and services during a given time period.
- Stimulating thought	There could also be other price indices. Which is right? That depends on your purposes. If you want [...]. However, if you need [...]
Audience-oriented questions:	
- Eliciting response	Have you ever heard of the term Keiretsu before?
- Soliciting agreement	It's based on gross national product, isn't it?
- Requesting confirmation/clarification	Have you done case study work before? (Student: no not really) No?

Table 3: Crawford Camiciottoli's (2008:1222-1223) classification of questions

Morell (2004) has divided questions into referential, display, rhetorical and indirect. Referential questions are those questions used to obtain unknown information. Display questions are used to verify what students know about a certain topic, as we have seen also in Thompson. Instead, rhetorical questions need no response and are often formulated and answered by the lecturer. They are useful to provide information.

Finally, indirect questions are used to obtain some kind of action from the audience (e.g. raising the hands). I have proposed an example of both a rhetorical question and an indirect question in the table below. Example of referential and display questions are provided in Table 4.

Type of question	Example
Rhetorical questions	What is the business of Parliament? Now the main
Indirect questions	Is there anybody who doesn't have this handout? [students who don't have it are expected to raise their hands to obtain it]

Table 4: Example of Rhetorical and Indirect questions (Morell, 2004).

2.5.2 Negotiation of meaning

Morell (2004) has affirmed that, among others (also cited in section 4 of this chapter), one of the main linguistic strategies that could be used to enhance interaction is the negotiation of meaning. He has described this strategy as “an aspect of interaction that occurs when at least two interlocutors work together to arrive at mutual comprehension of their utterance” (Morell, 2004:329). In order to do this, students and lecturers usually repeat, change or modify the form and the meaning of some words.

Some examples of negotiation of meaning are described by Long (1981, in Morell, 2004) and Pica (1994, in Morell, 2004) as follow: clarification requests, confirmation checks and comprehension checks. The first term refers to questions asked to understand the other speaker's previous utterance. The second one describes those questions to check confirmation of the other speaker's previous utterance. The third one refers to questions moved to ask if the listener or the listeners has understood. The table (Table 5) below shows some examples of them.

Negotiation of meaning	Example
Clarification requests	What did you say?
Confirmation checks	On Saturday?
Comprehension checks	Did you understand?

Table 5: Type of negotiation of meaning (Long, 1981 and Pica, 1994; cited in Morell, 2004).

2.5.3 Other linguistic strategies

Another strategy to enhance interaction in class is the use of personal pronouns, such as *we* and *you*, which are used to “ [...] engage the students in the unfolding of the lecture” (Young, 1994; in Morell, 2004).

Then, there are the discourse markers, which express the attitude of the lecturer (e.g. I believe, I agree with), that are used to elicit responses (e.g. What do you think about ...?) or accept responses (e.g. That’s absolutely right) (Morell, 2004).

Moreover, Björkman (2010) has listed some pragmatic strategies which are useful to be used during a class. These include, firstly, the strategy of commenting on terms and concepts, where the lecturers explain specific terms to their students. Second, another important strategy is to signal the discourse structure, by introducing what will come later in the explanation (prospectively), by referring to previous lectures to sum up what students have done, for example (retrospectively). Thirdly, highlighting the most important points of a lecture is another key strategy. In addition, another is the repetition, which was divided into three subcategories by Björkman (2010:83): “repetition for emphasis, repetition caused by disfluencies and repetition of others’ utterances”. The following table (Table 6) shows various examples of these pragmatic strategies.

Pragmatic Strategies	Examples	
Commenting on terms and concepts	<L3> What actually the steps the typical steps of hydrolysis is the typical er , the , breaking of er bigger molecules into smaller ones such as sugar it's not only sugars but fat an ser er amino acids er and er proteins </L3>	
Signalling the discourse structure	Prospectively: <L1> we will start the third interaction of the loop </L1>	Retrospectively <L1> so as I said </L1> <L4> and I indicated already last time </L4>
Highlighting the critical points of a lecture	<L2> I would said the heat exchange is very important </L2> <L4> you should never forget that there is oxygen molecule already </L4>	
Repetitions	<L3> that's why we cannot use really hydrogen now because it's a very very very very poor energy per volume ratio </L3>	

Table 6: Pragmatic Strategies

2.6 Factors that influence interaction

One of the main factors that influence interaction in class is the language proficiency of students. Therefore, if students felt that their language competence is low they may be reluctant to establish an interactional relationship with the lecturer. In addition, poor language proficiency represents an obstacle also because, for example, as the study conducted by Navaz (2013) found, students fear that their poor level of English may influence other students to make fun of them. Another study that has revealed similar results was conducted by Flowerdew et al. (2000, in Navaz, 2013) among Hong Kong Chinese students. Moreover, other reasons that explain why students do not answer in class are the facts that they have fear to talk in class or because they are shy (Navaz, 2013). Furthermore, the students' passive behaviour during the classes is another negative aspect (Navaz, 2013). In addition, Navaz (2013) has reported that

students may think that they could solve problems of comprehension on their own or with the help of other colleagues. Then, the lack of opportunity to ask questions is a problem that lecturers should avoid, trying to involve students in the class.

However, if we consider the positive aspects, “the incorporation of participatory activities, the use of relevant topics, the lecturer’s level of enthusiasm, the classroom atmosphere, the use of questioning, the lecturers’ intention of getting to know the students, and class-size” are mentioned by students in one study of Morell (2007:227), as important elements in a class.

2.7 Previous studies about interaction in the EMI classroom

2.7.1 Navaz’s study: perception of lecturer-student interaction

In the last two decades, attention to studies about interaction in class has risen among researchers. These studies focused both on interaction in first language (L1) classes and in second language (L2) lecturers and they studied how interaction can facilitate content learning (for example, Mroz et al, 2000; Myhill, 2006; Kumar, 2003, in Navaz, 2013). Moreover, Vygotsky (in Navaz, 2013) has affirmed that interaction has an important role both for L1 and L2 learners. However, these are not studies about the tertiary level of education, which is analysed only considering content learning and not the language learning (Navaz, 2013).

Navaz’s (2013) study is important because it takes into account both content and language learning. It is a study conducted to find out the advantages and implications of some dialogic interaction classes in a Sri Lanka university.

The results of this study have found that, as regards questions asked by lecturers, 97% of the students did not answer them. This is a significant percentage, as it includes almost all the students. Some of the reasons given for not answering are: the fear of giving the wrong answer (73%), language problems (63%) and the fact that the answer is not known (47%). This is the student perspective, but also the lecturer’s one was surveyed. Lecturers have affirmed that few students answered questions and these usually do so after repeated requests. The reasons given by the lecturers for this lack are

similar to those mentioned by the students, apart from the students' fear of teachers, which was not mentioned by lecturers (Navaz, 2013) .

As regards questions asked by students, 80% of them have answered that they did not answer questions. The main reason for not asking questions in class are: the belief that they could solve problems with their colleagues (57%), culture reasons (attitude to avoid to ask question in class, 57%) and language problems (47%).

2.7.2 Dafouz Milne and Sánchez García: “does everybody understand?”

The study of Dafouz Milne and Sánchez García (2013) was conducted to identify the role of English-medium instruction in three different university lectures in Spain, more specifically in Madrid. The lectures were composed by teachers and students who were, mostly, native-speakers of Spanish. In particular, the study focuses on the typology and function of question across different disciplines.

The results have revealed that the more frequent types of questions in this study are four: confirmation check (50%), self-answered questions (22%), display questions (20%) and referential questions (8%). In particular, one relevant finding of this study is that confirmation checks seem to have the form of transition markers, used by the teacher to make a short pause and think about the next idea. Therefore, they are not used to verify how much students have understood about the lecture, in this study. These findings are in contrast with a study conducted by Chang (2012), where confirmation checks were present with a low percentage. However, this has been explained by Dafouz Milne and Sánchez García (2013), who have affirmed that in Chang's study both lecturers and students were native-speakers of English, unlike in their study. Therefore, it is more plausible that comprehensive problems resulted to be more present when the language of the lecture is not the native language of lecturers and students.

Moreover, the authors of the study have found that the number of questions asked by teachers are not necessarily correlate with a response by students, so in Dafouz Milne and Sánchez García's (2013:143) idea, questions are not “a transparent sign of

classroom interaction”. In fact, they have argued that less than 50% of the teachers’ questions were answered by learners.

2.7.3 Morell’s study: the University of Alicante

Morell (2004) has carried out a research on the level of interaction and the linguistic strategies used in university lectures in one university in Spain, the University of Alicante. His study is particular because it takes into account both interactive and non-interactive classes and it compared them. In fact, the aim of this study was to classify some classrooms into interactive and non-interactive and to find out the presence of every language device, such as the use of personal pronouns and questions, used in class. Then, Morell has tried to use the data collected about interaction to give advises to lecturers of non-interactive classrooms, in order to help lecturers to transform these classes into interactive lectures.

He has found that interactive lectures were characterized, firstly, by the presence of more personal pronouns, in particular those which refer to both students and lecturers (we, us, our) and those which refer to students only (you, your). Secondly, the presence of more display and referential questions. Thirdly, they include negotiation of meaning. These findings were used to improve interaction in non-interactive lectures, asking the lecturers to keep them in mind (Morell, 2004).

Then, lecturers tried to change the form of their lectures from a non-interactive to an interactive style and the first important change was the increase of students contribution to the talk and, moreover, the enhancement in the quantity of personal pronouns, discourse markers, questions and negotiation of meaning, used during the lecture. This attempt was conducted in three non-interactive lectures and two of the three attempts could be considered as successful (Morell, 2004).

Moreover, the lecturers were interviewed and it has been found that those who usually used an interactive style of lecturing “express their awareness of the students’ needs to understand and to improve their communicative competence and believed that involving their students in the discourse partially filled these needs” (Morell, 2004:334).

However, the lecturers who have tried to change their methodology “were willing to do so but felt pressured by other factors, such as having enough time to cover the content of the syllabus” (Morell, 2004:334).

Finally, the findings of Morell’s study suggested that the increase in the use of linguistic strategies in the discourse is an effect of “personalization”, which, in Morell’s works, means that the distance between the lecturer and students became shorter. Moreover, he has concluded by saying that “for a lecturer to know about the linguistic aspects of interactive lecture discourse is not the only requisite for promoting participation. In fact, a lecturer’s attitude and beliefs towards the teaching and learning experience of content and language will determine, for the most part, the possibility of interactive discourse” (Morell, 2004).

2.7.4 Ackerley: survey at the University of Padua

Ackerley (forthcoming) has conducted a study at the University of Padua in order to understand how students feel about the introduction of English-medium instruction programmes. Among other questions about this issue, students (111 student of master’s level courses took part at the study) were asked to say how they feel about interaction in the EMI classroom.

As regards the use of questions, students seem to appreciate having the chance to ask their teacher questions (70.3%). However, the study has revealed something contradictory in the responses of students. This is because 66.8% of them have admitted that “they prefer to listen to the teacher and takes note, without speaking”. However, 80.2% of students involved in the questionnaire have affirmed that they like it when a discussion takes place in class.

Ackerley has justified these contradictory findings, stating that Italian students probably have a very low experience of interaction in classroom contexts. In fact, Costa and Coleman (2012) have found that “teaching methodology in most Italian universities is based on traditional, monologic lectures that provide little space for interaction” (cited in Ackerley, forthcoming:20).

Moreover, another interesting finding is that students believe that their language competence does not influence the interaction in class, as only 21.6% of the students prefer not to speak in class because they have poor language skills.

However, more studies are needed in this field, taking into account the Italian context (Ackerley, forthcoming).

THIRD CHAPTER: *A Survey of Interaction in EMI classes at the University of Padua*

3.1 Introduction

This chapter is part of a study about the importance of interactivity in university classes. In particular, this study aims to find out whether or not English-Medium Instruction classes are interactive in a university situated in the North of Italy, the University of Padua. The study is divided into two parts. The first part of the study, that will be explained in this chapter, is characterized by an analysis of interactivity in class and it consists of an analysis of some lectures conducted at the University of Padua in four different courses, belonging to three different Schools. I will explain the characteristics of these four courses in the following paragraphs. The second part of the study is composed of an analysis of the data obtained from a questionnaire conducted among students and lecturers in the same classes that have been observed. This part of the study will be discussed in the forth chapter of this dissertation.

I will now focus on the first part of this study. The aim of this section of the study was to analyse some EMI classes at the University of Padua in order to find out the different strategies used by professors to involve students in class. More specifically, this study focus on an analysis of the role of questions in lectures given in English at Padua University. This decision has been taken because questions are one of the most effective interactive devices used in class, which help students to follow the lectures in an effective way (Suviniitty, 2010). Moreover, questions are important because they “enable the lecturers to investigate what the students know about a particular topic and allow students to indicate their understanding, but are also used as organizing devices and to punctuate the matter at hand” (Suviniitty, 2010:55). Therefore, as I have already argued in Chapter 2 of this dissertation, questions have various functions and every type of question is useful to obtain feedback from students.

As questions are so important during the learning process, this third chapter will focus on the use of them in universities classes, trying to understand if lecturers ask questions in class and what kind of questions are asked by lecturers at the University of

Padua, during lectures. I will also analyse their frequency, giving some real examples of different types of questions. The examples were taken from the transcriptions of five different university lectures.

As regards the structure of this chapter, it will be divided as follows. First of all I will explain the aim and the characteristics of this study, talking about which kind of lectures have been analysed and I will also explain the methodology used to analyse them. Secondly, I will discuss the results of this study and I will also make some comparisons with other similar studies. In this section I will talk about the different functions of questions, analysing the most frequent types of them and giving some specific examples. In particular, I will talk about confirmation checks, referential questions, display questions and self-answered questions, which are the four main types of questions used by lecturers in this study. Then, I will also discuss other types of questions, that have occurred with a less percentage in this study with respect to other typologies of questions. At the end, I will make a conclusion to sum up all the findings of this research.

3.2 The study

As I have already mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, the aim of this study was to analyse five university lectures conducted in English at the University of Padua. This was done in order to find out how questions are used to involve students in various university lectures. In order to do this, the lectures were chosen from three different Schools of the University: the School of Economics and Political Sciences, the School of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine and the School of Engineering. In particular, five courses have been observed and they belong to three second cycle degrees programmes, which are Business Administration (B.A.), Forest Science (F.S.) and Environmental Engineering (E.E.). In particular, the five courses that have been observed are: two Family Business classes (belonging to the B.A. course), a Forest Ecosystem and Global Changes class and a Forest Pathology and Wood Alterations class (both belonging to the F.S. course) and a Water Supply Treatment class (belonging to the E.E. course). This selection was done across different subjects in

order to consider any possible difference across disciplines. As regards the lecturers, they were not all Italian-speakers. In fact, the two Family Business classes and the Forest Ecosystem and Global Changes class were held by Italian lecturers, but the Forest Pathology and Wood Alterations class was held by a Spanish lecturer and the Water Supply Treatment class by an English lecturer. This has helped me to reflect on issues linked to the lecturers L1.

3.2.1 The Procedure

In order to start this study, some lecturers were contacted via e-mail in order to explain the aim of my study and to ask the permission to observe and record their lectures. Five lecturers answered me. Therefore, I went to observe one of their lectures (two lectures as regards the Family Business course, because this was held by two different lecturers) and I have recorded them. Then, the lectures were transcribed manually, using the MICASE (Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English) transcription and mark-up conventions⁹, even if these were modified by myself in order to make them more suitable for my study and to match the purposes of my study. The table (Table 7) below shows the conventions used to transcribe the five lectures of this study.

Speaker IDs, assigned in the order they first speak ¹⁰	<S1> → LECTURER <S2>, <S3>, ...
Observer	<SO>
Pauses of 4 seconds or longer	Ex: <P: 05>, <P:20>, etc.
Ellipses indicate a pause of 2-3 seconds	...
This tag encloses speech that is spoken simultaneously, either at the ends and beginnings of turns, or as interruptions or backchannel cues in the middle of one speaker's turn. All overlaps are approximate and shown to the nearest word; a word is	Text of overlapping speech is in blue. <OVERLAP>...</OVERLAP>

⁹ For more information about the MICASE transcription and Mark-up convention:
<http://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/micase/>

¹⁰ S1 is always the lecturer.
S2, S3, etc. are always students.

generally not split by an overlap tag.	
All laughter is marked. Speaker ID not marked if current speaker laughs.	<LAUGH>, <S8 LAUGH>, <SS LAUGH>, etc.
Various contextual (non-speech) events are noted, usually only when they affect comprehension of the surrounding discourse.	<WRITING ON BOARD> <APPLAUSE> < AUDIO DISTURBANCE>, < BACKGROUND NOISE> < SOUND EFFECT>, <COUGHT> < STUDENT ENTERING> <INDICATE POINT IN A SLIDE> <STUDENT RAISES THE HAND> <STUDENT SPEAKING TOGETHER>
Used when part of an utterance is read verbatim.	<READING> xxx </READING>
Used for non-English words or phrases.	Italics
Two x's in parentheses indicate one or more words that are completely unintelligible. Words surrounded by parentheses indicate the transcription is uncertain.	(xx)
Type of questions	<VOCAL DESC= CLASS MANAGEMENT QUESTION> (text) </VOCAL DESC= CLASS MANAGEMENT QUESTION> <VOCAL DESC= CONFIRMATION CHECKS> (text) </VOCAL DESC= CONFIRMATION CHECKS> <VOCAL DESC= QUESTION SEEKING EXPLANATION> (text) </VOCAL DESC= QUESTION SEEKING EXPLANATION> <VOCAL DESC= RETROSPECTIVE QUESTION> (text) </VOCAL DESC= RETROSPECTIVE QUESTION> <VOCAL DESC= RETHORICAL QUESTION> (text) <VOCAL DESC= RETHORICAL QUESTION> <VOCAL DESC= REFERENTIAL QUESTION> (text) </VOCAL DESC=

	<p>REFERENTIAL QUESTION></p> <p><VOCAL DESC= DISPLAY QUESTION> (text) </VOCAL DESC= DISPLAY QUESTION></p> <p><VOCAL DESC= REPETITION QUESTION> (text) </VOCAL DESC= REPETITION QUESTION></p> <p><VOCAL DESC= SELF-ANSWERED QUESTIONS> (text) </VOCAL DESC= SELF-ANSWERED QUESTIONS></p>
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Table 7: revised MICASE transcription and Mark-up conventions

Then, the transcripts were analysed using the concordancing software, AntConc, in order to find out the frequency of the different types of questions and overlaps and to make some comparisons with other studies. I have found questions and other interactive strategies using the various tags, which are listed in Table 7.

3.2.2 The characteristics of the study

As I mentioned before, the five lectures were all transcribed manually after having recorded them. As shown in Table 8 below, my research accounts for 07:09:27 hours of lecture recording and a total of 42023 words. The audio files and the lectures transcriptions are on the CD attached to the dissertation.

LECTURE	DURATION	WORD COUNT
Family Business 1	1:29:24 h.	10158
Family Business 2	1:42:16 h.	5052
Forest Pathology and Wood Alterations	1:58:57 h.	5352
Forest Ecosystem and Global Change	1:54:58 h.	13399
Water Supply Treatment	1:33:16 h.	8062
TOTAL	07:09:27 h.	42023

Table 8: Lectures' duration and Word Count

3.3 Results

The results of this study show that a total of 424 questions have been asked during the five lectures, 395 were asked by lecturers and 29 were asked by students. In particular, the classes with the highest number of questions are the two Family Business (F.B.1 and F.B.2) lectures, with 203 and 77 questions each. They are followed by the Water Supply Treatment (W.S.T.) class, with 65 questions, and the Forest Ecosystem and Global Change (F.E.G.C.) class, with 48 questions asked. Instead, the lecture with the fewest questions is the Forest Pathology and Wood Alterations (F..P.W.A.) class, with 31 questions asked.

3.3.1 Questions asked by lecturers

The table below (Table 9) shows the frequency of questions asked by professors. The questions have been divided into functions, among the five disciplines. The various functions are confirmation checks, referential, display, self-answered, class Management, retrospective and repetition questions and questions seeking explanation.

Lecture	Confirmation checks	Referential questions	Display questions	Self-answered questions	Rhetorical questions	Class Management questions	Retrospective questions	Repetition questions	Questions seeking explanation	Total
F.B.1	130	30	5	16	10	2	1		1	195
F.B.2	40	11	10	5		2	5	1		74
W.S.T.	30	11	11	2		5				59
F.E.G.C		9	25	6			1	2		43
F.P.W.A		14	2	6	1				1	24
Total	200	75	53	35	11	9	7	3	1	395

Table 9: The frequency of the different typologies of questions across disciplines

It has resulted that 395 questions have been asked by lecturers and analysing these data in details, I have noted that the two Family Business classes, which are the classes with the higher number of questions asked, were classes where the lecturers

always tried to involve their students, both with some direct questions and also asking them to do some exercises in pairs or in groups (I will talk about this issue also in Chapter 4). During the classes, the lecturers always tried to be sure that their students had understood the topics and this explains the high number of confirmation checks, which are present in their classes. As I said before, the number of questions is very high in both the Family Business lectures compared to the number of questions in the other lectures of this study. Their classes were very interactive with both lecturers and, in my opinion, this means that the lecturers involved in this course paid a great deal of attention to the needs of their students, trying to make their classes as interactive as possible. Also the Water Supply Treatment course has a relative high presence of questions asked and, also in this case, confirmation checks are numerous. This could be explained by the fact that the lecturer was a native-speaker of English. On the contrary, the Forest Pathology and Wood Alterations class is the class with the less amount of questions asked. In this case, the nationality of the lecturer has probably influenced his teaching in the sense that he asked few questions. In my opinion, the lecturer was not keen to ask questions because he did not share the same first language of his students and he did not want to make in difficulty his students. A situation of difficulty (EXAMPLE 20) is explained below, even if in this case it was a student who first asked the question but she was not able to ask it in a good way because she did not remember how to say some words in English.

Below I will firstly discuss the most common types of questions of this study and then I will also talk about other types of questions, which are important for the current study.

3.3.1.1 The most common types of questions

As we can also see from Table 9 above, the analysis of the five transcribed texts has revealed that the four more frequent types of questions of this study are confirmation checks (55.1%), followed by referential questions (20.66%), display questions (14.6%) and, finally, self-answered questions (9.64%).

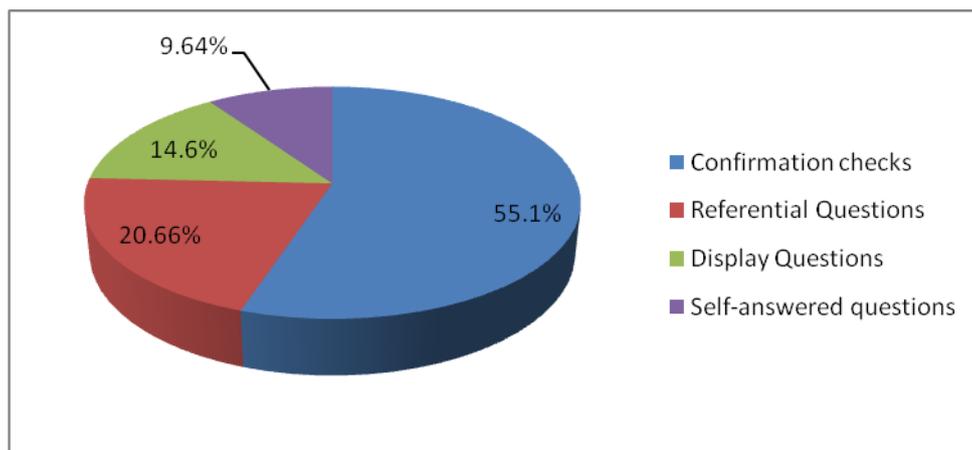


Figure 4: Most frequent types of questions

These results match other studies, such as the study of Dafouz Milne and Sánchez García (2013), who have found that the most frequent types of questions were the same of those of the current study. The only difference is the frequency of those questions. In fact, despite the confirmation checks, that were the most frequent questions also in Dafouz Milne and Sánchez García's (2013) study, the other types of questions were not present in the same order of frequency. In fact, Confirmation checks were followed by self-answered questions, display questions and referential questions, in this order, in Dafouz Milne and Sánchez García's (2013) study. Moreover, the findings of the current study are in line with Chang's (2012) study, who has discovered that confirmation checks are one of the most frequent types of questions used by lecturers.

In the followings paragraphs I will analyse these four most frequent types of questions that have occurred in the five transcribed lectures and also other questions, with other functions, that have occurred with a less percentage in the transcribed texts.

3.3.1.1.1 Confirmation checks

As I have explained in Chapter 2 of this dissertation, confirmation checks are questions used to verify if students have understood the topic of the lecture or, more generally, if they have understood what the lecturer has said during the lecture. As I

have already mentioned, confirmation checks are the most frequent types of questions in this study.

In the current study, the overwhelming majority of confirmation checks, 91% of the four main types of questions in this study, presented the form of “Okay?”. This result seems to be in line with what Dafouz Milne and Sánchez García (2013:138) found in their study. In fact, they have discovered that “89.9% of the questions classified as confirmation checks corresponded to the form “OK?””. However, Dafouz Milne and Sánchez García (2013:138) have stated that, in their data, this device was mainly used as a transition marker and lecturers seemed to use them to make a pause and think about what to say after. They have affirmed that “[...] it looks as if the primary goal of those “first-approach” confirmation checks used by lecturers is not to obtain verification from students but rather form himself/herself and could often be translated in teachers’ minds as “OK, this point is covered, let’s move on to the next one”” (Dafouz Milne and Sánchez García, 2013:138). On the contrary, in the current study, confirmation checks seemed to be used by lecturers to be sure that their students had understood the information presented by him/her. In my opinion, this is confirmed by the fact that lecturers made some short pauses of two or three seconds after having pronounced the questions and waited for the approval, generally not verbal, of their students. Below is an example (EXAMPLE 1) of confirmation check used to verify if students had understood. In this example I have written in bold the question in order to highlight it and I will do this for every question in the following examples of this chapter.

EXAMPLE 1¹¹

<S1> /.../ of course generally family members so decide who sits on the board but not because they sit on the family council or on the family assembly which has a different function the function of family council and family assembly is communicate we have to communicate because we are a family and we have some interest in the company but we do not necessarily own the company the owners of the company are

¹¹ Extract from the Family Business 1 lecture

shareholders <VOCAL DESC= CONFIRMATION CHECKS> **okay?** </VOCAL DESC= CONFIRMATION CHECKS> (...) so they sit on the shareholders meeting and among the functions the shareholders meeting has there is the one to nominate directors /.../ </S1>

In the example above the lecturer asked a confirmation check and after she made a little pause, signalled with this symbol “(...)”, in order to wait for a confirmation from her students. This confirmation could be express in a verbal or non verbal way by students, but, in this case, students gave a non verbal response. The lecturer understood, thanks to some gestures of the students, that everything was clear and she went ahead with the explanation.

Also the example below (EXAMPLE 2) is used to understand if students have a clear idea of what was explained by the lecturer. However, this case reported a different situation because the lecturer was not able to receive a feedback from the students and he insisted and asked various confirmation checks. He also referred to one student by name and he also use an Italian word “chiaro?”, that means “is it clear?”, in order to be sure that the student had understood. At the end, the students gave a confirmation to the lecturer’s question and he continued with his monologue.

EXAMPLE 2¹²

<S1> /.../ because they help families they help families to avoid or to reduce the so called grumpy approach <VOCAL DESC: CONFIRMATION CHECKS> **okay?** (...) **okay?** (...) **Lorenzo? Chiaro? Okay?** </VOCAL DESC: CONFIRMATION CHECKS> (...) outside members are not <WRITING ON BOARD> ... /.../ </S1>

Example 1 and Example 2 were two examples of “standard” confirmation checks, but the use of them as transition markers, as in Dafouz Milne and Sánchez García’s (2013) study, is not absent in the current study. The example (EXAMPLE 3) below shows the presence of a confirmation check, that was used by the lecturer to move on and start talking about another topic.

¹² Extract from the Family Business 2 lecture

EXAMPLE 3¹³

<S1> /.../ you do not know this <INDICATE POINT IN A SLIDE> but you know this because this is equal to hydrogen concentration and we originally have minus the hydrogen concentration that you may basically produce when you have the coagulant <VOCAL DESC= CONFIRMATION CHECKS> **okay?** </VOCAL DESC= CONFIRMATION CHECKS> so this is from the coagulant <WRITING ON BOARD> <P:05> so now let me show you so you another thing now this one /.../ </S1>

In this case, after the confirmation check, the lecturer did not make a pause and started immediately to talk about another topic. It is clear that the lecturer did not want to have a real confirmation from his students, but that the confirmation check was useful for him to make a small pause in his discourse and start talking about another topic. In fact, he followed saying “so now let me show you another thing [...]”.

The previous examples of confirmation checks had all the form of OKAY?, but this type of question could appear also in other forms. In fact, other examples of confirmation checks used by lecturers are “right?” or “is that correct?” and “okay? Okay?”. These different examples were present in the current study, but the frequency of those confirmation checks were very scarce.

3.3.1.1.2 Referential questions

In this paragraph I will analyse the frequency of referential questions, that are questions used to receive an answer that is not known by the teacher (see CHAPTER 2). These are questions used to involved students in the lecture, trying to ask what they think about a particular aspect of the lecture or to understand if they know something about a particular topic or to ask them to talk about a personal experience.

This type of question is the second most common in the current study and, in this case, this do not match with Dafouz Milne and Davinia Sánchez’s study and also with other studies about this topic. In fact, the various studies, that I will mention after in this

¹³ Extract from the Water Supply Treatment lecture

chapter, presented a less frequency of referential questions compared to display questions. I will discuss the reasons for this difference in 3.4 of this chapter, in order to give a more complete overview about this issue.

The followings are examples of referential questions used by the lecturers involved in the current study. As in this case an answer by students is expected, this was underlined in the various extracts, in order to recognize it better.

EXAMPLE 4 ¹⁴

/.../ <S1> <VOCAL DESC= REFERENTIAL QUESTION> **other ideas? Or different ideas?** </VOCAL DESC= REFERENTIAL QUESTION> <S1>

<S7> (xx) family tools if you are for example (xx) a person that you know for a long time <OVERLAP:S1> yes but I do not understand if you prefer </OVERLAP:S1> it depends </S7>

<S1> okay fifty fifty you cannot decide and answer the best composition the best composition /.../ </S1>

EXAMPLE 5 ¹⁵

<VOCAL DESC= REFERENTIAL QUESTION> **do you have an idea?** </VOCAL DESC= REFERENTIAL QUESTION> Whatever is it <STUDENT RAISES THE HAND> yes ... </S1>

<S3> because one has to control (xx) and the other (xx) </S3>

¹⁴ Extract from Family Business 2 lecture

¹⁵ Extract from Family Business 1 lecture

EXAMPLE 6 ¹⁶

<VOCAL DESC= REFERENTIAL QUESTION> **is important? Why? Do you know what what is the meaning of evolutionary stage?** </VOCAL DESC= REFERENTIAL QUESTION> </S1>

<S9> the (xx) board </S9>

EXAMPLE 7 ¹⁷

<VOCAL DESC= REFERENTIAL QUESTION> **which kind of features could I consider? And what is your idea? Why trees are so special in a proxy way?** I mean climate change for the person that is studying climate change and **why are so important for you?** And especially in this let's say point of view perfectly of the study pas past time condition so using trees so trees as a proxy which are the important sides? </VOCAL DESC= REFERENTIAL QUESTION> </S1>

<S4> ehm so the tree is growing seasonally and (xx) its growth I mean with the (xx) and everything and its growth is affected by the climate because if sometime it drought or if it is too hot or too cold you can see the difference in the in the structure because there are different kind of traces I mean the sorts are different for instance </S4>

EXAMPLE 8 ¹⁸

<VOCAL DESC= REFERENTIAL QUESTION> **are there other group with special needs?** </VOCAL DESC= REFERENTIAL QUESTION> </S1>

<S5> No </S5>

¹⁶ Extract from Family Business 2 lecture

¹⁷ Extract from Forest Ecosystem and Global Change lecture

¹⁸ Extract from Family Business 1 lecture

EXAMPLE 9 ¹⁹

<VOCAL DESC= REFERENTIAL QUESTION> **Did you all write down your decision? Is there someone who is still writing?** </VOCAL DESC= REFERENTIAL QUESTION> ... I could not see people in the middle </S1>

<S8> Yes </S8>

<S1> okay I give you some little time <VOCAL DESC: CONFIRMATION CHECKS> okay? <VOCAL DESC: CONFIRMATION CHECKS> /.../ </S1>

3.3.1.1.3 Display questions

Display questions are devices used to catch students' attention and they are used to understand what students know about a particular topic. The answer of this type of question is already known by the teacher. In some cases students try to answer these questions, but if they do not answer, the lecturers give their own response. This is an effective strategy to involve students in the discourse.

Below there are some examples of display questions used by the lecturers involved in this study.

EXAMPLE 10 ²⁰

<S1> /.../ <VOCAL DESC= DISPLAY QUESTION> **who nominates board members?** </VOCAL DESC= DISPLAY QUESTION> So if they are elected some people have to vote board members and there is a little forum a quiz for you on the website I kindly ask you to keep the QR code and try to answer the question there are different options and the options are top management family council family office family assembly shareholder meeting <VOCAL DESC= DISPLAY QUESTION> **who nominates board members?** </VOCAL DESC= DISPLAY QUESTION> (P:1.25) </S1> /.../

¹⁹ Extract from Family Business 1 lecture

²⁰ Extract from the Family Business 1 lecture

EXAMPLE 10 is an example of display question, but it corresponds to a particular case of display question. In fact, students are supposed to answer online via their smart-phone (I will discuss the strategy used by this lecturer in Chapter 4), therefore the teacher asked the students the question and then explain them the procedure they have to follow to answer her question. The feedbacks to this question appeared immediately on the teachers' laptop and then she discussed the responses with the students.

EXAMPLE 11 ²¹

<S1> /.../ <VOCAL DESC= DISPLAY QUESTION> **what chemical in that water do you think might react? Might react to chlorine?** </VOCAL DESC= DISPLAY QUESTION>
<P:10> <VOCAL DESC= REFERENTIAL QUESTION> anybody? </VOCAL DESC= REFERENTIAL QUESTION> </S1>

<S5> Natural organic matter </S5>

<S1> <WRITING ON BOARD> Natural organic matter <VOCAL DESC= REFERENTIAL QUESTION> anything else? </VOCAL DESC= REFERENTIAL QUESTION>
</S1>

<S6> carbon </S6>

<S1> carbon it does not react with the does not react with chlorine because chemical that will react with chlorine are chemicals that are reduced that can change form from a reduce form to an oxygen form okay so remember <VOCAL DESC= DISPLAY QUESTION> **what is the problem in the summer time on the bottom of lake? What happen to the oxygen concentration?** </VOCAL DESC= DISPLAY QUESTION> ... <VOCAL DESC: CONFIRMATION CHECK> pardon? <VOCAL DESC: CONFIRMATION CHECK> </S1>

<SS> (xx) </S1>

²¹ Extract from Family Business 1 lecture

<S1> It goes down and then you have release of chemical in the sides we have talked about it and <VOCAL DESC= DISPLAY QUESTION> **what kind of chemical do we have into the water?** </VOCAL DESC= DISPLAY QUESTION> </S1>

<S6> Phosphor </S6>

<S1> phosphor phosphor does not react with chlorine because it cannot change that <VOCAL DESC= REFERENTIAL QUESTION> anything else? </VOCAL DESC= REFERENTIAL QUESTION> </S1>

<S7> **Hydrogen** </S7>

<S1> Hydrogen (xx) okay <WRITING ON BOARD> </S1>

<S2> **Magnesium** </S2>

<S1> No magnesium or by the way some of you some of you in your design project come up with the effect of (xx) removal of magnesium and calcium and sodium and that is not true the along the coagulation does not remove any of the (xx) it does not remove any (xx) so calcium magnesium and sodium basically are stable chemical and they do not get oxidant or reduce <VOCAL DESC: "CONFIRMATION CHECKS"> okay? </VOCAL DESC: "CONFIRMATION CHECKS"> okay so they do not can remove by coagulation and fluctuation ...<VOCAL DESC= "REFERENTIAL QUESTION"> do you put your hand up? </VOCAL DESC= "REFERENTIAL QUESTION">

<S8> Iron </S8>

<S1> Iron yes iron is present as (xx) and the oxide and magnesium you said magnesium but it is not as right magnesium and this goes to three and this mn four alright and there is also you have also (xx) this is sulphur so there are chemicals in the water that tend to react with chlorine so now these chemicals react fast <VOCAL DESC: "CONFIRMATION CHECKS"> okay? </VOCAL DESC: "CONFIRMATION CHECKS"> /.../ </S1>

This long extract (EXAMPLE 11) provides another example of display question. In this case, the question asked by the teacher created a dialogic section in the lecture and various students tried to give the correct answer. In the meantime, the lecturer helped them to give a correct feedback, trying to ask other questions in order to guide them in the searching of the correct answer.

EXAMPLE 12 ²²

<S1> /.../ <VOCAL DESC= DISPLAY QUESTION> **what happens in nineteen-fifty-three? What could be the cause to having such kind of traumatic (xx)?** </VOCAL DESC= DISPLAY QUESTION> (P:30) okay in most of the cases are mechanical stresses of the forest could be also for example area management having some logic let's say you create you cut some trees but the (xx) activity just think about when you cut a tree the tree fall down and can hit some other trees (xx) from one side to the other you can create some very small cracks or so on in any case some stresses mechanical stresses and the tree could react in this way (xx) any kind of mechanical stresses to produce /.../ </S1>

In this case (EXAMPLE 12) the lecturer asked his students a display question, but nobody answer. He waited thirty seconds to receive a response from students, but they did not answer. Probably he understood that nobody knew the answer and, therefore, he gave the response and he continued his monologue.

3.3.1.1.4 Display VS. Referential questions

As I have already explained in the previous paragraphs of this chapter, the percentage of referential questions of this study is higher than that of display questions. These findings are in line with Dalton-Puffer's study, that reported a "overhang of referential over display questions at a ratio of 53% to 47%". This is explained stating that student questions were included in the count and these are "referential by

²² Extract from Forest Ecosystem and Global Change lecture

definition”, and also “all teacher questions referring to procedural matters are referential, as are, indeed, some of the teachers’ content questions” (Dalton-Puffer, 2007:101).

However, as I mentioned above, the results about display and referential questions are in contrast with other studies where the percentage of display questions is higher than the percentage of referential questions. For example, Long and Sato (1983) have noted that professors, in their study, used more display questions than referential questions. Moreover, Musumeci (1996) has discovered that referential questions were non-existent in the lectures she observed. Also Dafouz Milne and Sánchez García (2013) and Chang (2012) reported the same results. In addition, in a different study, which took into account the differences between L1 and L2 lectures, Zuengler and Brinton (1997) found that display questions are more numerous in L2 than in L1 lectures.

The data presented by the current study are significant and positive because referential questions “are frequently seen as more natural and are expected to generate student answers that are somehow qualitatively better (more authentic, more involved, longer, and more complex)” (Dalton-Puffer, 2007:96). For this reason, classes with small percentages of referential questions are often deplored (Dalton-Puffer, 2007). However, this is not the case of the current study, that has reported a different situation with respect to the studies listed above: referential questions are more numerous than display questions.

In order to understand better the reasons for this difference, I have tried to analyse these two types of questions in detail. As I mentioned above, what I have found is that referential questions are more frequent than display questions. However, this is true only if we analyse the data as a whole. But, after having singularly analysed the presence of these questions in every discipline, I have discovered that referential questions are more numerous than display questions only in two lectures, which are one of the Family Business classes and the Forest Pathology and Wood Alterations class. This is clear if we look at Figure 5 below.

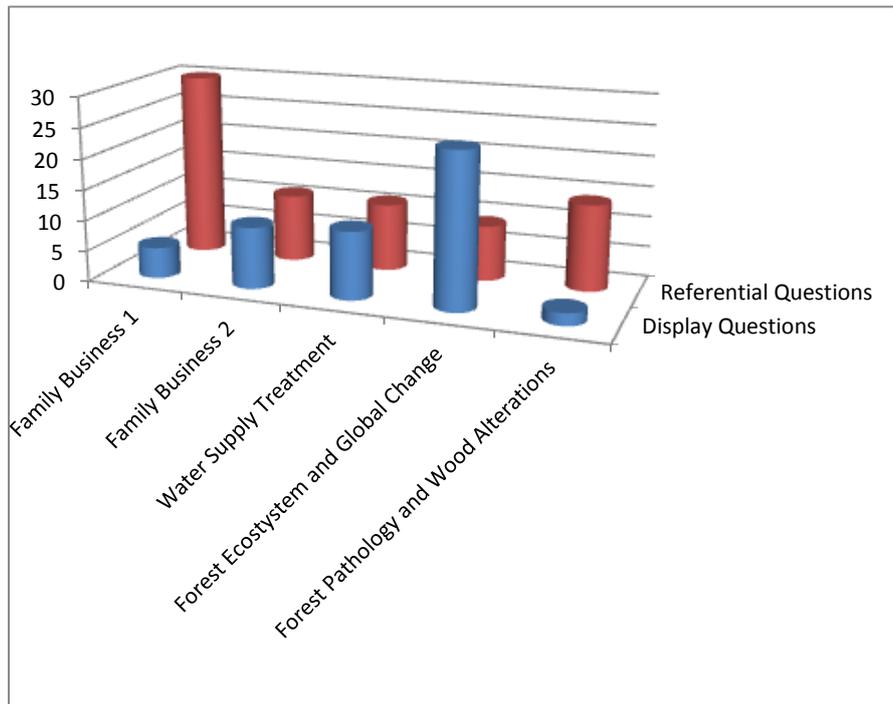


Figure 5: Display and referential questions by disciplines

These data show that the percentage of referential questions is very high in one of the Family Business classes and this result raises significantly the amount of referential questions as a whole. After an analysis of the data, I have deduced that the high presence of this type of question is probably due to the fact that the lecturer used them to discover if the students have already answered some exercises or questions that she has posed before. She continuously asked if students had completed the exercise or answered the questions and, as the students were supposed to complete lots of exercises during the lecture, the percentage of referential questions is very high. In my opinion, the device used by this lecturer is useful because it is like an invitation for the students to immediately answer the questions in order to go ahead with the lecture, as shows EXAMPLE 10 of referential questions. It is a way to pressure students in order to obtain an answer, or more answers, rapidly. The same happened in the Forest Pathology and Wood Alterations class, where the lecturer wanted to have a feedback from the students and continued to ask them what they think about a particular topic.

Furthermore, Dafouz Milne and Sánchez García (2013:142) found that “students’ output to referential questions was extremely limited and often reduced to minimal responses [...]” and this goes against the specific nature of referential questions, which are supposed to be authentic, long and complex (Dalton-Puffer, 2007:96). Moreover, referential questions “in theory present an excellent opportunity to create a conversational exchange between participants” (Dafouz Milne and Sánchez García, 2013:142). The current study also presented this kind of problem, as example 7 and 8 show. But, the answers with complex and long answers are more than those that presented minimal responses, as example 3, 4, 5 and especially 6 show. Therefore, this is again a positive result for this study and the findings are totally in discordance with Dafouz Milne and Sánchez García’s (2013:142) study, where “in most cases either no output (...) or very reduce discourse (i.e. one- or two-word responses) was produced by students (...)”.

To sum up, the results about referential and display questions are very positive with respect to many other studies about this topic. However, data have to be analysed singularly, by discipline, in order to have a clear idea about the differences with other studies.

3.3.1.1.5 Self-answered questions

These types of questions are not used to involve students into the lecturers’ discourse in order to produce an interactive class because the lecturer offers a prompt answer to his/her question, without any pause. It is as “he/she were talking to himself/herself while paving the way for the next point in the lecture or the further development of an idea” Dafouz Milne and Sánchez García’s (2013:140). The four extracts below are great examples of self-answered questions, where the lecturers asked a question and then he/she immediately answered.

EXAMPLE 13²³

<S1> [...] <VOCAL DESC: SELF-ANSWERED QUESTIONS> **which are the differences between for instance the HA manager the informational technology manager and the person in charge of a division? Which are the most important differences?** </VOCAL DESC: SELF-ANSWERED QUESTIONS> The difference is based on the traditional segmentation between line manager and staff manager the staff manager like HA manager or IT manager or quality assurance manager they provide services to internal costumers and these costumers are the division or the function or the business units or subsidiaries or or or but the main idea is that these units sell services to internal costumers they are providers providers of services the line managers are in charge of a division or a process production sails research and development and so on [...] </S1>

EXAMPLE 14²⁴

<S1> [...] <VOCAL DESC: SELF-ANSWERED QUESTIONS> **what is the advantage of having an advisory board?** </VOCAL DESC: SELF-ANSWERED QUESTIONS> Well a board means that some people meet so we can could substitute the word board with meeting <VOCAL DESC: CONFIRMATION CHECKS> okay? </VOCAL DESC: CONFIRMATION CHECKS> it is people that meet around the table so what you are doing with your groups work is actually meet people that is precisely what people do in firms do decide so the advisory board is people that might have a relationship with the firm but generally not and they might decide to sit on a separate board [...] </S1>

²³ Extract from the Family Business 1 lecture

²⁴ Extract from the Family Business 2 lecture

EXAMPLE 15²⁵

<VOCAL DESC: SELF-ANSWERED QUESTION> **how to measure a disease?**
</VOCAL DESC: SELF-ANSWERED QUESTION> There are some parameters we will learn how to measure only some disease in my class using simple formulas here there is a simple formula that is important for you in the future

EXAMPLE 16²⁶

<S1> (...) it is much darker then the cellulose was on this bracket are much thicker <VOCAL DESC: SELF-ANSWERED QUESTIONS> **why are they much thicker?**
</VOCAL DESC: SELF-ANSWERED QUESTIONS> because probably the season well better the temperature well see I must see where these tree are coming from otherwise it is almost impossible to say anything so I consider this is a tree kind of high elevation for the temperature the winter environment so the wood at the end of the season probably they appreciate and they are producing sticker walls here the season we have talked at the end of the season temperature let's say I do not know it is late wood or this area back to the Alps so with (xx) without a score of temperature or September or September let's say (...)</S1>

3.3.1.2 Other types of questions

The four types of questions that I have analysed above, referential, self-answered and display questions and confirmation-checks, are very important tools and the lecturer could use them in order to make a class more easy to follow for the students. These were the most common types of questions in the current study, but also other types of questions have been found. For example retrospective questions, questions seeking explanation and class management questions. I will analyse the first two of them, which are the most frequent below.

²⁵ Extract from the Forest Pathology and Wood Alterations lecture

²⁶ Extract from the Forest Ecosystem and Global Change lecture

3.3.1.2.1 Retrospective questions

Retrospective questions are important tools to involve students in the discourse, as their primary function is to ask questions about old topics or information that the lecturer has given during the lecture. An example of this type of question is given by the extract (EXAMPLE 17) that follows.

EXAMPLE 17²⁷

<VOCAL DESC= RETROSPECTIVE QUESTION> **do you remember which are or which were the main issues concerning <WRITING ON BOARD> the governance system or the governance bodies within family firms? Do you remember which were the most important issues? Effectiveness of strategic bodies or governance bodies in terms of firms?** </VOCAL DESC= RETROSPECTIVE QUESTION> Lorenzo ...</S1>

<S3> communication </S3>

<S1> communication okay but from a theoretically point of view ... we analysed two or three main theories agency theory <OVERLAP: S4> theoretically <OVERLAP: S4/> the problem was between familiar <OVERLAP: S4> point of view and the manager point of view <OVERLAP: S4/> and the manager point of view <VOCAL DESC= RETROSPECTIVE QUESTION> **do you remember the agency theory?** </VOCAL DESC= RETROSPECTIVE QUESTION> Or on the other (xx) theory I introduced also the so called the propriety the propriety right theory these theories help us to manage <WRITING ON BOARD> the so called overlap between two instructions family on one side firm or company or business on the other side we have the same problem we have the same problem when we design we design the top management the same problem the same problem and we have to choose which might be the best shape or the best composition of top management team in family in family firms <VOCAL DESC: CONFIRMATION CHECKS> okay? </VOCAL DESC: CONFIRMATION CHECKS>

²⁷ Extract from the Family Business 2 lecture

3.3.2 Questions asked by students

Students asked a relatively low amount of questions compared to the number of questions asked by lecturers. The total amount of questions asked by students is 29, as Table 10 below shows.

Lecture	Class-management questions	Questions seeking explanation	Total
F.B.1		9	9
F.B.1	1	2	3
W.S.T		5	5
F.E.G.C.		7	7
F.P.W.A.		5	5
Total	1	28	29

Table 10: questions asked by students

The students asked questions above all during one of the Family Business lectures, where the lecturer continuously asked their students if they have any questions and in this way she obtain some feedback in form of questions.

3.3.2.1 Questions seeking explanation

The most asked typology of question is to seek explanation. This type of question is the most used by students in this study. It is used to obtain better or extra information from the lecturer. In the current study students asked some questions of this typology and they were very useful to have a clear idea of what they had to do (for example in an exercise) or to ask some explanations about a certain topic. I will give some examples of them below.

EXAMPLE 18²⁸

<S15> <VOCAL DESC= QUESTION SEEKING EXPLANATION> **what is the difference between family council and family assembly?** </VOCAL DESC= QUESTION SEEKING EXPLANATION> </S15>

<S1> Family assembly are generally larger it is just a matter /.../ </S1>

This first example (EXAMPLE 18) is a short one and it represents a situation where a student who the lecturer explain the difference between two different terms. The lecturer started to explain the difference. The next example (EXAMPLE 19) is similar to this one, in fact a student asked a question and the professor immediately answered it .

EXAMPLE 19²⁹

<S2> <VOCAL DESC= SEEKING EXPLANATION QUESTION> **Can false rings say something about the capability of optimization of water used and also if there are some species more prompt to this kind of feature?** </VOCAL DESC= SEEKING EXPLANATION QUESTION> </S2>

<S1> for sure more some species are more prompt to this respect to other according with their physiological features /.../ </S1>

EXAMPLE 20³⁰

<S4> <VOCAL DESC= QUESTION SEEKING EXPLANATION> **professor could you also explain if it spread also during the reproduction of the plant?** </VOCAL DESC= QUESTION SEEKING EXPLANATION> </S4>

²⁸ Extract from the Family Business 2 lecture

²⁹ Extract from the Forest Ecosystem and Global Change lecture

³⁰ Extract from the Forest Pathology and Wood Alterations lecture

<S1><VOCAL DESC= QUESTION SEEKING EXPLANATION> **yes but the reproduction of the plant or of the trees?** </VOCAL DESC= QUESTION SEEKING EXPLANATION> </S1>

<S4> no no the reproduction of the plants like when the flower is I do not know I do not know the name in English </S4>

<S1> Do not worry do not worry repeat your question </S1>

<S4> <VOCAL DESC= QUESTION SEEKING EXPLANATION> **When the flower is open so the pollen goes to another flower could the disease spread?** </VOCAL DESC= QUESTION SEEKING EXPLANATION> </S4>

<S1> no no the pathogen is outside the insect in form of spores so when when a certain amount of spore go inside the plant the pathogen in this case is (xx) not inside the flower we have seen that environmental factors such as /.../ </S1>

This second example is much longer than the previous ones. In this, there is a student who asked the lecturer to explain a certain topic, but the professor did not understand what the student wanted to say and he asked her to explain better. At this point the student was not able to say what she wanted to ask in English and the lecturer tried to help her. In the end the student repeated the question with other words and the lecturer started to answer her question.

3.3.3 Question and answer correlation

Dafouz Milne and Sánchez García (2013:143) have argued that the number of questions asked by lecturers in their study is not a transparent sign of interaction because “teacher questions do not necessarily correlate with student response”. As regards the current students, I wanted to check if the findings of Dafouz Milne and Sánchez García (2013) are similar. Table 11 shows that the number of responses given by students do not match with the number of questions asked.

Lecture	Confirmation checks	Referential questions	Display questions	Self-answered questions	Rhetorical questions	Class Management questions	Retrospective questions	Repetition questions	Questions seeking explanation	Total
F.B.1	130	30	5	16	10	2	1		1	194
Answers	1	9				2	1		1	14
F.B.2	40	11	10	5		2	5	1		74
Answers	1	6	4				1			14
W.S.T.	30	11	11	2		5				59
Answers		6	4							10
F.E.G.C		9	25	6			1	2		43
Answers		6	22				1			29
F.P.W.A		14	2	6	1				1	24
Answers		7	3						1	11

Table 11: question answered by students

As we can see from the Table above, lecturers' questions are not always answered by students. This finding is in line with the study of Dafouz Milne and Sánchez García (2013:143), who have affirmed that "teacher questions do not necessarily correlate with student response". However, they also found that when the teachers questions are more numerous, there is a higher chance for students to respond. But in the current study this is not true. In fact, the class with the highest amount of questions (194) is the Family Business 1 lecture, but the number of answers are very few (14).

In the current study, the most answered questions are referential questions, where students are directly asked to answer questions. Moreover, the class with the highest number of questions answered is the Forest Ecosystem and Global Change Class, with 29 questions answered. This result could be explained by the fact that this class is

followed by a low number of students, 8, as I will explain also in chapter 4. In my opinion, this low number of students facilitate interaction.

3.3.4 Other types of interactions

3.3.4.1 Overlaps

In this paragraph I will analyse the amount of overlaps which are present in this study. Overlaps in interaction occur when a speaker starts to talk and he/she overlaps the discourse of another person. In the current study, there are 61 overlaps, both from students (48) and lecturers (13). These overlaps become interruptions when the first speaker stops to talk and the other speaker starts to speak. Students interrupt the lecturers several times to ask them questions or simply to finish a lecturer’s statement, without the lecturer giving them the floor in advance. Table 12 shows the number of overlaps divided by lecture.

Lecture	Students’ Overlap	Lecturers’ Overlap
Family Business 1	6	
Family Business 2	8	2
Water Supply Treatment	2	
Forest Ecosystem and Global Change	29	11
Forest Pathology and Wood Alterations	3	
Total	48	13

Table 12: Students’ and lecturers’ overlaps

As we have seen in the previous section about questions answered by students, the higher number of overlaps was in the Forest Ecosystem and Global Change class. This number could be explained by the fact that the class is composed by fewer students, compared to the other classes. The example below shows a lecturer interrupting and overlapping a students’ discourse.

EXAMPLE 21³¹

<S2> it is just my idea but we can assume that a tree has lived always in the same place <OVERLAP: S1> okay <OVERLAP: S1/> so it is a very powerful information and secondly even that tree can give information because the key does not burn immediately let's think about wood that is present brown wood in ancient (xx) or also in the structure or also fossil or something that we can not necessarily refer to this century but also let's say to the (xx) <OVERLAP: S1> you can again potentially extract some information even just out of dead material not only from living trees so even the dead are potentially good for us and (xx) <OVERLAP: S1/> yes <S2/>

The example below is a student overlapping the discourse of the lecturer.

EXAMPLE 2³²

<S1> /.../ but you can see that sometimes something very very similar happens and again it is not written that it is just a from or a competition or you can have some other special cases <OVERLAP: S3> falls raining <OVERLAP: S3/> this is not false this is true <VOCAL DESC= DISPLAY QUESTION> which is the difference here that you can appreciate? </VOCAL DESC= DISPLAY QUESTION> And I hope that all of you is able to see that this is different respect to the other this is the very important thing <VOCAL DESC= DISPLAY QUESTION> which are the differences here? </VOCAL DESC= DISPLAY QUESTION>... <S1/>

³¹ Extract from the Forest Ecosystem and Global Change lecture

³² Exctrct from the Forest Ecosystem and Global Change class

3.4 Conclusion

This chapter focused on the use of questions by five university lecturers in three different courses of the University of Padua, the Family Business course, the Environmental Engineering course and the Forest Science course. These three second-degrees programmes are taught in English. The current study aimed at discovering how lecturers use questions in class to help their students to understand the lectures' content.

The results of this study shows that questions are usually used by lecturers in English-Medium Instruction programmes at Padua University, especially in the Business Administration course and in the Environmental Engineering course. In fact, the transcriptions of some recorded lectures have revealed that the classes with the higher amount of questions are the two Family Business classes and the Water Supply Treatment class. As regards the typology of questions, the most used are confirmation checks, followed by referential questions, display questions and self-answered questions. The frequency of these four types of questions matches other similar studies, for example the study of Dalton-Puffer (2007) and Dafouz Milne and Sánchez García (2013). In fact, also these studies have reported that the four main typologies of questions asked in class are confirmation checks, referential, display and self-answered questions.

But, the current study matches that of Dafouz Milne and Sánchez García (2013) only for the four main typology of questions asked, but the frequency of these typology of questions is different. In particular, the current study has demonstrated that referential questions are more frequent than display questions, but this is in contrast with other studies about this topic, for example those of Long and Sato (1983), Musumeci (1996), Chang (2012), Dafouz Milne and Sánchez García (2013), and Zuengler and Brinton (1997). I have analysed in details the presence of referential and display questions and I have discovered that, in this study, referential questions are more than display questions only in two lectures. Of these two lectures, one had a big amount of referential questions and this has probably raise the number of these questions as a whole.

Other typologies of questions that have been found in this study are questions seeking explanation and retrospective questions, but they are not so frequent as the

other four types of questions in this study. In fact, they are present with a small percentage in the various transcribed texts. Despite their small presence, these types of questions, and in particular retrospective questions, are also important because they are tools used by lecturers to invite their students to participate in class, as the most frequent type of questions are. Questions seeking explanation are usually asked by students, but I have also found that some of them have been asked by lecturers, in this study.

As I have already mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, the aim of this study was to shed light on the importance of questions during the teaching process, trying to understand if EMI lectures at the University of Padua are interactive or not. What has been found is very positive, because a high number of questions (395) have been asked by teachers during the five lectures observed. But we have seen that there is not always a correlation between questions asked and students answers. In fact, the study has revealed that the class with the highest number of questions answered is the Forest Ecosystem and Global Change class. This could be explained by the fact that this class is followed by a low number of students. Moreover, the high number of overlaps suggests that university classes at the university of Padua are interactive. Another time, the Forest Ecosystem and Global Change class was the class with the highest number of overlaps. Therefore, it seems interaction is easier in classes with a low number of students. Furthermore, the study has revealed that students are more keen to answer questions when the questions are display and referential. However, the samples of this study are very limited and more research need to be undertaken to obtain more realistic data among various lectures.

FOURTH CHAPTER: *A survey of interaction in EMI lectures at the University of Padua*

1. Introduction

As I have mentioned in Chapter 3, the fourth chapter of this dissertation will discuss the results of a questionnaire carried out at the University of Padua during the academic year 2015/2016. More precisely, the survey involved 100 master's courses students, from the four courses involved in the study about questions, which I have developed in the third Chapter of this dissertation. I will specify the typology of the classes and their composition in the following paragraphs of this chapter.

As regards the structure of this chapter, I will firstly focus on the results of the questionnaire conducted among students and secondly I will talk about the results of the interviews carried out among lecturers. As regards the part of the questionnaire, I will talk about what students thought about EMI programmes and about the reasons why EMI classes are useful. Then, I will discuss the results concerning with interactivity in class and the use of questions by lecturers. Then I will briefly discuss the use of other means to get a reaction from students, for example using group works or pair works, asking students to do exercises and use smart-phones to answer the questions. This tool is one of the most innovative ways to get a reaction from students. Moreover, I will also pay attention on questions asked by students and how students felt about the use of interactivity in class.

Before the beginning of this chapter, it is important to underline that the study was conducted in only 4 classes of the University of Padua, so it is not possible to make a generalization, but the findings are important to shed light on the importance of interactivity in the learning process.

2. The study: students' opinions

The present study aims to understand how interactive lessons are at Padua University. In the following paragraphs I will explain in details the characteristics of this survey, specifying who are the participants, how the questionnaire is designed and I will also analyse the results obtained from the students' responses.

2.1 Participants

The present survey was conducted among 100 students enrolled in four different EMI classes at the University of Padua, during the second semester of the academic year 2015/2016, in particular, during April and May 2016. Of these students, 77 were Italian and 23 came from other countries in Europe, such as Germany, Spain, France, Finland, Belgium, and Ireland and few of them from outside Europe, such as Pakistan. However, the 77 Italian students were enrolled on fully English-taught programmes in three different departments: Business Administration (BA), Environmental Engineering (EE) and Forest Science (FS). In particular, the questionnaire was carried out in four different EMI classes, as I have already specified in Chapter 3: Family Business Water Supply Treatment, Forest Ecosystem and Global Change and Forest Pathology and Wood Alterations. Table 13 shows the distribution of Italian and Foreign students among the various disciplines.

University Courses	Family Business (BA)	Forest Pathology and Wood Alterations (FS)	Forest Ecosystem and Global Change (FS)	Water Supply Treatment (EE)	
Italian students	35	10	4	28	77
Foreign students	11	4	4	4	23
Total	46	14	8	32	100

Table 13: Distribution of Italian and Foreign students among the various disciplines

2.2 Questionnaire design

The questionnaire (see Appendix) was designed in two sections: a general part where students were asked to express their feelings about the introduction of lessons taught in English and to express their thoughts about the usefulness of EMI's classes, and a specific part about interaction in class. In this second part, students were asked to list what types of strategies lecturers use to get a reaction from them and, in particular, whether the professor asks questions in class or not. The questionnaire investigated also if students ask questions to their lecturers and if they answer lecturers' questions, specifying, in the case of a negative response, the reasons why they did not answer or ask questions. Moreover, students' preferences concerning interaction in class were evaluated.

As regards the structure of the questionnaire, questions asking about students' feelings about EMI were open-ended. However, those about asking and answering questions were Yes or No questions, where students should also express their motivations, in the case of a negative answer. For the sections about students' preferences about interaction, a four-point Likert scale was used. At the end, students could also express their comments in a final open-ended question.

This questionnaire was given to the students enrolled in the Family Business course and the Forest Ecosystem and the Global Changes course. However, the questionnaires given to students enrolled in the Water Supply Treatment class and the Forest Pathology and Wood Alterations class presented some changes, as the lecturers were not Italian speakers and some questions were not relevant (see Questionnaire in the appendix).

3. Findings

3.1 Students' perceptions about the introduction of EMI's programmes

Several studies have revealed that "satisfaction with EMI courses may vary from country to country, university to university, course to course, and may depend on any

number of variables” (Ackerley, forthcoming:5). Two important variables that seem to influence students’ satisfaction are students’ language proficiency and the lecturers’ level of English. However, the studies about students’ satisfaction with EMI are many and it is not easy to make generalisations (Ackerley, forthcoming).

As regards language proficiency, a study conducted by Kym and Kym (2014) has revealed that the students’ level of satisfaction did not depend on their English proficiency. However, students “are more satisfied with an EMI class when they feel that they can comprehend the content of the course easily” (Kym and Kym, 2014:46). On the contrary, a study conducted by Lei and Hu (2014:28) has found that “students’ perception of EMI [...] appeared to mediate the effectiveness of EMI in enhancing English proficiency and positive effect in English learning and use”.

Kym and Kym’s study (2014) has also focused on how students’ level of satisfaction is influenced by lecturers’ level of English. The study has revealed that the lecturer native language and nationality have an high impact on students’ satisfaction. In fact, students were more satisfied when the instructor was an American, rather than a Korean or Chinese (Kim and Kym, 2014).

Focusing on the current study, conducted at the University of Padua, it is important to state that it did not directly focus on the reasons that influenced students’ satisfaction with EMI courses, however few students have made some spontaneous comments about the importance of lecturers’ English proficiency in these kinds of courses. In fact, when students were asked to say how they feel about the introduction of lessons taught in English, only one student answered that he was not satisfied, saying that lessons taught in English are useful to improve English language, but they are not good for the content, because the information given in class are less compared to a similar lesson given in Italian. Other students did not mention whether they are satisfied or not, but they have commented that “level of lecturers’ English is not always satisfying” and “professors haven’t an high level of English so for the moment it’s quite easy to follow the lessons”. Therefore, these findings seem to be in line with the studies conducted by Kim and Kym (2014), that I have mentioned before.

On the contrary, students from the department of Engineering, who followed the course of Water Supply Treatment, were taught by a English-native speaking lecturer. For this reason, they were asked to state whether interaction levels might be affected by the fact that the teacher was a native speaker. 23 out of 32 students enrolled in this course affirmed that interaction might be affected. 11 students of the 23 students affirmed that interaction was better because it was more natural, but 4 of them stated that communication is more difficult because they cannot talk in Italian with him and because students were afraid of making mistakes. The other students did not give an explanation.

3.2 Why are lessons taught in English useful?

When students were asked to say whether courses in English are useful or not, a strong majority (99%) stated that, in their opinion, EMI courses are useful. This means that only one student is dissatisfied with this type of course and this one said that “professors aren’t able to speak it [English] properly”.

Moreover, students were asked to give the reason or the reasons why they feel that EMI courses are useful. One opinion seems to prevail among others. In fact, 20.20% of the students have answered that they believed EMI programmes would be useful to improve their English language skills. Most of this students mentioned that EMI courses will be useful especially for their listening skills. Students have also affirmed that these types of courses will be useful for their future job (15.66%), affirming that English is required in many working places. This percentage could also be added at the 3.06% of students who have affirmed that these courses will be useful for their future in general, without giving a more specific explanation. However, I think it is possible that these students were thinking about a possible future job.

Therefore, the two most important reasons given by student concerned with the improvement of English proficiency and a future job and these findings are in accordance with several studies about the advantages of EMI programmes, for example the study conducted by Tatzl (2011), which revealed that students though that the most important benefits of English-taught programmes are the improvement of

communication skills in English (31.9%), followed by the preparation for international workplace (25.9%). The data of the current survey are also in line with what Kym and Kym (2014) reported. In fact, they discovered that 70% of the students involved in their questionnaire took EMI courses to improve their English communicative ability (53%) and to meet the requirements for a future job (17%). However, The data of Table 2 are not completely in line with what Ackerley (forthcoming) has found in a survey conducted at the University of Padua. In fact, she has reported that a strong majority, 74% of the surveyed, though that improving English is one of the main advantages of an EMI course. However, only 15.3% of the students affirmed that there could be advantages for their future employment. Therefore, students involved in her questionnaire seemed to give more importance to immediate aims, such as the improvement of English language skills, rather than giving attention to future advantages. However, Ackerley (forthcoming:13) has explained the lack of interest in the future job saying that one possible reason is that students though that advantages in terms of future employment “is a natural consequence of advanced language skills and [they] may not felt the need to explicitly state it”.

In order to focus again on the current study, I will give other data about students' feeling about EMI programmes. For example, 11.73% of students thought that EMI courses are useful to learn technical terminology, which will be useful for their job, and 6.12% of students thought that it is useful to know English if you want to work abroad. Other comments explain that English is considered as the most important language worldwide and it is necessary to know it well (9.18%) and it is also important because communication in English is easier (7.66%) in classes with a significant percentage of foreign students, as are the classes involved in the questionnaire. Other students mentioned that these types of courses are useful because the language of their field of study, for example engineering or business, is English (9.70%). A small number of international students have affirmed that lectures held in English are useful for them to understand lecturers, as they did not know the language of the host country, Italian, well. Therefore they needed English to understand the content and to avoid the risk of being penalized following a lecture in Italian.

In sum, the findings of this survey show that most of the students are interested in improving their English language abilities and many students affirmed that attending an EMI course will enable them to find a job in their field, more easily. Other less relevant comments, in terms of percentage, are cited in Table 14, that shows the different answers of students, divided in macro-areas.

Do you think lessons taught in English are useful? Why?	Percentage
Improve the language	20.20%
Better future job opportunities	15.66%
To learn technical terminology	11.73%
The language of research/science/business is English	9.70%
English is an international language/important	9.18%
Communication is easier	7.66%
English is useful if you want to work in a foreign country	6.12%
I don't speak Italian	3.06%
Good for the future	3.06%
Improve my knowledge	3.06%
To be more international	2.04%
To open the mind	2.04%

Table 14: Reasons why lessons taught in English are useful

In the following, I will make a list of different students' comments about the usefulness of English-taught programmes.

“We have the opportunity to continuously improve the English level, especially the listening part” (FamBuss2)

“It widens future possibilities when looking for a job” (Eng4)

“In every scientific subject English is the main language. It is impossible to do science without knowing English” (Eng1)

“Because English is the language used in scientific research and it is preparing me to work abroad” (Eng2)

“We have not only Italian professors and classmates. It opens your mind, you can see problems with different points of view” (Eng3)

“It allows students from different nationalities to participate” (FamBuss1)

“Because I am not an Italian-speaker” (Eng5)

To conclude, the fact of improving language skills seems to be the goal of many students involved in these kinds of programmes, as reveals this study, but also other studies, such as those of Tatzl (2011), Kym and Kym (2014) and Ackerley (forthcoming), which I have all mentioned above. It is important to observe that students may be interested in enhancing their language abilities in order to prepare themselves for a future work in a field where English is widely used. Therefore the two findings, improving language abilities and future job opportunities, are linked with each others.

3.3 Interaction at Padua University

A question was designed to find out if lecturers usually used questions in class to involve their students in the development of subject content. The findings seem to be very positive because a strong majority of students (97%) have affirmed that their lecturers usually ask questions during lectures. Only 3% of students have affirmed that their lecturers did not asked questions, but the percentage of students who have given a positive feedback is very high and, probably, this 3% of students is composed by non-attending participants. In fact, students involved in this questionnaire took part to classes where attendance was not compulsory and their negative feedback may be due to the fact that they were not always present in class. Consequently, non-attending students did not know if their lecturers were used to ask questions.

As I said before, 97% of students is a high amount and it is possible to say that these lectures are interactive. However, it is necessary to analyse this data in a more

precise way and, to fulfil this aim, the following paragraphs will examine interactivity, especially in form of question, in order to have a clearer idea about it.

3.3.1. Strategies for promoting interaction/reaction

When students were asked to list the tools that professors used to try and get a reaction from them, they gave various examples and some of them recurred many times. For example, students affirmed that lecturers asked them to raise their hands to state whether they agreed or not with a lecturer's statement and that they asked them if they had understood the content of the lesson. Moreover, some lecturers tried to be funny in class, making the students laugh with some jokes. Other findings revealed that students were usually asked to work and discuss a case study in pairs or in small groups of three or four people and at the end of their discussions they were asked to give the feedback to the lecturer. Moreover, they were also asked to solve some exercises and then discuss the results with the class, trying to resolve the difficulties. Furthermore, some students revealed that their professors tried to stimulate interaction between Italian and foreign students and this is good because, in these cases, students were "forced" to speak in English. In fact, when students were asked if they work in group in class and whether they did it in English or in Italian, a significant percentage of Italian students affirmed that if in their group there were a foreign student they spoke English, but if the group is composed only of Italian students they prefer to speak in their native language. Other examples of interactivity are when students are asked to affirm, at the end of the lecture, what part of it was most interesting or the fact that the lecturer involved them in some stories about his/her experience and then asked them to give their impressions. On the other hand, students affirmed that they were also asked to remember some particular topics that they dealt with, in previous lectures. Few students also stated that the lecturers often asked students to complete an exercise at the blackboard.

In my opinion, all these tools are useful to involve students in the lecture and it is important that professor use them frequently. However, the use of other two different and unusual tools emerged from the questionnaire. These are the use of Google forms and the use of barcodes. Google forms are online questionnaires, but they were not

directly use in class. In fact, students were asked to complete them at home and then the lecturer showed the various answers in class. However, the use of barcodes was different. It consisted in the use of an online application, via students' personal mobile. Students' mobile, after having registered a barcode, usually showed in a slide, automatically showed a question that should be answered. Then, the various answers were all registered in an application used by the lecturer. This application immediately gave the feedback of the various answers. Unfortunately, only two of the lecturers involved in this questionnaire used these kinds of means to involve students, the Family Business lectures.

In the followings paragraphs I will focus on what students thought about the most common ways to get a reaction from students, that are answering questions and asking questions in class, trying to understand the reasons why students did not answer or ask questions.

3.3.2. Answering questions

Students may be influenced by numerous factors when asked to answer a questions in class. The findings of the current questionnaire have revealed different reasons why student did not answer in class and they are all explained in this paragraph.

First of all, students were asked to say whether or not they answered questions in class and the majority of them (76%) have affirmed that they usually answered lecturers' questions. Therefore, the survey has revealed a positive feedback with respect to other studies, where small percentages of students affirmed that they answer teachers' question. However, this is not entirely in line with my observation. In fact, a small number of students answered questions in the lectures that I have observed (see Chapter 3). For example, the study of Navaz's (2013) has revealed that 97% of the students in his study did not answer lecturers' questions. Table 15 shows the results of this questionnaire's question: "Do you ever answer questions?". The answers are divided according to the nationality of students and also according to the course they were enrolled.

Do you ever answer questions?	yes (%)	No (%)
Family Business – Italian students	77.14	2.86
Family Business – Foreign students	63.63	36.36
Forest Pathology - Italian students	100	0
Forest Pathology – Foreign students	100	0
Forest Ecosystem – Italian students	100	0
Forest Ecosystem – Foreign students	100	0
Water Supply – Italian students	64.28	35.71
Water Supply – Foreign students	50	50
Total	76	24

Table 15: Percentage of students who answered teachers questions in class

As regards the reasons why students did not answer questions in class, the main reasons are that they are shy (31.25%) and they are afraid of giving the wrong answer (29.87%). Then, another important reason is that students affirmed that they are not confident speaking in English (20.15%). However, of this 20.15% of students, only 6 students confirmed that they did not speak in class because of their poor language skills. Probably, this discrepancy is due to the fact that some students did not want to state directly that they have poor language skills. Table 16 shows also other reasons which influence students in answering questions, such as the fact that they did not know the answer and that there were not so many occasions to answer questions in class. The answers are divided into the type of class the students were enrolled with.

Reasons	Family Business – Italian students	Family Business – Foreign students	Water Supply – Italian students	Water Supply – Foreign students	%
I am shy	2.5	1.33	3.66		31.25%
I am afraid of giving the wrong answer	3	0.5	2.66	1	29.87%
I don't feel confident speaking in English	1.5	1	2.33		20.15%
I don't know the answer		0.83	1.33	1	13.18%
There are not so many occasions to answer questions		0.33			1.38%
Other: I prefer not to interact in class	1				4.1%

Table 16: Reasons given by students for not answering questions

As regards Navaz's (2013) study, the major reason for not answering questions was the fear of giving the wrong answer, followed by the fact that students have admitted having language problems. Other reasons were the fact that students did not know the answer or that they were shy to talk in class, although these two reasons represented a low percentage in Navaz's study.

In order to have a complete overview and a confirmation of the findings cited above, other questionnaire's questions were designed. For example, Figure 6 shows the percentage of students who affirmed that they liked to answer teachers' questions.

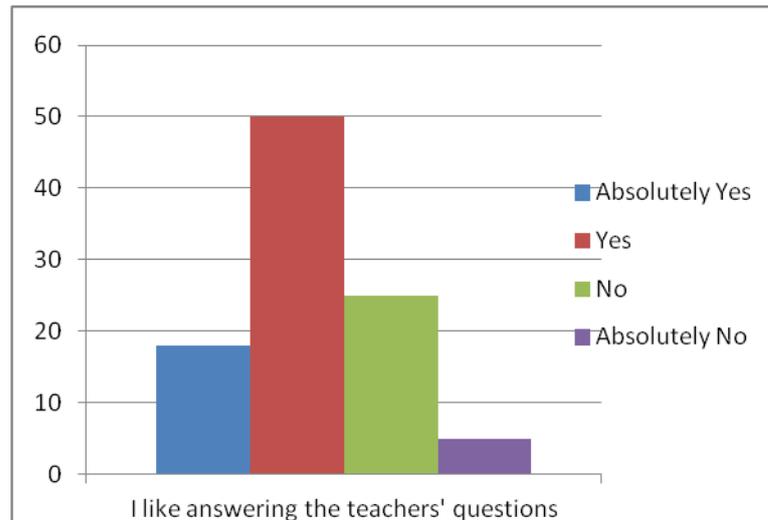


Figure 6: Percentage of students who liked to answer teacher questions

Looking at this figure, it is obvious that the majority of students argued that they liked answering teachers' questions, but the percentage of students that did not should not be overlooked. In total, 68% of students gave an affirmative answer and 30% a negative one. This means that some students, who affirmed that they did usually answer lecturers' questions, did not like to do it and maybe they answered because they are forced to do it. For example, the teacher may sometimes ask questions directly to one specific student and he/she is obligated to give an answer. Ackerley (forthcoming:8) has pointed out that "[...] as well as being a symptom of language problems, a lack of questions may depend on a student's cultural expectations about appropriate behaviour during a lecture. Lecturers, then, may have to explicitly encourage interaction in the classroom. However, students in this study usually interact in class.

3.3.2 Asking questions

It would also seem that students usually asked questions in class, as the majority of them, 71%, stated that they did it. Of this 72% of students who usually asked questions, 68.5% asked them in English and 2.5% in Italian. Therefore, lecturers in Business, Forest Science and Engineering seem to involve students in their lectures, giving them space to answer their questions but also to give them the possibility to ask questions. On the other hand, a little percentage of students, 29%, did not ask questions.

Analysing the data obtained from the questionnaire, it is resulted that the two main reasons for this lack is linked to a lack of students' need to ask questions (8.5%) and to the fact that students generally prefer to ask a fellow students if there is something that they did not understand (9%). In other words, on one hand, students felt that the explanation of their lecturers was complete enough to understand the content of the lesson and they had not doubts about the content. On the other hand, students might be shy and they did not ask questions to their lecturer, preferring to talk with other students about their doubts. Moreover, 7.5% of the students affirmed that they did not ask questions even when lessons are in Italian and this may also be related to shyness. The difference between this percentage and the percentage of students who ask to fellow students, may be the fact that the second one prefer not to speak with the teacher because they did not want to talk in English. However, students who affirmed that they did not ask question even when lectures are in Italian did not link their lack in asking questions to the fear of speaking in English. This is also confirmed by the answers given to a questionnaires' question, where students were asked to affirm whether they prefer not to speak in class at all, even when lessons are in their mother tongue and to state whether they like to listen to the teacher and take note in class without any speaking. The 7.5% of students who have affirmed that they did not talk in class even when lessons are in Italian confirmed this data. In fact, they all (except two students) both affirmed that they prefer not to speak in class and listening to the teacher. These students are probably accustomed to follow monologic lectures, that is typical of Italian University, as I have written in the second chapter of this dissertation. However, language problems were not missing, as 4% of the students affirmed that they did not ask questions because they did not feel confident speaking in English.

As there were not many differences among Italian students and international students, Table 17 shows the results of this questionnaire's question, without showing any nationality difference between participants.

Do you ever ask the professor questions ?	Yes, in English	No, I prefer to ask a fellow student if there is something I don't understand	No, I just don't feel the need to ask questions	No, I generally do not ask questions even when lessons are in Italian	No, because I don't feel confident speaking in English	Yes, in Italian
Family Business	27.5	1.5	7	3.5	3	2.5
Forest Pathology	14					
Forest Ecosystem	7		1			
Water Supply Treatment	19	7.5	0.5	4	1	
Total	68.5	9	8.5	7.5	4	2.5

Table 17: Percentage of students who asked or not questions in class

Two other questions were designed to understand if students really prefer to interact in class. Students were asked to answer these two questions with a four-pointed Likert scale. First of all, students were asked to state whether they liked to have the chance to ask questions in class and 83% of students gave a positive answer (with 37% of students answering absolutely yes). Figure 7 shows clearly the predominance of positive attitudes for this question.

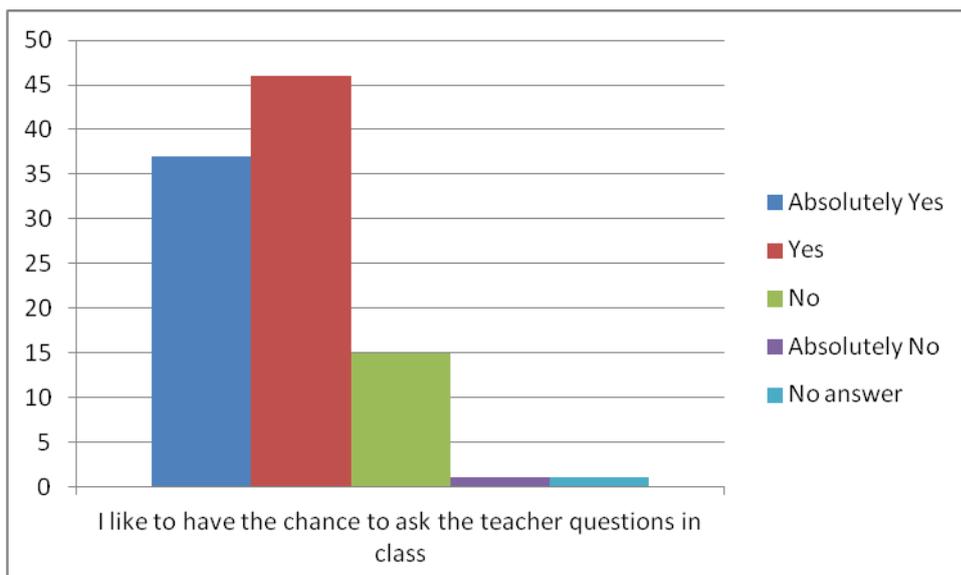


Figure 7: Percentage of students who like asking question in class

Secondly, students were asked to state whether they like to ask questions in English or not. The results are positive, as the vast majority, 79%, of students gave a positive response (with 30% of them answering “absolutely yes”). Figure 7 gives a clear idea about the predominance of a positive students’ attitude about asking questions in English. However, there is a difference with respect to the previous questions. Probably, students liked asking questions in class, but some of those that liked it did not like to do it in English. Figure 8 shows the results about this question.

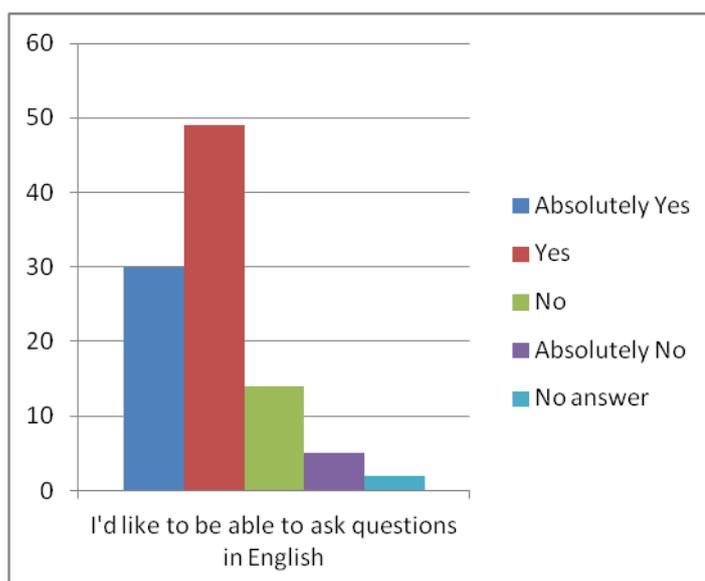


Figure 8: Percentage of students who like/dislike asking questions

3.4 Students' feelings about EMI classes

An overwhelming majority (95) of students affirmed that they felt that they had adequate English language skills to follow the course. On the contrary, of the 5 students who answered that they did not, just two would have preferred their lecturer to use more simple language and no one of them would have liked their teacher to use Italian for some explanations. These findings are in line with what Ackerley (forthcoming) has found in her survey, where the majority of students with comprehension problems did not expect their teachers to give explanations in Italian or modify their speech. In order to give an explanation to these data, she has argued that “[...] the students appear to recognize that a lack of understanding may be something that they are responsible for” (Ackerley, forthcoming: 23).

Analysing the complete data about students' preferences, it is resulted that only 18 students would have preferred their teacher to use more simple language and, of these 18, 16 were Italian students.

On the contrary, students were also asked if they would have preferred their teacher to use Italian for some explanations. Obviously, international students, engineering students (taught by an English-speaking teacher) and students following the course of Forest Ecosystem and Global Change (taught by a Spanish teacher) were not counted in these results. Therefore, the sample of students counted in this questions is composed by 65 students. The results shows that only 5 students answered yes.

4. The study: lecturers' views

In this part of the chapter I will focus on the opinions of lecturers about interaction in class. The results came from interviews conducted with each lecture of every class that I have observed.

In fact, after every lecture's observation, an interview to all the lecturers has been carried out. In total, the lecturers that participated in the interview were five. Two of them taught in the Family Business Course. The lecturers were not only Italian, but there were also a Spanish lecturer and an English lecturer, as I have already said. It has

come to light that these lecturers prefer interactive lessons and they all affirmed that they use questions in class because they are important tools, that enable students to participate in a more active way to lectures. Questions are usually asked to all students in general, only one lecturer admitted that he always asks questions directly to one student, calling her or she by name, as his lecture is composed by a small group of students. Another lecturer affirmed that she does not ask questions directly to one student because she feels that her students may feel embarrassed and they see this as negative. For these reasons, she leaves her students free to give a response, if they want.

However, questions are not the only tool used by professors to get a reaction from the students. In fact, the lecturers of the Family Business course affirmed that they use smart phones to involve students in class. This is an innovative tool that is gaining a lot of success in this course, as affirmed the lecturers. Other lecturers use group work, pair work, interesting examples of personal experience, rhetorical questions, practical activities and field excursions to involve students. Moreover, some lecturers allow students to do a five minutes talk about a specific topic at the end of the entire course and ask to sum up the topics of the previous lecture, at the beginning of every lesson.

All the lecturers admitted that it is not easy to follow an entire course in English and, for these reasons, they usually try to adopt different kinds of methods to facilitate students' understanding of the subject content. For example, some professors usually repeat difficult concepts, use simple language, show graphs, tables, images and videos of practical activities and try to interact with students.

Furthermore, lecturers were asked to affirm whether their students ask them to repeat concepts in Italian or not. All the lecturers stated that it does not happen because lectures are in English, therefore they always repeat or answer in English. This is in line with my observation. In fact, lecturers did not repeat concepts or answer at the questions of students in Italian. Moreover, the presence of many international students does not bring lecturers to use Italian, as these students would be disadvantaged. If something is not clear, they try to repeat the same concept with other words, using keywords. Only when technical words are not clear some lecturers give the translation in Italian.

5. Conclusion

This chapter tries to shed light on interaction in EMI classes, trying to understand if interaction is practised in class. In order to do this, both students and lecturers were questioned. Students were asked to fulfil a questionnaire, however lecturers were interviewed. The findings of both the questionnaires and the interviews were analysed in this chapter and it is possible to be said that the findings are positive. However, It is not possible to generalize the findings because of the shortcoming of this study (i.e. the small number of students).

On the whole, students at the University of Padua are satisfied with EMI programmes. In fact, students' opinions about the introduction of English-taught programmes are very positive. However, negative opinions are not absent and it is not possible to ignore them. In fact, some students have affirmed that lectures in English are not good for the content, because they feel that the information given during an English class are limited in comparison with a lecture given in the mother tongue. Moreover, students also think that EMI lectures are useful and, as we can see from students' answers, the most relevant benefits of studying in English are the improvement of the language skills and the perspectives of a better future job opportunity. These findings are in line with other studies, such as that of Tatzl (2011) and Kym and Kym (2014).

As regards interaction in class, the answers have revealed that lecturers try to structure their class in an interactive way. It is easier to have an interactive lecture when the class size is small, but this study has revealed that interaction is present also in class with many students. These high levels of interaction are achieved using various ways, for example using questions. However, also other tools are used by professors. Such as, groups or pairs works or the use of personal students' mobiles. On the other hand, also students answered questions to their teachers. But a small percentage of them did not and the main reasons are the lack of students' need to ask questions and that they prefer to ask a fellow student if something is not clear.

As regards the interviews with lecturers, they have confirmed that lessons are interactive and that they prefer these kinds of classes because they allow students to take part in an active way to the lecture.

To sum up, the results about interactivity in EMI classes at the university of Padua are positive. However, more research is needed because the samples of this study were not big. In any case, the perceptions of people involved in these programmes are very important because as Kym and Kym (2014:37) have affirmed “[...] it is important to pay attention to participants’ perceptions of an academic initiative since those perceptions can show the ways to improve the initiative”.

CONCLUSION

In this dissertation, I have discussed the spread of English as a Medium of Instruction in the University context. In recent years, universities have started to provide single programmes or entire courses in English, in countries where English is not the main language of the majority of the population. The increasing adoption of English as the language of academe is one of the effects of globalization (Coleman, 2006), that has helped English to obtain a prominent role worldwide (Graddol, 2006). Therefore, English has become important in many fields and the university context is one of them.

In Europe, the response to the globalization of Higher Education has resulted in the Bologna Process, that has tried to promote internationalization and to harmonize Higher Education among European Countries. Following the Bologna Process, European universities are increasingly using English as the language of Instruction in their university programmes. Universities need to introduce English-medium instruction in order to become competitive and to attract more international students and staff. This is one of the benefits of the introduction of EMI, but it is not the only one. In fact, EMI also prepares students in a better way for the labour market, in an international environment. Moreover, English is important because most of the teaching and research material are written in this language (Coleman, 2006). Other benefits are listed in Chapter 1 of this dissertation. However, the disadvantages are not absent. Some researchers (Klassen and de Graaff, 2001; Doiz et al., 2011) have discovered that lecturers' and students' language proficiency in English may cause some problems for students involved in EMI programmes. Furthermore, there might be problems for the local language or the local languages, because English may be seen as a threat for the development of them.

Moreover, students may be discouraged when EMI programmes are taught by teachers with a poor level of English, as has resulted from the questionnaire conducted at the university of Padua (Chapter 3). In order to solve this problem, some actions have been taken at the University of Padua. In fact, the Language Centre has launched the LEAP Project, in order to prepare some lecturers to be more effective in the teaching of

these new programmes. This has been done because lecturers involved in these programmes are for the most part non-native speaker of English and it is necessary that they have high skills of English language to transmit content in a language that it is not their own.

The spread of English is a current phenomenon in Europe, but the situation is not the same all over the continent. In fact, many studies have revealed that there is a north-south divide in the implementation of EMI programmes (Mauranen, 2010; Costa and Coleman, 2013; Dimova et al., 2015). The Northern Countries seem to be at the forefront of the introduction of these programmes. However, the situation is not the same in the Southern European Countries. For example, Italy is one of the countries where EMI is a new phenomenon. This work has focused on the situation of EMI programmes in the Italian context and then it explained the state-of-art of EMI at the University of Padua, focusing on a research conducted at the university by Guarda and Helm (2016) in the academic year 2014/2015, but also another study conducted by Ackerley (forthcoming) among students.

In order to compare the results of the study conducted by Guarda and Helm (2016) and Ackerley (forthcoming), the present dissertation aimed at discovering the various opinions of students and lecturers involved in EMI programmes at the University of Padua. The results of a questionnaire conducted at the University of Padua are very positive (see Chapter 4). In fact, a great majority of students thought that EMI programmes are useful. They were also asked to give some reasons to explain their choice of following courses in English and the results are in line with the reasons discovered by other studies, such as Costa and Coleman (2013), Kym and Kym (2014) and Ackerley, (forthcoming). These reasons are all explained in chapter 1 of this dissertation. The main important reasons listed by the students enrolled at Padua University are to improve English language, to achieve English language skills to have better opportunities for their future work and to learn technical terminology (see Chapter 4).

One of the main focus of this work is the role of interaction in the learning process. It has emerged that interaction could help students to understand the content of the lecture in a more profitable way (Dafouz Milne and Sánchez Garcia, 2013). On the other hand, if it is not present in an EMI class, the understand of the content may be prevented (Ackerley, forthcoming).

Several scholars have argued that “university teaching has for a long time been traditional, theoretical and content-centred” (Guarda and Helm, 2016:3) and lectures are for the most part monologic in many European Countries, including Italy. The current study aimed at discovering the interaction strategies of a small number of university lectures at the university of Padua. The results of the current study are encouraging because they have showed that classes are for the most part interactive, with high number of lecturers’ questions and several students’ overlaps. This means that the lecturers involved in the study try to involve their students in their discourse to help them in the understanding of the lecture content. It has resulted that lecturers mainly use questions to involve their students. In the lectures that I have observed at the University of Padua, I have found different typologies of questions. There were both audience-oriented questions and content-oriented questions. In fact, students were asked to explain particular concepts and to express their opinions about a particular topic, or questions were simply strategies to catch the attention of the students, without the expectation of a response from the audience, like self-answered questions. I have also taken into account the correlation between questions and answers and it seems that students tend to answer questions when the class has a low number of students. Moreover, the questions with the highest number of answers are referential and display questions. Therefore, lectures may use these questions to promote interaction in class. However, other strategies are also used. For example, lecturers ask their students to raise their hands or use technological devices, such as students’ personal smart-phones (using barcodes) to obtain a reaction from them (see Chapter 4). But, the lecturers also use repetitions, negotiation of meaning, personal pronouns, discourse markers and they comment on terms and concepts, signal the discourse structure, highlight the most important points of a lecture, in order to enhance the understanding of their students.

On the other hand, students ask fewer questions with respect to the questions asked by lecturers, as it has resulted from the observation of classes at the university of Padua. However, they participate in the classroom in other ways. For example, they sometimes overlap the discourse of the lecturer and they interrupt him/her to finish a statement that was initially begun by the lecturer. Therefore, the classrooms observed at Padua appear to be for the most part interactive. Moreover, students are more keen to participate in the classroom when it is a class composed by few students, rather than a class composed by many students. Therefore, the findings of the current study are in contrast to what several scholars have argued. For example, Fontanet (2005) has argued that university lectures have the form of expository classrooms. It seems that university lecturers are assuming the role of facilitator in the learning process (Crawford Camiciottoli, 2004; Morell, 2007).

This study has also analysed the various reasons that prevent interaction in class. The questionnaire given to students was very useful to understand the main problems that prevent interaction in class. For the most part, students affirmed to be shy and to be afraid of giving the wrong answer. Moreover, 20.15% of the students has also affirmed that they do not answer questions in class because they are not confident speaking in English (see Chapter 4).

Therefore, the findings of this study are both interesting and positive. It seems that lecturers want to stimulate interaction in class in order to facilitate students in the understanding of their lectures. However, problems are not absent in these programmes. In fact, students sometimes do not participate in class because they do not feel confident with their English. For these reasons, lecturers may help their students and involve them in their discourse as much as possible. Interaction is a key element in EMI programmes and lecturers should use strategies to promote interaction in order to foster more effective learning.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A: Questionnaire

Questionnaire: Interaction in classrooms with English as a medium of instruction

Dissertation in Modern Languages for International Communication and Cooperation

(Laurea Magistrale in Lingue Moderne per la Comunicazione e Cooperazione Internazionale)

1. What is the name of the course taught in English?

.....
.....

General: English-Medium Instruction

2. How do you feel about the introduction of lessons taught in English at your University?

.....
.....

3. Do you think lessons taught in English are useful? YES NO
Why?

.....

Interaction

4. Does the Professor usually ask questions during the lecture? YES NO

5. Do you ever answer questions? YES NO

*If the answer is yes → Do you answer in English or Italian? Can you choose the language?

.....

*If the answer is not → Why not?

- I am shy
- I am afraid of giving the wrong answer
- I don't know the answer
- I don't feel confident speaking in English
- There are not so many occasions to answer questions
- other

6. In what other ways does the professor try and get a reaction from the students? (for example: asking students to raise their hands, making the students laugh, asking if students have understood, etc.)

.....
.....
.....

7. Do you ever ask the professor questions?

Yes, in English

- Yes, in Italian
- No, because I don't feel confident speaking in English
- No, I generally do not ask questions even when lessons are in Italian
- No, I just don't feel the need to ask questions
- No, I prefer to ask a fellow student if there is something I don't understand

8. Please state whether you agree with the following statements:

	Absolutely yes	yes	No	Absolutely no
a. I feel I have adequate English language skills to follow this course	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. I would prefer the teacher to use Italian for some explanations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. I would prefer the teacher to use more simple language	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. I like to have the chance to ask the teacher questions in class	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. I prefer not to speak in English in class because of my poor language skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. I prefer not to speak in class, it doesn't matter what language the lesson is in	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. I like to listen to the teacher and take notes in class (without any speaking)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. I'd like to be able to answer questions in my own language	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. I'd like to be able to ask questions in English	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j. I like answering the teachers' questions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

9. Do you ever do presentations in class during the course?

*If the answer is yes → Do you like doing them?

YES

YES

NO

NO

10. Do you ever work in group during the lectures? YES NO
* If the answer is YES → Do you talk in English or in Italian with other students?.....

11. Other comments:
.....
.....

APPENDIX B: Questionnaire

Questionnaire: Interaction in classrooms with English as a medium of instruction

Dissertation in Modern Languages for International Communication and Cooperation

(Laurea Magistrale in Lingue Moderne per la Comunicazione e Cooperazione Internazionale)

12. What is the name of the course taught in English?

.....
.....

General: English-Medium Instruction

13. How do you feel about the introduction of lessons taught in English at your University?

.....
.....

14. Do you think lessons taught in English are useful? YES NO

Why?

.....

Interaction

15. Does the Professor usually ask questions during the lecture? YES NO

16. Do you ever answer questions? YES NO

*If the answer is not → Why not?

I am shy

I am afraid of giving the wrong answer

I don't know the answer

I don't feel confident speaking in English

There are not so many occasions to answer questions

other

17. In what other ways does the professor try and get a reaction from the students? (for example: asking students to raise their hands, making the students laugh, asking if students have understood, etc.)

.....
.....
.....

18. Do you ever ask the professor questions?

Yes, in English

Yes, in Italian

No, because I don't feel confident speaking in English

No, I generally do not ask questions even when lessons are in Italian

No, I just don't feel the need to ask questions

No, I prefer to ask a fellow student if there is something I don't understand

19. Please state whether you agree with the following statements:

	Absolutely yes	yes	No	Absolutely no
k. I feel I have adequate English language skills to follow this course	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
l. I would prefer the teacher to use more simple language	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
m. I like to have the chance to ask the teacher questions in class	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
n. I prefer not to speak in English in class because of my poor language skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
o. I prefer not to speak in class, it doesn't matter what language the lesson is in	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
p. I like to listen to the teacher and take notes in class (without any speaking)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
q. I'd like to be able to answer questions in my own language	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
r. I'd like to be able to ask questions in English	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
s. I like answering the teachers' questions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

20. Do you ever do presentations in class during the course? YES NO
*If the answer is yes → Do you like doing them? YES NO

21. Do you ever work in group during the lectures? YES NO

22. Other comments:

.....
.....

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SUMMARY IN ITALIAN

RIASSUNTO IN ITALIANO

La lingua inglese è sempre più usata come lingua franca in vari ambiti e la scuola è uno di questi. Nell'ambito scolastico si utilizzano varie terminologie per riferirsi all'insegnamento di una materia tramite una lingua straniera. Per esempio, il CLIL (Content ad Language Integrated Learning) è un tipo di insegnamento che combina l'apprendimento della lingua e della specifica materia insegnata. Questo termine è tipicamente usato nelle scuole primarie e secondarie. Invece, nel settore universitario, il termine usato è ICLHE (Integrating Content and Language in Higher Education). Recentemente, un altro termine si sta diffondendo in ambito universitario, EMI (English-Medium Instruction). Questo termine si riferisce all'uso dell'inglese per insegnare materie universitarie in paesi dove l'inglese non è la lingua nativa della maggior parte della popolazione (Dearden, 2015). Questo termine è diverso dagli altri perché esplicita che la lingua d'istruzione è l'inglese.

Questa tesi si focalizzerà proprio sull'insegnamento di materie universitarie tramite il programma EMI e, in specifico, sull'interazione tra professore e studente durante le lezioni universitarie tenute con questa metodologia.

La trasformazione in ambito educativo è iniziata con la Dichiarazione di Bologna, firmata il 19 Giugno 1999. La Dichiarazione fu pensata per armonizzare l'educazione universitaria in Europa, in modo da favorire la mobilità di studenti, docenti e personale universitario e quindi favorire il riconoscimento dei vari titoli nei diversi paesi europei. Per questo, l'obiettivo principale della Dichiarazione era quello di creare un'area nella quale gli studenti potessero muoversi liberamente ed utilizzare le loro qualifiche anche in altri paesi. Attualmente, i paesi europei che hanno siglato questa Dichiarazione sono ufficialmente 48, tra i quali ci sono l'Italia, la Spagna, la Finlandia, la Danimarca, l'Irlanda, l'Estonia, la Grecia, ecc.

L'introduzione dell'inglese "veicolare" in ambito universitario (EMI) è uno dei risultati di questa Dichiarazione Europea (Pulcini, 2015) e molti studiosi (Björkman, 2011, Wilkinson, 2013, Helm, 2015) affermano che l'introduzione dell'inglese in

ambito universitario porti con se molti vantaggi. Per esempio, uno dei maggiori vantaggi è il reclutamento di studenti e personale accademico straniero con qualità brillanti. Inoltre, gli studenti possono essere preparati per una carriera internazionale in modo migliore e il profilo dell'università può essere accresciuto. In un mondo dove le classifiche universitarie internazionali stanno diventando molto importanti, uno dei metodi per aumentare il prestigio dell'istituzione universitaria è quello di inserire corsi in lingua inglese, in paesi dove l'inglese non è lingua ufficiale, dato che le "migliori università" sono, al momento, quelle situate in paesi anglofoni. Quindi le ragioni dell'introduzione di corsi in lingua inglese sono svariate e includono sia ragioni economiche che pedagogiche.

D'altro canto i problemi legati a questi tipi di programmi non sono assenti. Infatti sono stati riscontrati problemi legati alle competenze linguistiche di insegnanti ed alunni. Gli insegnanti sono cruciali nel processo di insegnamenti e quindi devono essere molto preparati, soprattutto quando sono chiamati ad insegnare una lingua che non è la loro madrelingua. In caso contrario, il corso può risultare carente per quanto riguarda l'aspetto del contenuto e gli insegnanti possono risultare poco chiari nell'esposizione del contenuto. Possono esserci anche problemi con la pronuncia e l'accento, oppure i professori tendono a focalizzarsi nella corretta esposizione del contenuto (dal punto di vista linguistico), piuttosto che concentrarsi sul contenuto della lezione (Klassen and De Graff, 2001). Inoltre, il livello di conoscenza della lingua da parte dei professori può essere un problema per gli studenti, che già devono fare i conti con il fatto di seguire una lezione in una lingua straniera (Ackerley, forthcoming). Anche la competenza linguistica degli studenti può essere un problema. Gli studenti devono fare un grosso sforzo per capire la lezione in una lingua straniera ed il livello di comprensione della lezione può non essere sufficiente per ascoltare i lunghi monologhi del professore (Klassen and De Graff, 2001). Inoltre gli studenti iscritti a questi corsi imparano la terminologia in inglese per il loro futuro lavoro, ma se lavoreranno nel loro paese non avranno acquisito l'esatta terminologia nella loro lingua. Quindi tutto questo può provocare problemi per la qualità dei programmi universitari.

In ogni caso è evidente che i corsi in lingua inglese stanno sempre più aumentando di numero in tutto il mondo. In particolare in Europa, dove dopo il

Processo di Bologna l'inglese è sempre più usato in ambito universitario. Ma l'offerta formativa in inglese è stata accolta con favore in alcuni paesi europei ed in altri no. Il nord Europa sembra aver accettato con maggiore favore l'introduzione di questi corsi, invece il Sud non ha ancora sviluppato appieno questo progetto.

L'Italia è uno dei paesi rappresentativi della situazione nel Sud Europa. Infatti, i corsi in lingua inglese sono un fenomeno nuovo in Italia, che risale agli anni novanta del secolo scorso. I dati raccolti da un recente studio e pubblicati da Costa e Coleman (2013) hanno rilevato che la maggior parte delle università partecipanti allo studio offrono corsi in lingua inglese e queste università sono prevalentemente situate nel Nord e nel Centro Italia. Comunque la situazione in Italia è ancora in via di sviluppo e le voci contrarie non si fanno mancare. Un esempio è il caso del Politecnico di Milano, scoppiato nel 2002. Il Rettore del Politecnico aveva annunciato che dall'anno accademico 2014-2015 tutti i corsi di laurea magistrale e di dottorato sarebbero stati offerti in lingua inglese. In risposta a questo annuncio molti professori hanno presentato un ricorso al TAR (Tribunale Amministrativo Regionale) e, attualmente, il Politecnico sta aspettando la decisione della Corte Costituzionale, alla quale si era rivolto.

Questa tesi si focalizza sulla situazione dei corsi in lingua inglese in un'università del Nord Italia: l'Università degli Studi di Padova, dove i corsi in lingua inglese sono presenti dall'anno accademico 2009/2010. Un recente sondaggio ha rivelato che l'Università di Padova offriva 27 corsi in lingua inglese e 275 corsi individuali in inglese nell'anno accademico 2013/2014. Invece i corsi offerti nel prossimo anno accademico, 2016/2017, saranno 39 ed i corsi singoli 923. Quindi, in due anni, l'incremento dei corsi in lingua inglese è stato molto rilevante e l'Università di Padova promuove questa iniziativa anche con l'aiuto del progetto LEAP (Learning English for Academic Purposes). Questo progetto fu creato per supportare gli insegnanti nella nuova esperienza dell'insegnamento in lingua inglese e durante questi ultimi anni ha organizzato varie iniziative per aiutare questi insegnanti. Per esempio ha organizzato dei corsi (uno dei quali presso l'Università di Dublino) per dare ai professori alcune direttive ed alcuni consigli per insegnare in modo produttivo in una lingua che non è la loro lingua madre.

Una delle strategie più importanti per rendere efficaci le lezioni in una lingua straniera è l'interazione tra studente e professore. Questo perché l'interazione aumenta la comprensibilità della lezione da parte degli studenti. Il problema delle classi universitarie è che sono tradizionalmente monologiche, con un professore che sviluppa il tema della lezione e gli studenti che ascoltano (Bamford, 2005) e questo tipo di lezioni è in discussione negli ultimi anni poiché è il riflesso di un'istruzione passiva (Crawford Camiciottoli, 2007). Specialmente in classi universitarie offerte in lingua inglese è importante utilizzare varie strategie per far sì che gli studenti partecipino in modo attivo alle lezioni. Una delle strategie più frequentemente diffuse è l'utilizzo delle domande. Le domande infatti sono strumenti fondamentali nel processo d'apprendimento perché possono semplificare la comprensione della lezione, dare un supporto agli studenti, aiutare a testare le conoscenze degli studenti e ottenere informazioni da essi.

Molti studi sono stati fatti sull'uso delle domande in classe e le domande sono classificate in vari modi, a seconda delle loro funzioni. Per esempio, Thompson (1998), in un suo studio, ha classificato le domande in domande orientate all'ascoltatore e domande orientate al contenuto della lezione. Queste due categorie sono state ulteriormente divise in altre sottocategorie. Infatti le prime servono per controllare se gli studenti hanno compreso le parole del professore, per evocare una risposta o capire se il pubblico è d'accordo con quanto affermato. Le seconde servono per introdurre informazioni nuove o parlare di qualche tema specifico. Invece, Dalton-Puffer ha diviso le domande in referenziali ed espositive ed in aperte e chiuse. Ma molte altre divisioni sono state fatte, per esempio quella di Fontanet Gómez (2004) o Morell (2004). Ma le domande non sono l'unico mezzo per cercare di far partecipare gli alunni alla lezione ed aiutarli nella comprensione del suo contenuto. Infatti, l'utilizzo di strategie come il commentare alcuni termini e concetti, anticipare ciò che verrà detto più tardi durante una discussione e il riferirsi a lezioni precedenti per ricordare agli studenti ciò che è stato fatto, sono metodi vincenti per aiutare la comprensibilità delle lezioni.

Un'analisi è stata fatta per dare una dimostrazione oggettiva sul livello di interazione in un contesto universitario. Infatti il focus di questa tesi è l'interazione in classi universitarie presso l'Università degli Studi di Padova. Lo studio si divide in due

parti. La prima è basata su un'analisi di alcune lezioni svolte presso l'Università, la seconda è basata sui risultati di un questionario compilato da studenti che seguivano tali lezioni.

Per quanto riguarda la prima parte dello studio sono state scelte alcune lezioni in tre diversi dipartimenti: il Dipartimento di Scienze Economiche e Aziendali, il Dipartimento di Agraria e Medicina Veterinaria ed il Dipartimento di Ingegneria Ambientale. In specifico, 5 lezioni sono state registrate e poi trascritte usando alcune convenzioni (vedi capitolo 2 della tesi). Queste 5 lezioni sono due lezioni del corso "Family Business", una lezione del corso "Forest Pathology and Wood Alterations", una di "Water Supply Treatment" ed infine una di "Forest Ecosystem and Global Change". Le prime tre lezioni elencate erano impartite da insegnanti italiani, invece la quarta da un professore madrelingua inglese e l'ultima da un madrelingua spagnolo. In totale sono state trascritte poco più di 7 ore di lezione, per un totale di 42023 parole. L'obiettivo di questo studio era quello di capire in che modo i professori interagivano con gli studenti per renderli partecipi alla loro lezione.

I risultati dello studio hanno dimostrato che le domande chieste durante le cinque lezioni sono state in totale 424, sia da parte dei professori (395) che da parte degli studenti (29). In particolare, le classi con il più alto numero di domande sono state le classi del corso "Family Business" (con 171 e 97 domande), seguite dalla classe "Water Supply Treatment".

Lo studio si è poi focalizzato sulla tipologia di domande chieste. Per quanto riguarda i professori, le domande maggiormente chieste sono quelle per ricevere una conferma (OK?), seguite dalle domande chieste dai professori per ricevere una risposta che già sanno e quelle per ricevere una risposta di cui non sanno niente. La quarta tipologia di domande è rappresentata dalle domande che i professori pongono e poi rispondono immediatamente loro stessi. Quindi le quattro tipologie di domande che solitamente sono chieste durante le cinque lezioni osservate presso l'Università di Padova sono quelle elencate precedentemente. Questo risultato è conforme ai risultati ottenuti da molti altri studi che riguardano questa materia, come per esempio lo studio di Dafouz Milne e Sánchez García (2013). In ogni caso il numero di domande chieste da parte dei professori è molto alta, ma per dire che una classe è interattiva bisogna anche

guardare alla correlazione tra domande chieste e risposte ottenute. Studiando questo punto è emerso che un totale di 78 domande è stato risposto, che non è un numero molto alto. Analizzando le risposte, la classe con il maggior numero di risposte date è la classe di “Forest Ecosystem and Global Change”, con 29 risposte date su 43 domande. L’elevato numero di risposte ottenute durante questa classe può essere spiegato con il fatto che codesta classe era frequentata solo da 8 studenti e quindi gli studenti erano, probabilmente, più propositivi ad intervenire in classe. Inoltre, le tipologie di domande che hanno ottenuto il numero più alto di risposte sono le “referential” e “display questions”, cioè quelle con una risposta già ovvia per il professore e quelle delle quali il professore non conosce la risposta.

Per quanto riguarda le domande chieste dagli studenti ho già annunciato che sono 29, un numero molto basso rispetto alle domande chieste dai professori. La maggior parte di queste domande è fatta per cercare di ottenere un’ulteriore spiegazione dell’argomento affrontato a lezione da parte del professore.

Ma le domande non sono l’unico mezzo che conferma che una classe è interattiva o meno. Infatti anche le interruzioni e gli interventi spontanei degli studenti sono importanti. Per esempio, questo studio dimostra che un totale di 48 interruzioni sono state fatte dagli studenti. Ancora una volta la classe con il maggior numero di interruzioni è la classe di “Forest Ecosystem and Global Change”. Il fatto che questa classe sia seguita da un numero ristretto di partecipanti agevola molto la partecipazione in classe, secondo la mia opinione.

La seconda parte dello studio riguarda la un questionario svolto tra i partecipanti delle classi osservate. I partecipanti al questionario sono 100 in totale, 77 dei quali di nazionalità italiana e 33 di altre nazionalità (spagnoli, tedeschi, francesi, etc.). Il questionario è stato diviso in due parti, una generale dove gli studenti erano chiamati ad esprimere le loro opinioni riguardo all’introduzione di corsi in lingua inglese all’università e l’altra più specifica riguardo alla partecipazione attiva degli studenti in classe.

Una delle domande sulla parte generale del questionario chiedeva l’opinione degli studenti riguardo l’utilità dei corsi in lingua inglese. Gli studenti hanno risposto

che questo tipo di corsi è utile soprattutto per perfezionare la l'inglese (20,20% degli studenti). Altre ragioni sono: per trovare migliori opportunità di lavoro in futuro e per imparare una terminologia specifica nella lingua straniera (rispettivamente 15,66% e 11,73%).

La seconda parte del questionario, quella relativa alla partecipazione attiva degli studenti durante le lezioni, ha analizzato il fatto che gli studenti rispondano o meno e che chiedano o meno domande in classe ed il motivo per il quale non rispondono o non fanno domande. I risultati dimostrano che il 76% degli studenti afferma di rispondere alle domande in classe. Del 24% degli studenti che non risponde in classe, il 31,25% di essi non risponde perché dichiara di essere timido. Invece il 29,87% afferma che ha paura di dare una risposta sbagliata. Un dato molto rilevante è il fatto che il 20,15% degli studenti dichiara di non voler rispondere in classe perché non si sente a suo agio a parlare in inglese. Per quanto riguarda il fatto di fare domande in classe, il 71% degli studenti afferma di farle e la maggior parte di essi fa domande in inglese.

Infine, alcune interviste sono state fatte agli insegnanti delle classi osservate. Dalle loro interviste è risultato che preferiscono classi con un livello di partecipazione alto e che cercano di utilizzare varie strategie per promuovere la partecipazione. Per esempio, una delle strategie più innovative è quella utilizzata dai professori del corso "Family Business", che cercano di far intervenire gli studenti attraverso la tecnologia. Infatti i professori chiedono una domanda e gli studenti devono dare la risposta attraverso i loro telefoni cellulari.

In conclusione, le classi osservate presso l'università di Padova sembra abbiano un livello di partecipazione alle lezioni abbastanza elevato. Ciò che favorisce la partecipazione agli studenti in classe sembra essere il numero ristretto di partecipanti. In ogni caso le domande sono il mezzo più utilizzato per rendere efficace la partecipazione in classe e le domande che ricevono il maggior numero di risposte da parte degli studenti sono quelle che richiedono di dare una risposta che il professore non sa o che il professore sa. I risultati del sondaggio e delle osservazioni nelle classi dell'Università di Padova sembra essere molto positivo per quanto riguarda i livelli di partecipazione durante le varie classi, ma uno studio più approfondito deve essere svolto, in modo da poter generalizzare i risultati a tutta l'Università e per poter capire quali sono le strategie

migliori per aiutare gli studenti a partecipare in modo produttivo a questi nuovi programmi offerti dalle università.