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### *Evaluating the LEAP project 2015-2016: from lecturers and staff perspectives*

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## **Introduction**

The aim of the present study is to evaluate the LEAP project 2015-2016 from lecturer and staff perspectives. Basically, my task here is to understand not only the lecturers' attitudes towards English as a Medium of Instruction at the University of Padova, but also to gain greater insights into the perceptions, which both lecturers and the staff (at the University Language Centre and International Relations Office) have on LEAP. My study also seeks to contribute to the large body of research conducted on the vast topic of EMI, with the final aim of offering a comprehensive view on the way EMI is developing at the University of Padova.

I admit that before my 6-month stay at Umeå university, in Sweden, as an Erasmus exchange student, the topic of English as a Medium of Instruction was a completely unknown to me. Basically, I was not aware of the fact that this was and still is a hot topic in the world of academia and that nowadays much discussion revolves around it. I would like to add that I started to mature a deep interest in EMI while talking with Ingrid Schild, my Evaluation Professor. We were discussing about the role played by the English language in the field of research and education, especially in the context of Nordic Countries. She observed that, although there is a common belief that people living in those countries have an overall high level of English, at Umeå University for instance, there were many Swedish lecturers who were reluctant to teach through English. Hence, I decided to dig deeper and to learn something more about EMI in the context of Umeå University; and of course, I also wanted to understand why teaching in English was considered to be such a problematic issue. The more I asked lecturers and staff members to share with me their experiences, the more I found interesting information I found, and this helped to increase my knowledge on this topic. In particular, one of the most interesting aspects, which caught my attention, was that the University did not provide any support for lecturers involved with EMI as each University department can decide whether to provide provision or not. Thus, I asked my Master thesis supervisor Fiona Dalziel if in the Italian context and specifically at the University of Padova steps towards EMI support had been made. Surprisingly, she told me that our University Language Centre was one of the first in Italy to have promoted and designed a project aimed to help

lecturers who had to teach in English. Finally, I decided that this was to be the topic of my MA thesis.

This dissertation is structured as follows. First of all, I found it necessary to build up a theoretical framework aimed at helping the reader to understand the context of the study as well as the way data have been analysed. Therefore, in Chapter 1 I have provided the reader with a detailed and comprehensive explanation of the role played by Internationalisation in Higher Education (HE) in order to understand the multiple reasons why it is intertwined with English as a Medium of Instruction. Moreover, two sections will be devoted to the presentation of EMI in the Swedish context, and in particular I will introduce the case of Umeå University. Following this, in Chapter 2 I will refer to what Campagna and Pulcini (2014) call the “two Europes” by offering a bird’s eye view on the situation of EMI in northern Europe and by highlighting the role that English plays in those countries. As later explained in somewhat greater detail, this chapter also focus on the Italian context and it provides the reader with interesting insights into the LEAP project. Since this study could be considered as a sort of evaluation, in Chapter 3, I deemed it appropriate to first include a brief section to introduce the topic of evaluation; secondly, I outlined the methods I adopted in order to analyse data effectively. Thirdly, I included a detailed as well as comprehensive analysis of the results. To conclude, in the last section of the present study, I provided the final considerations and observations.

## **Chapter 1 From Internationalisation to EMI**

In the pages that follow, I will provide the reader with an exhaustive and detailed explanation of the role that Internationalisation in Higher Education (HE) plays in the global arena (sections 1.1 and 1.2). The object is to offer a theoretical framework that might make it easier to understand why this phenomenon is intrinsically intertwined with EMI (section 1.3), which is the core of the present study. Finally, the last two sections aim to present English as a Medium of Instruction in relation to the Swedish context. As I will explain in somewhat greater detail, there are two main reasons why I chose to mention Sweden. Firstly, there is a considerable amount of research that has been conducted in the field of EMI at Swedish higher institutions; secondly, I spent six months at Umeå University as an Erasmus student and I had the opportunity to understand something more about EMI here. Hopefully, in this first chapter, the reader will gain a knowledge of this extremely vast and yet interesting topic.

### **1.1 Internationalisation in Higher Education (HE)**

In today's society, internationalisation is a concept which is widely used in various contexts and for different purposes. It has become an umbrella term that actually covers many dimensions, components, approaches and activities<sup>1</sup>. As far as Higher Education (HE) is concerned, for some people internationalisation has to do with academic exchange both for teachers and students, curriculum development and partnerships as well as new academic programs and research initiatives (Knight 2012: 28). Others, instead, consider internationalisation in its relationship with global dimensions, international development projects or with the increasing emphasis on commercial cross-border education (Knight 2012: 28). Notwithstanding the ways in which this term has been used in all its various nuances, it is still possible to broadly define it and to emphasise its dominant themes. In her article *Concepts, Rationales, and Interpretative frameworks in the Internationalisation of Higher Education*, Jane Knight<sup>2</sup> (2012) provides the reader with a definition of internationalisation to be applied to different cultures, countries and

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<sup>1</sup>Quoted at:

[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2015/540370/IPOL\\_STU\(2015\)540370\\_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2015/540370/IPOL_STU(2015)540370_EN.pdf)  
(last accessed 19.11.2016)

<sup>2</sup> Jane Knight, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto. She focuses her research on the international dimension of higher education at the institutional, national, regional and global levels.

educational systems. I decided to mention her work since her research and theories have contributed greatly to the development of this vast topic. Basically, Knight (2012: 29) describes internationalisation as “the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education”. There are two interesting aspects that should be highlighted here. Firstly, Knight herself makes it clear that this is an intentionally neutral and objective definition as it describes a phenomenon, which in this case is universal and might have various outcomes as well as various purposes depending on the actors/stakeholders (Knight 2012: 30). Therefore, even though from country to country the aims and goals of internationalisation could actually change, there seems to be a shared view that this multifaced phenomenon “will contribute to the quality and relevance of higher education in a more interconnected and interdependent world” (Knight 2008: 10). Secondly, another interesting point to be underlined is that the definition provided by the researcher stresses the word *process*. As a matter of fact, internationalisation is constantly developing and for sure, it is not a passive experience. Instead, it is what the International Association of Universities define as a “means of enhancing quality and excellence of HE and research”<sup>3</sup>.

As far as a brief explanation is concerned, it should be clear that the main purpose of the present study is not to focus only on internationalisation in deeper detail. I would instead provide the reader with a general overview; in this way, it should be easier to understand why EMI (English Medium-Instruction) comes as a direct consequence of internationalisation and how these two are inextricably intertwined (Kirkpatrick 2011 in Doiz, Lasagabaster and Sierra 2013).

As previously stated, scholars have continually revised the concept of internationalisation, attempting to include the diverse internationalisation strategies that already exist. The current literature, indeed, offers countless examples of studies on this topical issue; it only takes a few minutes to google the word internationalisation and hundreds of articles are soon available. However, the common ground seems to be the complexity and multifaced nature of this phenomenon. Looking at the past decade, the landscape of the internationalisation of HE has rapidly progressed and deeply changed the global arena. To give an example, in Knight’s view (2008) internationalisation is the

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<sup>3</sup> Quoted at: <http://www.iau-aiu.net/content/advancing-strategic-internationalization-heis> (last accessed 22.11.2016)

major force impacting and shaping HE. Along similar lines, De Wit in *Globalisation and internationalisation of Higher Education* suggests that nowadays the position of HE in the global arena and its international dimensions are emphasized more than ever before “in international, national and institutional documents and mission statements” (De Wit 2011: 242). Moreover, he goes even further, reporting what was stated during the UNESCO World Conference on Higher Education. Specifically, he mentions that international trends have always affected universities, which “to a certain degree, operated within a broader international community of academic institutions, scholars, and research” (2011: 242). Overall, these examples support the view that not only has the international dimension of HE increased in importance, but HE itself is also willing to adapt to these new circumstances (Altbach and Teichler 2001). Not surprisingly, there is confirmation of what Altbach and Teichler state in their article *Internationalisation and Exchanges in a Globalized University*: “universities started as truly international institutions” (2001: 6).

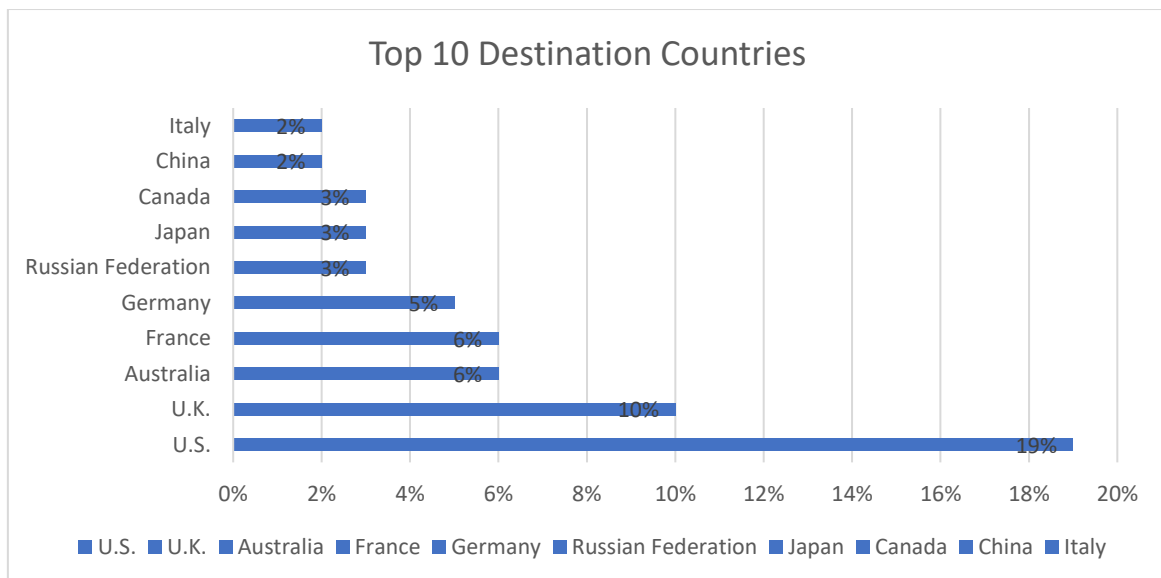
Historically speaking, universities have always had international links. For instance, if we go back in time to the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the original universities of Paris and Bologna, with Latin as a common language, expanded to other parts of Europe. As a direct consequence, basic knowledge became international: many students came from different countries and professors were recruited internationally (Altbach and Teichler 2001: 6). Additionally, the two authors point out that between the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries internationalism grew with the establishment of the scientific disciplines and yet, universities kept their fundamental role as international networks. In the same way, when thinking about Modern Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), it is possible to acknowledge this specific hallmark. Indeed, the more HEIs are following the trend of internationalisation, the more likely they are to address diverse opportunities and to offer new objectives for future institutional leaders (Deardoff *et al* 2012). For instance, HEIs actually facilitate the movement of a large number of individuals, offering both student and staff mobility, a collaborative approach to curricula and international research projects (Dafouz & Smit 2014).

In the case of student and staff mobility, it is commonly agreed that it is one of the most obvious and fundamental aspect of internationalisation (Deardoff *et al* 2012). In other words, it is a trend that greatly highlights the universities’ role as international actors.



Altbach and Teichler, for instance, underline that mobility and exchange has become a “normal option for staff and students as well as a regular policy and administrative review within higher education institutions, especially in the industrialized countries” (Altbach and Teichler 2001: 8). Once again, this shows that mobility has become a normal part of academic life.

To support this view, let me give you some factual information. If we look at the research conducted by UNESCO in collaboration with OECD and EUROSTAT, statistics show that in 2013, over 4.1 million students went abroad to study, up from 2 million in 2000, representing 1.8% of all tertiary enrolments or 2 in 100 students globally<sup>4</sup>.



**Figure 1.** *Top 10 Destination Countries reported in the research conducted by UNESCO institute for statistics (Source UNESCO<sup>5</sup>)*

Figure 1 illustrates that in 2013 the first six (starting from the bottom) destination countries hosted “nearly one-half of total mobile students<sup>6</sup>”. Undoubtedly, the United States along with the United Kingdom are the dominant host nations. In detail, the former enrolled 842,384 of the world’s total, while the latter account for 428,724 mobile students.

<sup>4</sup><http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Pages/international-student-flow-viz.aspx#sthash.1hj6euk9.dpuf> (last accessed 22.11.2016)

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Pages/international-student-flow-viz.aspx#sthash.1hj6euk9.dpuf> (last accessed 22.11.2016)

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Pages/international-student-flow-viz.aspx#sthash.1hj6euk9.dpuf> (last accessed 22.11.2016)

Interestingly, the top five, namely the U.S., the U.K., Australia, France and Germany witnessed their share of international enrolment decline from 56% in 2000 to 50% in 2013. Taking a closer look at the data presented in the research, Italy occupies the 10<sup>th</sup> place in ranking with 82,450 students hosted and 47,998 students abroad. The U.K is the main destination country for Italian students; indeed, statistics indicate that approximately 9,500 studied there in 2013. In addition to this, a more recent study (2015) requested by the European Parliament’s Committee on Culture and Education<sup>7</sup>, analyses the understanding of Internationalisation of HE in the European context. In the report (EU 2015: 123) it is stated that, although Italy does not seem to hold a good position in international rankings – with only a small number of its universities appearing in the top 200 list – some steps have been made towards internationalisation. Strategic goals have been set, especially regarding<sup>8</sup>:

- Student mobility
- Recruiting international staff
- Enhancing student and staff international research profiles
- Aligning with international practices by adopting English-Taught Programmes

Thus, despite the many challenges, Italian universities are making a great commitment with the aim of becoming a “strong players in the European and international arena” (EU 2015: 124).

To conclude, before moving to the next subchapter, I would like to make it clear that the present study also attempts to shed the light on the Italian context, especially when dealing with the matter of internationalisation and EMI. Basically, in this section and in Chapter 2, I have included some extra information, aiming to help the reader to gain a clear understanding of what the current situation in Italy is. Let us now turn to another important aspect of internationalisation.

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<sup>7</sup> “The study results in conclusions and recommendations on the future of Internationalisation of Higher Education in Europe, based on the national reports and a Delphi process among experts in international higher education”. Further information available at:

[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2015/540370/IPOL\\_STU\(2015\)540370\\_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2015/540370/IPOL_STU(2015)540370_EN.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> The strategies were listed in the results from a survey, organised in collaboration with the Italian Rectors’ Conference (CRUI), that captured the state of internationalisation strategies in 37 universities (Salvaterra, 2012).

[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2015/540370/IPOL\\_STU\(2015\)540370\\_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2015/540370/IPOL_STU(2015)540370_EN.pdf)

## **1.2. Dealing with the international dimension**

When dealing with the international dimension, “internationalisation at home” and “internationalisation abroad” should be taken into consideration. Over the years, many scholars have attempted to define those two aspects; however, if we look at Knight’s studies, she explains that they are: “two key components in the internationalisation policies and programmes of higher education” that are closely linked and constantly evolve (Knight 2008: 22-24). In the next lines, I will offer the reader with a brief but clear explanation of those two dimensions by starting from internationalisation “at home”.

### **1.2.1 Internationalisation “At home”: bringing the world to the home campus**

According to the International Association of Universities<sup>9</sup>, a first straightforward definition of Internationalisation at Home should be the one provided by Watcher (2000): “Any internationally related activity with the exception of outbound student and staff mobility.” From these lines, one understands that Internationalisation “at home” basically focuses on all kinds of activities that do not include education across borders. However, Internationalisation at Home is a concept that should not be captured in one rigid definition and for this reason I would like to provide a few more examples in order to make the notion clearer.

Originally, it was Nillsson (2003) the one who introduced the concept at Malmö University in Sweden. In brief, his study aimed to better understand in which ways Internationalisation at Home could be implemented with examples from the above mentioned Swedish university. Interestingly, in his article *Internationalisation at Home from a Swedish Perspective: The Case of Malmö*, he explained that this concept was elaborated in 1998 and from that time, it became a great “concern for higher education at many universities both in Europe and other parts of the world” (2003: 27). More recently, the notion of internationalisation “at home” was further developed by Knight (2012). In her interpretation, it should also focus on research and teaching/learning functions of the university by emphasizing the importance of internationally-focused curricula. In sum, internationalisation “at home” has mainly to do with activities that develop international

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<sup>9</sup> <http://www.iau-aiu.net/content/internationalization-home-curriculum-and-learning-outcomes>

or global understanding and intercultural skills (Internationalisation of HE Report 2015: 45).

Returning briefly to the Italian context, the previously mentioned research conducted in 2015, actually offers a practical example of how internationalisation “at home” could be implemented. In other words, it is shown that Italian universities attempted to achieve a more international profile by adopting different approaches so as to internationalise the curriculum. Specifically, “this was understood principally as teaching in English or developing joint/double degrees, without any specific mention made of online learning or virtual mobility”<sup>10</sup>. Another interesting example is taken from my experience as a student at the university of Padua, where “students are encouraged to develop their intercultural competence, even if they do not take part in mobility projects” (Dalziel forthcoming). In fact, the University expressively fosters the “furthering of culture founded on universal values such as human rights, peace, respect for the environment and international solidarity”<sup>11</sup>.

### 1.2.2 Internationalisation “Abroad”

The second dimension of internationalisation is known as “cross-border education” or alternatively, internationalisation “abroad”. Over the years, this term has been widely conceptualized by many scholars and experts worldwide. However, one should first consider what it is written in the *Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-border Higher Education* (2005) developed by UNESCO with the collaboration of the OECD. Indeed, in this document, cross-border education is associated with:

[...] higher education that takes place in situations where the teacher, student, program, institution/provider or course materials cross national jurisdictional borders. Cross-border education may include higher education by public/private and not-for-profit/ for profit providers. It encompasses a wide range of modalities in a continuum from face-to-face (taking various forms from students travelling abroad and campuses abroad) to distance learning (using a range of technologies and including e-learning)<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2015/540370/IPOL\\_STU\(2015\)540370\\_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2015/540370/IPOL_STU(2015)540370_EN.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> Quoted at: <http://www.unipd.it/international-highlights/node/99> (last accessed 22.11.2016)

<sup>12</sup> Quoted at:

[http://www.iau-aiu.net/sites/all/files/OECD\\_UNESCO\\_guidelines\\_cross\\_border\\_education.pdf](http://www.iau-aiu.net/sites/all/files/OECD_UNESCO_guidelines_cross_border_education.pdf)  
(last accessed 24.11.2016)

In Knight’s words (2012: 36), this term has come to be used to refer to: “[...] the movement of people, programs, providers, policies, knowledge, ideas, projects, and services across national boundaries”. What should be highlight here is that both the definitions that I provided are important for what they include. That is to say, they mainly associate this dimension of internationalisation with all forms of education across borders. Arguably, this might seem too simplistic and vast a definition; however, if go to somewhat greater detail it is possible to gain a better understanding of what is meant by “all forms”.

<b><i>Internationalisation “Abroad” – Cross-Border Education</i></b>	
<b>People</b> Students Lecturers, Scholars Researchers Experts Consultant	Semester/Year abroad Full Degrees Field/research work Internships Sabbaticals Consulting
<b>Programs</b> Course, Programs Post Graduate degrees	Joint/Double degrees Online/Distance courses Franchised courses
<b>Providers</b> Institutions Organisations Companies	Branch Campus Virtual University Independent Institutions

**Table 1.** Framework for Cross-border education inspired by Knight’s work (2012: 37)

Overall, Table 1 broadly illustrates the diverse types of academic mobility. It is clear that student, staff and lecturer mobility have increasingly become a matter of high interest for HEIs. The former, thanks to programs like Erasmus+, are more than willing to gain knowledge in various disciplines as well as intercultural skills. However, although students clearly play a fundamental role in building a more internationalised profile, staff and scholars appear to be the key components in the university landscape. Postiglione and Altbach (2013: 2) support this view pointing out that “without the full, active, and enthusiastic participation of the academics, internationalization efforts are doomed to fail”. As regards cross-border mobility programs, it could be said that double/joint degrees, franchising and twinning are the most common and popular methods adopted (Knight in Deardoff *et al* 2012). Finally, cross-border education entails providers’

mobility, which concerns the virtual or physical movement of education providers (see Table 1) across “a national border to establish a presence in order to offer education training programmes or services to students and other clients” (Knight in Deardoff *et al* 2012: 36).

Once again, we should take the Italian context into consideration and more specifically, the case of the University of Padova. The point here is that cross-border education has become an essential component of this University, since it greatly contributes to the development of its international profile. This, could be further supported if one looks at all the positive results achieved by the annual evaluations undertaken by the “Nucleo di Valutazione” team. Basically, these evaluations are meant to assess the quality and the effectiveness of both the various teaching programs and the research activity; additionally, the staff and the infrastructures are evaluated with the overall aim of improving the numerous University services. In the 2014/15 Final Report<sup>13</sup>, which was published last year, it was been highlighted that there is an increasingly positive trend towards the number of incoming and outgoing mobility students. Whilst the slightly difference in numbers between the two directions, Padova undoubtedly plays a key role in the national landscape. To give an example, already in 2013/14, the University was second only to Bologna “in the percentage of outgoing mobility students and third to Bologna and Florence in the percentage of incoming mobility” (Dalziel forthcoming pp.2). As for academic staff mobility, in 2015 the University registered a substantial increase with 51 outgoing and 74 incoming lecturers, which corresponded to a growth of 70% and 23% respectively. Finally, the University in 2014 collaborated in 13 projects with 50 different universities from 22 EU and Non-EU Countries. Overall, it can be observed that the University of Padova has shown a considerably great interest in adopting the effective strategies in order to become a strong player in the international arena and it does not show any sign of letting up.

### **1.3 English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI)**

In the previous section, I attempted to provide the reader with the explanation of *Internationalisation* mainly by drawing on the exceptional work of the expert Jane

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<sup>13</sup> Figures and further data are available at <http://www.unipd.it/nucleo/rapporti-annuali> (last accessed 26.11.2016)

Knight. Sections 1.2.1 and 1.2.2 went in somewhat greater detail by addressing the issue of internationalisation “at home” and “abroad”. In the subchapters that follow, I will offer an outline of another fundamental aspect of the issue that will be useful to understand the framework in which the present evaluation is undertaken.

### **1.3.1 Overview of the *Englishisation* process**

First of all, before moving to the core of this section, I would like to explain why EMI and internationalisation are so intrinsically linked. In the discussion of internationalisation at HEI level, it is commonly agreed that universities are striving for internationalisation more than ever before. As previously mentioned, their aim has become that of being internationally competitive, open and attractive. Therefore, if in the past, universities were considered as something devoted to a small élite, now the global arena has changed deeply and so have universities. In Coleman’s view (2006), the necessity of engaging with the market economy and the desire to follow the wave of internationalisation have led HEIs to a point where universities are brands and accordingly, students are their customers. In the EU context, the Bologna Process has been introduced partly in response to this trend. To give an example, Teichler (2009) suggests that aspects of internationalisation and globalisation have been relatively high topics on the agenda of Bologna Process. This can be observed, for instance, if we look at the Europe goals set for 2020. On the one hand, it is highlighted that the main priorities are the “to attract the best students, staff and researchers from around the world, to increase international outreach and visibility, and to foster international networks for excellence<sup>14</sup>”. On the other hand, the economic factor is also mentioned. In fact, one assumption underlying the Bologna Process might be that the more internationals EU universities welcome, the more funding and *prestige* they might have. Overall, as the consequence of universities’ role as actors driving economic development and promoters of the internationalisation agenda, English-taught programmes have considerably increased in numbers worldwide. In recent years, research has provided ample documentation of this process. According to Altbach and Knight (2007) internationalisation goes hand in hand with the use of English as the global academic lingua franca. Moreover, as noted by Campagna and Pulcini, nowadays EMI has become

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<sup>14</sup>Quoted at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52011DC0567&from=EN>

a “[...] recurrent, consolidated practice across Europe” (2014: 176). Similarly, Berns (2009: 195) observes that: “[...] English is used across all levels of education and as such fulfils the instrumental function. This role has been expanding in part due to the internationalization of the student population in many universities, encouraged by European Union (EU) policies and by ever larger numbers of students from outside the EU”. Thus, it is undeniable that English as a Medium of Instruction has become a reality, which needs to be constantly investigated.

Interestingly, one of the questions that has been mostly addressed is why English and why not other languages. The answer is not an easy one because it was and still is vastly discussed from various angles by an endless number of experts. However, one possible answer would be that the spread of English has been a causal and concomitant factor of universities’ necessity to respond to this “international marketisation of HE” (Coleman 2006 in Campagna and Pulcini 2014: 176). On the one hand, by using Wilkinson words (pp.7 forthcoming) it could be argued that: “internationalisation does not mean that education has to be offered in a single language”. However, looking at the other side of the coin, it is clear that in recent years English has become the dominant language worldwide. Kancru and Nelson (2001: 9) explain that “[it is] the most widely taught, read and spoken language that the world has ever known”. Graddol in *The Future of Language* (2004) highlights that English, despite an unexpected and possible decline by 2050, was spoken by nearly 9% of the world population in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. This is a high percentage, but it should not be of any surprise especially if we consider that in the EU the use of English has spread from the Northern countries (i.e. Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark, Norway etc.) to the South countries, such as Spain, Italy and France – despite the very strong role of French in the latter. Over the years, universities have turned out to be the perfect setting for English as a Lingua Franca: a wide range of journals, books, articles and international distributors are written in British/American English. Likewise, at a scientific level, English has taken up the role that Latin once used to have in Medieval Europe concerning both scientific communication and research (De wit 2011).

Jenkins is undoubtedly one of the major experts to have acknowledged the “peril” of this English dominated world. Specifically, throughout her numerous book and articles<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> For a deeper understanding see also Jenkins (2011), Seidlhofer (2004), Berns (2009) or Phillipson (2003) on the shift to English-only policies. The titles are listed in the bibliography.



she makes it clear that the increase of English will consequently lead more and more people to “acquire broken, deficient forms” of this language (Jenkins 2000). Moreover, she highlights the serious situation concerning the future decrease of native speakers with the consequence fact that, for the first time, there will be “probably more non-native than native speakers using English for at least some purposes on university campuses all over the world” (Jenkins 2014: 5). In response to this, once again, we could mention Graddol’s research (2004: 1330) in the sense that he interprets slightly positively this *Englishisation*. He understands it as a phenomenon that will shape the new world linguistic order by “creating new generations of bilingual and multilingual speakers across the world”. Overall, the issues presented in the previous lines are only a small part of what has been amply debated by many scholars and, going in deeper detail, would be like opening Pandora’s box. What I wanted to show here is that, the context in which EMI develops is surrounded by many controversies: this, might explain the complexity of EMI itself. Thus, what I suggest to the reader is to acknowledge the various problematics in order to better understand the framework in which the present study is set.

### **1.3.2 EMI from lecturers’ perspective, a benefit or a threat?**

Because of the vastness of this topic, I have decided to focus on what I consider to be the most interesting and noteworthy aspects of EMI. Firstly, I will explain what makes EMI such an important issue and in the same way, I will present the criticism and problems that occur when implementing it specifically referring to the lecturer’s perspectives. The importance of EMI and how it is currently on the increased, has been widely stressed. However, one should look at data in order to see what this means in practice. A good illustration would be the *English-Taught Master’s Programs in Europe: New Findings on Supply and Demand*, published by the Institute of International Education’s Centre for Academic Mobility Research. Strictly speaking, it provides a detailed, data-driven look at the growth of English-taught master’s programs in Europe. The findings show that EMI had an impressively positive trend: in 2008, the Academic Cooperation Association reported that in Europe there was a total of 1,500 Master’s programmes held in English; while in 2010, the MasterPortal<sup>16</sup> showed that the number had risen to 4,664 – including 963 programs listed with English as one of their languages of instruction.

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<sup>16</sup> Europe’s most popular source of information about postgraduate degree programs, [www.mastersportal.eu](http://www.mastersportal.eu)

	2007	2010	2011	
	<b>Total of programs offered</b>	<b>Total of programs offered</b>	<b>Total of programs offered</b>	<b>%increase<sup>17</sup></b>
All of Europe	1028	3933	4664	19%
<b>Netherlands</b>	386	767	812	6%
<b>Sweden</b>	168	383	401	5%
<b>Germany</b>	88	522	632	21%
<b>Denmark</b>	67	141	188	33%
<b>Belgium</b>	62	202	214	6%
<b>Finland</b>	42	155	172	11%
<b>Switzerland</b>	31	196	237	21%
<b>France</b>	11	260	346	33%
<b>Spain</b>	8	189	327	73%
<b>Italy</b>	7	144	191	33%

*Table 2. The increase in English-Taught Master's Programs listed in MasterPortal*

Table 2 provides a good illustration of the English-taught Master distribution: is clear the distinction between countries located in the south of the EU (i.e. Italy, Germany, France Spain, etc.) and the smaller countries in the north such as Denmark, the Netherlands and the Scandinavian countries. The former, indeed, offers only a small percentage of Masters programs in English, whereas the latter witnessed a large increased in their educational offerings. Furthermore, as for the subjects, figures show that Business and Economics is overall most frequently offered (especially in France, Germany and Spain), Engineering and Technology programmes are mainly offered in Sweden, while the U.K provides a more balanced distribution<sup>18</sup>.

In addition to this, I would like to mention another interesting study that might give to the reader some useful information about EMI. The British Council in collaboration with the Oxford University Department of Education's (OUDE) research centre, conducted a global research project based on EMI. This work is relatively recent since the final report, and consequently the findings, were released in 2015. Darden, the author of the report,

<sup>17</sup> Increase registered is based on the total programmes registered in 2010.

<sup>18</sup> For further information see pg.11 of the official document

highlights that the scope of the project was to map the size, future and trends of EMI worldwide<sup>19</sup> succeeding in obtaining information from 55 different countries. First of all, the study addressed the question concerning the reason why various stakeholders (such as policy makers, institutions, teachers) chose to implement EMI; not surprisingly, the rationale behind the decision was to internationalise the education on offer in their country, especially regarding the phase of higher education. It appears that the more universities accelerate in the process of internationalisation, the more English is used as lingua franca – as has been mentioned in the previous section. Indeed, the study shows that the courses offered in English because of the Bologna Process, are more likely to attract international students from around the world and thus going to the U.S. or the U.K to study is no longer the one and only way of learning in English. Secondly, the vast majority (67% of the countries surveyed) reported that in the near future there could be a possible increase in the EMI provision, especially in the private sector. However, EMI does not seem to be a completely successful system. On the one hand, data demonstrate its increase and implementation worldwide; on the other, more research is needed to obtain a textured knowledge of the problems that occur when dealing with it in order to solve them. Hence, I will now list the main issues and for each of them I will attempt to provide a clear explanation by bringing in examples of various cases where EMI has been implemented.

Two issues widely reported as problematic, concern EMI and lecturers' qualifications and training courses. If we look at Darden's report (2015: 24), it is clearly stated that in many countries EMI was introduced "for reasons of economic growth, prestige and internationalisation without considering the teaching resources needed to ensure its proper implementation such as sufficiently trained teachers, materials and assessment". This, could be rather worrying if we consider the constantly raising number of HEIs offering English-taught programmes. Teaching in a Second Language is highly demanding, since it involves many different skills that lecturers who are non-native speaker of English need to put them into practice. I am not only referring to language skills, but also the teaching skill themselves; in fact, when dealing with another language it is impossible to think about adapting the same teaching method, because this would be

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<sup>19</sup> Quoted at: [https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/e484\\_emi\\_-\\_cover\\_option\\_3\\_final\\_web.pdf](https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/e484_emi_-_cover_option_3_final_web.pdf) (Last accessed 29.11.2016)

inevitably unfruitful, ineffective and it would most likely lead to an impoverishment of the course content. O’Dowd (2014: 5) clearly shows that among the 70 European universities that participated in his survey, the issue of training lecturers to teach in English was rated as “very important” or “important” by only a 51%, and the main problems reported in comments, were related to the lack of support for teachers, who “need training to obtain” a high command of English (O’Dowd 2014: 6). Furthermore, the survey sheds light on the qualifications that lecturers are required to have. The point here is that universities appear to show a lack of consensus on which English level is needed: 17% of respondents stated that B2 was the minimum level and for 13% C2 was considered the maximum. This is a result, which in O’Dowd’s view (2014: 12): “shows the need for research in the area”.

Let us move to a case study conducted in Denmark (Wheter *et al* 2014), at Copenhagen Business school, which provides a different and yet interesting example. As I previously explained, in this country, along with the Scandinavian ones, English is used more and more, it now dominates the academic landscape. However, this does not directly mean that lecturers – especially those who are not familiar with EMI– do not show any sign of difficulty. Indeed, the study highlights that there is a rather positive trend towards EMI (i.e. it is a way to attract international students and staff, it makes the programmes more international etc.) and yet there are doubtful lecturers. There are basically two main complaints: the former concerns the way lecturers came to teach in English; as a matter of fact, they complained about the very short notice they were given to switch from L1 to L2. The second issue had to do with the fact that the inherent skills needed to lecture in a Second Language were automatically taken for granted by those who implemented EMI. Currently, the University is attempting to support lecturers by offering language training courses and individual feedback provided by a support team. Despite these problems, the study could be considered as quite a good example of EMI implementation; in fact, “taken as a whole, our study shows that a substantial number of the lecturers feel that they are just as capable at teaching in their L2 as in their L1” Wheter *et al* observed (2014: 454).

A third example could be taken from Ball and Lindsay (2013); the context of their research was the Basque Country, and more specifically the University of the Basque Country (UBC), which in 2009-2010 offered a total of 144 courses in English or French. It is noteworthy to include their work because it provides some interesting insights into

the reality of lecturers dealing with EMI. As for lecturers' qualifications, for instance, a specific language level is required; in detail, the authors refer to C1 of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). If lecturers do not have the formal qualifications in English, whether it is a C1 or C2, they need to take an accreditation test (2013: 47). Overall, Ball and Lindsay note that the clear majority of the respondents (96%) claimed that implanting EMI turned out to be "totally advantageous" (Ball and Lindsay 2013: 58-59). Basically, the reasons were that lecturers acquired extra motivation, they managed to keep the quality of content high anyway or some of them seemed pleased by the cultural variety of students coming from different part of the world. Clearly, disadvantages have been mentioned as well; in addition to what has already been said, Ball and Lindsay observe that timing turned to be a serious problem, as lecturers are generally busy because of their multiple academic commitments. Likewise, the University of Padova during the first edition of the LEAP project, witnessed the same: "professors soon became aware that despite the good intentions and appreciations of the advice, extra work was unrealistic for many<sup>20</sup>". I would like to include one last example concerning the study conducted by Kling, about Danish lecturers' reflections on English-medium Instruction. This research provides some interesting insights as it shows that the experienced natural science EMI lecturers interviewed, did not find that the challenges "in teaching in a foreign language affected their sense of themselves as teachers" (Klin in Dimova *et al* 2015: 201). Although participants admitted that teaching in English had its difficulties such as less precision, lack of nuances in English terms or an increased workload, they had a strong sense of their disciplinary expertise and they "did not view the weaknesses in their English proficiency to be a problem" (Klin in Dimova *et al* 2015: 219).

Hence, by merely focusing on these few examples, it should be clear to the reader that lecturers are still facing many difficulties and it is relatively hard to help them to meet the requirements they need. It could be argued, for instance, that most of the time lecturers are taken for granted when EMI is implemented. However, I would say that they play a key role, which could not be denied. Although some lecturers do not seem to be equipped to teach courses in English, this does not mean that those skills cannot be acquired. "It is the methodological abilities (or otherwise) of the teachers that were rated as far as more

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<sup>20</sup> Quoted at: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B0OX2RoLSSyzOGNqbzlxOW5mMWS/view>

important by the students in the facilitation of their learning” (Ball and Lindsay 2013: 51). Therefore, even though lecturers are sometimes forced to abandon their consolidated practices, it is not idealistic to think that they will not refuse to adopt new and maybe, more effective, methodological approaches. In this regard, recent research shows that more and more training courses are being held in different universities all around the world. Clearly, each institution has its own context and specificity but at least, steps are being made towards a more internationalised education. I would like to conclude this brief section with the meaningful words expressed by Airey (2015), who claims “all teachers are language teachers since their job is to introduce students to the discourse of their chosen discipline”. Therefore, the question to be addressed should not be whether EMI is a threat or a benefit; nowadays we find ourselves at a point of no return, where EMI has become a reality and focusing only on its effectiveness would not be enough. Consequently, I would rather think about some practical advice to be followed; and in this specific case, a more suitable question would be if lecturers are being offered with the right learning strategies and helpful guidelines to be in line with the goals of the courses they teach.

#### **1.4 English as a Medium of Instruction in Nordic countries**

It should be clear to the reader that the complexities of EMI are the more varied and it is extremely difficult to summarize years of research on such a few pages. Providing a general overview of the situation of EMI from the lecturers’ perspective seemed to be the very best way to help the reader in his/her understanding of the aim of my analysis. Let us now move to the last section of this first chapter, where I will explain in which ways the issue of EMI is perceived in what Campagna and Pulcini (2014) call the “two Europes” by focusing on northern Europe. Here, I will present the Swedish context with Umeå University as a case study.

##### **1.4.1 An insight into northern Europe**

So far, the issue of language in Nordic countries has been one of the most widely debated and problematic. The first formal statement that stated the role of languages in defining priorities for national work on language policy<sup>21</sup> was the so-called *Nordic Language*

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<sup>21</sup> <http://www.norden.org/en/om-samarbejdet-1/nordic-agreements/treaties-and-agreements/language>

*Convention*, ratified in 1981, but not implemented until 1987 (Linn 2016). In accordance with this document, the use of any of the national languages (Danish, Norwegian, Swedish, Finnish and Icelandic) was allowed “in official contexts in any of the relevant countries” (Linn 2016: 223). Then in 2007, the Nordic Council of Ministers produced the *Declaration on a Nordic Language Policy*; this is another fundamental document, which has been considered the milestone in the history of language issues in the Nordic area. What should be highlighted here is that, from the very beginning, the document stresses the multilingual aspect of the various Nordic Countries. Indeed, it is written (2007: 91) that all languages are equal, they are essential to society and that “Nordic cooperation will continue to be carried out in the Scandinavian languages, i.e. Danish, Norwegian, and Swedish”. Clearly, English is not contemplated in this first section of the document; however, it is mentioned on page 93 when the goals of the *Declaration* are presented. In detail, the policy defines “Four issues to work with” (2016: 93), which are:

1. Language comprehension and language skills
2. The parallel use of languages
3. Multilingualism
4. The Nordic countries as a linguistic pioneering region

For the aim of the present study, I will focus on the second section only since it is entirely devoted to parallel language use. This, means using several languages within one or more areas, without causing the replacement of one language with the another one. As for English, it is written that “Nordic residents, who internationally speaking have good English skills, have especially favourable conditions for developing skills in the parallel use of English and one or more of the languages of the Nordic countries in certain fields” (2007: 93-94). Additionally, it is stressed that English and local languages are both meant to be used in the contexts of education and research, knowledge dissemination in Nordic language is to be rewarded, and finally HEIs should “develop long-range strategies for the choice of language, the parallel use of languages and language instruction” (2007: 94). Overall, this policy was intended to enhance paralleling with the aim of developing the multilingual landscape. In practice, however, it turned out to be partially designed as a possible way to fight what Kuteeva and McGrath call “the predatory

English” (2014: 367). Airey and Kuteeva (2004b) point out that so far, very little thought has been given to the practical aspects of parallel language use and policies such as that mentioned above remain “an unoperationalised political slogan” (2004b: 536). The “issue” of parallelinguism along with the questions of domain loss and necessity of English as a language of international research (Airey 2001) arouse many concerns especially in the world of Nordic higher education, where EMI has increased.

In addition to what I previously explained, there is another point to be taken into consideration in order to understand why EMI in the Nordic Countries is so widespread. To start with, we should look at what has been presented by Airey *et al* (2015) in their thorough analysis. Basically, he takes into consideration the Danish, Norwegian and Finnish languages and explains that their absolute number of speakers has recently witnessed a rapid decrease. However, only the Swedish-speaking population (present both in Sweden and Finland) seems to be the most numerous as manages to register on the list of the 100 largest languages at position 94 with 8.5 million native speakers (Airey *et al* 2015). As a possible consequence, Airey *et al* (2015: 3) claim that “with such a small number of first language speakers—and hence very small markets—it is therefore a difficult and costly enterprise for the Nordic countries to maintain and develop the status of their national languages in all of the specialist areas within the higher education domain”. Therefore, perhaps one should not be surprised if EMI has started to be a common strategy adopted by various HEIs. Much of the available literature on this topic also consider the exposure of the Nordic countries to English as an additional reason for the introduction of EMI. Campagna and Pulcini (2014) argue that Northern Europe differs from the South because of the use of English as a common medium of communication; in detail, they show how Nordic countries foster an early exposure to the English language outside the classroom, whereas in the Mediterranean ones the exposure is more limited. This could be further supported if one looks at the Swedish context; as a matter of fact, Falk (in Airey 2004) suggests that 75% of all adult Swedes can hold an everyday conversation in English, and that Sweden is actually one of the countries with the highest percentage of bilinguals and multilinguals in the EU.

In Swedish higher education, the spread of English has been noticeable and mainly driven by the internationalisation process, which has slowly led programmes and courses being held in the English language. Briefly, Airey (2004) describes this shift as a natural



and rather positive consequence of many concomitant factors. To give you an example, he refers to the rising number of textbooks, course materials and publications of academic papers in English, the boost in confidence that Swedish lecturers gain when teaching in a Second Language or to the possibility of studying in a Swedish university given to international students.

In line with the Language Act published in 2009, Swedish is the country's official language and parallelinguism is considered "as a guiding principle for the dual use of English and Swedish in higher education" (Bolton and Kuteeva 2012: 430). However, what emerged from Salö survey on the role of English in Sweden higher education and research, shows something else (Bolton and Kuteeva 2012). In 2010, the Swedish Language Council published its language report and the most striking observation was related to the role that English played and still plays in the academic world. Indeed, data show that around 87% of all dissertations at Swedish universities are written in English, 12% in Swedish and 1% in other languages. Moreover, in 2009, 65% of all Master's programmes were held in English with around 50% of international students (Bolton and Kuteeva 2012: 432). This Language Report was just one example of the endless amount of work that has been conducted recently. The increasing trend towards EMI has been further documented by the above mentioned Kuteeva and Airey (2014) research, which show clearly that there are different language policy needs for disciplines with different knowledge structures—what might be appropriate for one discipline may be untenable for another. Bolton and Kuteeva (2012), in their large-scale survey at Stockholm University, have shown the various attitudes towards EMI in different disciplines; specifically, the findings highlighted that English "in the sciences is a pragmatic reality for both teachers and students", whereas "in the humanities and social sciences is typically used as an additional language in parallel with Swedish" (2012: 429). However, Stockholm University is not the only example; in fact, it has been observed that overall English-mediated programmes were activated in disciplines such as engineering, science and technology and at a much more lower level in humanities or arts (Airey *et al* 2015). Up to now, surveys have explored Swedish higher education, focusing on the extent to which English is used at universities and yet it seems that much research is needed. Airey *et al* (2015) directly address the issue arguing that there is "a lack of research into teaching and learning outcomes of EMI, few formalised support mechanisms for teachers and

students, and a lack of appreciation of disciplinary differences in the implementation of policy”.

Overall, I would conclude this section saying that on the one hand, studies suggest that local languages still play a fundamental role in knowledge dissemination in Sweden (Salmö 2010). On the other, it could be argued that English is predominantly present and its use as a Medium of Instruction, in parallel with Swedish, “is likely to continue into the indefinite future, not least so that Swedish universities can compete in the international arena” (Bolton and Kuteeva 2012: 444).

#### **1.4.2 Introducing Umeå University**

Before proceeding with the theoretical framework, the reader should know the reasons why I chose to include my personal experience at Umeå University in the present study. Indeed, while I was studying there I managed to talk to various professors as well as many staff members working in different departments and, by listening to them, it seemed that the case of EMI was considered a kind of an issue. Hence, I decided to dig deeper and I found some interesting insights that will help the reader in order to better understand my analysis. In addition, I would like to make it clear that including Umeå as a case study, albeit not generalizable, could be an interesting way to see whether or not Campagna and Pulicini (2014) two “Europes” theory could have some foundation. In fact, one should notice that, because of their geographic position, Padova and Umeå might perfectly represent the variety and diversity in the way that EMI has developed so far. Clearly, if we look at dates, these universities are not exactly on the same level since the Institution of Padova was founded in 1222, whereas the latter in 1965 and yet, it is Sweden’s fifth oldest university<sup>22</sup>. However, these institutions could be compared at a linguistic level as Swedish and Italian are widely considered to be difficult languages to be learn and many recent studies have addressed the question concerning the possible threat that speakers of both languages might feel because of the predominant role of English. In Italy, for example, Dario Generali (2013 in Molino and Campagna 2014: 1) says that Italian linguistic policy would only favour the “creation of an Anglophone élite to the detriment of the Italian language and culture, which are the cornerstones of our richest and enviable tradition and intellectual identity”. Similarly, in Sweden, Swales (1997: 374) has used the

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<sup>22</sup> Source: <http://www.umu.se/english/about-umu> (last accessed 3.12.2016)

metaphor of English as a Tyrannosaurus Rex in order to call attention to English as a “powerful carnivore gobbling up the other denizens of the academic linguistic grazing grounds”.

Using such concerns and observations as the starting point, I should now go into somewhat deeper detail by looking more closely at Umeå University. As I mentioned before, this is a quite recent institution positioned in the Northern part of Sweden. Although it could be considered relatively young, the University boasts 30,957 full-time, part-time and distance students, eight Schools and Institutions (Academy of Fine arts, School of Architecture, Institute of Design, School of Business and Economics, School of Sport Sciences, School of Education, Institute of Technology and School of Restaurant and Culinary Arts), 900 international exchange agreements and currently 32 English-Taught degree programmes (entirely held in English). In addition, Umeå University received the first place in overall satisfaction ranking in Europe as the part of international students, according to the latest International Student Baromete; this clearly shows how this institution’s primary focus is on providing students with an international landscape. Developing its international profile and research excellence are probably the main hallmarks of this University, which takes these matters very seriously on the agenda. Interestingly in 2014, Umeå University published its internationalisation strategy for education (a document that contains all the internationalisation goals based on the *Umeå University 2020 – Vision and objectives*). In a way, this publication should not be of any surprise especially if we consider that Swedish higher education is highly internationalised and Umeå is neither the first nor the last university to have followed the wave of internationalisation. In the document (2014: 4), the top-level goals are:

- Becoming nationally and internationally respected through offering attractive, high-quality education at all levels, characterised by national and international mobility.
- Increasing the number of incoming and outgoing students, in order to create a learning environment where internationalisation leaves its mark on our courses and study programmes.
- Offering working and learning environments with international dimensions so as to be able to increase the level of quality of our education and to be a more attractive higher education institution. International exchange for teachers and other staff

creates a superb environment for both pedagogical and scientific development, as well as professional and personal development.

Thus, not only is the international presence indeed very strong, but it could also be said that these goals are in line with what I explained in section 1.2 about internationalisation “abroad” and “at home”. As for the former, students and academic staff mobility is highly valued. Even though high priority is given to English-speaking countries like Canada or the USA this does not mean that the EU is not important as well. Indeed, the document (2014: 12) shows that Europe plays a fundamental role for two main reasons: around 200,000 students participate in the Erasmus+ programme annually and the EU context itself fosters teacher and staff collaboration as well as mutual exchanges. As for internationalisation “at home”, greater attention is given to students who do not travel or participate in exchange programmes. As a matter of fact, the strategy to be adopted is that of enhancing students’ intercultural communication and the exchange of thoughts and ideas with different cultural backgrounds in order to increase programme quality.

There is, however, another interesting issue that I would like to point out. Here, the reader should recall what has been previously mentioned about Coleman’s (2006) view on the trend that universities are currently following. As I said, he supports the idea that in response to marketisation, universities are no longer institutions but brands, instead. In a nutshell, this reasoning could perhaps be applied to the case of Umeå, a university that already counts on an extremely internationalised profile and yet it sets very ambitious goals to be more competitive in the global arena. Interestingly, the above-mentioned document (2014: 10) clearly refers the university as “a strong *brand* in Sweden”, which has to be developed because “in the global education arena [...] competition between higher education institutions is extensive, and it is only within a few subject areas that Umeå University is known. We therefore need to strengthen our *brand* based on an international perspective”.

### **1.4.3 The question of language**

As already discussed, the question of language in the Nordic Countries has been on the agenda for many years. However, with the internationalisation process and the subsequent

spread of EMI, now more than ever there is need to design policies that include both helpful guidelines and recommendations about the practical aspect of the language. In her study, Bjorkman (2014) assesses the effectiveness of language policies from eight Swedish universities, Umeå included. Basically, she argues that these documents lack attention to the issue and to language practices; as a matter of fact, in her conclusion, she suggests (2014: 538) that people who work in these institutions “need to deal with the complexities of language use and usage on a daily basis and may benefit from guidance with regard to language practices”. These interesting observations might find a favourable ground if considering both *Umeå University’s internationalisation strategy for education* and the *University Language Policy*. The internationalisation process has led this institution to adopt an increased number of attractive English-Taught programmes: by 2020, each programme must contain an English course in order “to better succeed with international student recruitment”, which would “[...] also increases the opportunities for recruiting international doctoral students<sup>23</sup>”. Aiming to keep the University’s internationalization work at a high level, the education policy provides several guidelines concerning the help that should be given to both students and academic staff. As for the former, the University is expected to provide support services for both Swedish and international students by working in parallel with English and the local language, and by increasing translations of University’s internal communications in English. As for the academic staff, it is stated: “it is important that Umeå University increases the skills of its staff as regards teaching in English. This can be done through internal professional development, through recruiting international staff and through encouraging international teacher exchanges” (2014: 8). Arguably, these are very general recommendations, no practical guidelines are directly provided. The same, could be observed if taking into consideration the *University Language Policy*, which was published in 2008. As with all the various Swedish institutions, Umeå University is a governmental agency, which means that it must follow the already existing guidelines provided by the Swedish Language Policy. As I explained in the previous section, this document stresses the official status of Swedish and it describes how parallel language use should be managed. Likewise, Umeå University policy highlights that (UU 2008: 1):

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<sup>23</sup> Quoted at Umeå University’s internationalisation strategy for education (2014).

- The main language of Umeå University is Swedish which means Swedish is the language that should be primarily used.
- The university's departments, centres and units are to have Swedish and English names.
- The university's courses, programmes and qualifications are to have Swedish and English names.
- Any deviation from using Swedish must be based on careful and well-founded consideration.

Although primary importance is given to the Swedish language, it also mentions that Umeå is a language-friendly university that “encourages linguistic diversity among its students and employees and strives to promote a mutual understanding of the Scandinavian languages” (UU 2008: 3). The importance that English has in the academia is clearly acknowledged here; it is written that with “a good knowledge of first and foremost English, but also of other languages, the university and its students, teachers and researchers will become attractive both in Sweden and abroad” (UU 2008: 3). Similarly, programmes and qualifications are to have Swedish and English names, and parallel language use for both teachers and students is considered a long-term goal. However, if we look in much more detail, we can easily notice that there are very few practical guidelines related to EMI implementation. Overall, the policy addresses the issue of teaching in other languages in very general terms and it seems that effort is made in order to protect the Swedish. Indeed, it is stated that languages other than Swedish must always be well justified and must be linked to the goals of the course “i.e. such decisions must not be taken in a routine fashion” (UU 2008: 4). As we can see, suggestions and recommendations for the academic staff are not provided. Moreover, as regards English, the policy explicitly underlines that its use should vary depending on the students' degree cycle. In fact, the document makes it clear those who are in their first cycle should be taught in Swedish since it is their primary language and “research has shown that Swedish students reach a deeper understanding and are more active when teaching and studying are done in Swedish” (UU 2008: 5). At an MA level, students must be given the opportunity to continue to develop their skills in Swedish, and yet more English must be introduced. Instead, at the Third Cycle level, “different demands as regards choice and use of language” are present (UU 2008: 5). In order to be ready for the mainstream and to operate at an international level, students need support to develop their parallel

language use. Thus, it seems that higher English proficiency corresponds to the highest cycles levels.

Up to now, I have offered a general overview of the Nordic context by starting from the debated question of the language, a topical issue that cannot be ignored when dealing with EMI in Northern Europe. Then, I narrowed down my object of interest by focusing merely on the Swedish context and finally I have introduced Umeå University. Let us now move to the last section of this first chapter.

### **1.4.3 Attitudes towards EMI at Umeå University**

During my staying at Umeå University, my personal interest in EMI grew considerably. Probably, the reason is that studying in such an international setting, where people are greatly exposed to the English language and where many different English-Taught programmes are held, made me think that the university must have had an important role in supporting lecturers and students. However, when I talked to various members of the academic staff, it turned out that I was partially wrong. Clearly, I did not have time enough to dig deeper and survey a great number of people; for this reason, these results cannot be generalised. However, I had the possibility to speak with 13 people: the head of the International Office, lecturers from the Sociology, Economics, Psychology and Language Studies Departments and finally, two members of the UPL, that is the Centre for Teaching and Learning. My interest was mainly in getting an understanding of the following:

- The general attitudes towards EMI: whether or not it might be of benefit to Umeå University and its various departments;
- The main concerns of those involved with EMI;
- The issue of “standardisation of language”; in other words, that English that might be perceived as a “threat” to the Swedish language.

Although a limited amount of information has been gathered, some useful observations can be made anyway. As I mentioned before, universities are governmental agencies, which means that they apply the guidelines provided by policies developed at a national level. Sometimes universities decide to follow those recommendations, sometimes they design their own policies, like Umeå University. The case of Umea is interesting because, as previously analysed, the *Language Policy* did not include any practical guidelines in

order to implement EMI. It seemed to me that the scenario was quite general and the focus was more on the protection of the Swedish language instead of the way of helping lecturers and students with English-Taught programmes. Moreover, among those I surveyed it emerged that some did not have specific knowledge of the document itself; as a matter of fact, one respondent said that “honestly, I don’t have any idea of the policy” (from the Economics Department) or if yes, they knew that “there is a strong Internationalisation policy or strategy, which I assume implies an EMI policy. I think at the moment, most English taught courses are taught by non-Swedish academic staff” (respondent from the Sociology Department). Interestingly, the member from the International office partially supported what I previously observed claiming that: “the policy is somewhat helpful since it clearly states that our university has the ambition to be a two languages university (English and Swedish); however, because there are no enforcement mechanisms in place it is easy for departments to ignore the policy”. The point here is that the policy addresses the University as a whole, but it is up to each department to choose whether to adopt specific strategies to help lecturers or not. However, I found out that sometimes, but very seldom, teachers have asked for advice and support.

I interviewed Katarina Winka, the educational developer at the UPL (Centre for Teaching and Learning), who told me that requests came mainly from the Social Sciences Faculty and the Psychology Department. Over the years, the UPL unit has arranged courses about “Teaching in English” and “Teaching and Learning in a second language” on request, which have been appreciated by the few teachers who participated. Another positive example comes from the above-mentioned Psychology Department, which gave teachers and the administrative staff the chance to improve their competence in EMI. The UPL organized two editions of workshops: the first one was held last year, while the second one started this September (the official Workshop Plan has been included in the Appendix). This was the first time that the UPL combined Teaching in a Second Language with pedagogy (active learning). Winka’s colleague Claire Englund, a university lecturer at the Centre for Educational Development, told me that their idea was to create a course that could satisfy the lecturers’ need to teach in English with the introduction of innovative teaching methods. Englund and Winka explained to me that during throughout the duration of the project teachers had the possibility to participate in



one-hour meetings with a language instructor for individual advice; in addition, 5 workshops were organized starting from September 29<sup>th</sup> 2016 until December 17<sup>th</sup> 2016. Up to now, Winka told me that 11 lecturers signed up for the workshop series and usually there were between 8-10 people attending. As for the topics faced, great attention was given to teaching in a Second Language, focusing on the helpful strategies that lecturers could use to improve the language and teaching skills; moreover, a presentation regarding teacher exchange opportunities was given. The issue of the intercultural university and raising the intercultural awareness were addressed; in detail, the interculturality presentation was held by John Baker from the Language Department, based on the book *Internationalizing the curriculum*, by Betty Leask<sup>24</sup>. Overall, despite the small amount of information, what Englund, Winka and their colleagues attempted is similar to what the University of Padova did with the LEAP Project, which I will present in detail in Chapter Two.

Before moving on the final observations, I would like to make it clear one should bear in mind the possible bias of the responses, since most of the respondents were English native speakers. Now, let me go back to the “research questions” I mentioned previously. Based on the comments I received from the various respondents, there seems to be an overall positive attitude towards EMI. Roughly, all the interviewed felt that EMI benefits the University not only because it sharpens the University international profile by attracting both students and staff from the international arena; but it can also make Umeå more appealing with respect to other important Swedish Universities, which attract more students due to their central position. Let us look at the answers in more detail:

“As a native English speaker, I think that it is great. Seriously though, in order to be an international Business School it is necessary, certainly if we are wishing to attract foreign students to our programs” (Senior Lecturer from Business School)

“[...] In order to achieve a higher international status the university needs to be able to attract both students and staff in an international arena. Further, potential employment opportunities for Swedish graduates are greatly increased if they have good English skills.” (deputy head of the International Office)

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<sup>24</sup> Professor Betty Leask, executive Director of Internationalisation of the Curriculum in Action  
<http://www.ioc.global/>

“I think it is a good thing, as it opens up universities to all students. With regards to Umeå university, EMI makes it less parochial/provincial, and more like a serious international university. (Lecturer from Sociology Department)

“[...] Since Umeå is not centrally located in Sweden, this kind of openness and international appeal is perhaps more important for us than for Universities in Stockholm, Uppsala or Malmö, where location may be the immediate draw for students and staff.” (lecturer of English at the Language Studies Department)

I would also like to mention an interesting comment provided by one of the lecturers of English from the Language Studies Department. Indeed, the respondent told me that one of the multiple reasons that might have led the University to implement EMI is to be related to the language issue. Indeed, in this lecturer’s view “most people who have grown up in Sweden started learning English from an early age, because the country is aware that Swedish is a “small” language, population-wise, and so has focused on educating the population in a global language”. This example is useful since it shows that the question of language (explained in section 1.4) is an ongoing issue, which goes hand in hand with the discussions raised on English as a Medium of Instruction.

Even though EMI is considered a benefit by all those interviewed, one should look at the other side of the coin. Indeed, one possible shortcoming is related to the fact that teaching in a Second Language certainly requires extra work and endeavour, which is not always welcomed by the various lecturers. For instance, the respondent from the Business School told me that this still happens at his department and sometimes “many older people regret the loss of their position because of the internationalisation process. That is, because they are not as strong in English, and feel that they might be too long in the tooth to learn it then they can be resentful”. This shows another widespread concern, which comes up when discussing EMI: students and academic staff’s proficiency in English. AS for the former, it is quite clear that they might encounter language difficulty; for instance, the lecturer from the Sociology Department said that “Funnily enough, the main issues I have are not to do with the teachers, but with the students”. By contrast, however, one interviewee noted that students in the Business Programme were worried that “their own English was so much better that the instructor may not understand them if they didn’t ‘dumb it down’”.

As for the lecturers, an interesting insight was provided by the lecturer from the Language Studies Department. He exhaustively explained that his department was deeply concerned with studying the complexities of language and it was involved by the University in numerous discussions about the way the English-Taught programmes were introduced. From the lecturers' perspectives, it has been pointed out that they generally "did not feel their English was good enough to allow them to teach their subjects effectively. This is not merely a question of skill, but also of working language. For example, many of my colleagues who work in English note that they would have difficulties working in Swedish, even though it is their native language, because they don't know the terminology, ways of expressing things, etc.". Similarly, this matter was raised by a member of the International Office, who said that teachers feel they "will not be able to effectively communicate ideas or express themselves to students either because of their own deficiencies in using the English language or the students' limitations in understanding English".

Apparently, these comments are in line with what has been observed in section 1.3.2 while discussing EMI. On the hand, lecturers feel they are not enough competent in English, while on the other the university with its *Language Policy* does not seem to provide any specific guidelines to improve this situation. In fact, what is currently happening is that this switch from Swedish to English is probably considered by this university an easy task and it has been taken for granted that no type of concern will be expressed by educators. However, it is not quite true that "because most Swedes speak English fairly well, at least informally, they could just switch to English without problems", one respondent complained. Finally, the last issue that came up during the surveys is mainly about this increasing trend of switching more and more courses into English. What has been argued here is that not all courses and programmes are suitable for instruction in English; for instance, Swedish law is intrinsically related to Swedish culture and context and it would be ineffective teach it in English. I would conclude by quoting the comment I received from one of the respondents. Interestingly, he observed that "the issue here is, quite simply, assuming that everything can be taught in English". I would tend to agree with these words, especially because they remind that implementing English as a Medium of Instruction does not mean drastically switching to English-only

policies; on the contrary, it means to foster a more international environment by keeping the identity and the status of the local languages.

Last but not least, I would like to address the issue of “standardisation of language”. In section 1.4.2, I discussed the question of language referring to the whole of Sweden; here I will briefly address the issue at Umeå University. Overall, participants acknowledged that there might be a certain risk when dealing with English in academia, especially considering the dominant role that this language has in research. For instance, one participant noted that “the Swedish language itself may not develop along with academic developments. Rather, English words may start creeping into the Swedish language as new users are more familiar with the English words”. In line with the findings of Airey *et al* (2015) I presented in section 1.4.2, participants said that there is little doubt that the increasing use of English is a threat to the Swedish language and this risk might be perceived differently from one department to another. For instance, a lecturer from the Sociology Department claimed: “Yes, I think some do see English as a “threat” (especially staff in Humanities Departments might see it this way)”. Despite these observations, I would say that there is a widespread belief that English has become an inevitable aspect of being in academia, and making it the language of teaching is just an extension of that. However, as mentioned in the *Language Policy*, Swedish is and must remain the language for the university, and the language department “was central in asserting this when the policy was developed”, the participant from the Language Studies said.

I would like to conclude this first chapter by saying that everything has been presented in such a way as to build up a satisfactory theoretical framework aimed to help the reader to understand both my analysis and approach. Multiple definitions and explanations have been provided to offer possible insights into the world of EMI and internationalisation. Additionally, it should be highlighted that throughout the chapter I offered factual information concerning Padova University, clearly because it is a way to help the reader to understand the context in which the LEAP Project was planned and organized. Finally, focusing on Umeå University has turned out to be a both interesting and effective way to look at how EMI has developed in one part of Campagna and Pulcini’s “two Europes” (2014). In the chapter that follows, I will go into greater detail by presenting EMI in country of Southern Europe, that is Italy, and the LEAP Project.



## **Chapter 2 English as a Medium of Instruction in southern Europe**

In the previous chapter I offered a bird's eye view on the vast topic of EMI. I explained thoroughly why EMI is intertwined with internationalisation and I provided an overview of lecturers' perspectives and attitudes towards EMI by taking into account various studies that have been recently conducted. Additionally, I made it clear that despite the overall positive effects that EMI might have, it presents evident drawbacks, which cannot be ignored. Finally, I decided to refer to what Campagna and Pulcini (2014) call the "two Europes" by offering a greater understanding of the situation of EMI in northern Europe and by highlighting the role that English plays in those countries. Finally, I narrowed down the matter of interest by reporting the noteworthy results that I collected during my stay at Umeå University in Sweden. This chapter instead seeks to provide an overview of the south of the EU, particularly by focusing on the Italian context. Indeed, in the sections that follow, I will start by drawing on the work of Costa and Coleman (2013); I will examine the overall Italian situation by giving voice to the various opinions and concerns that have been raised when dealing with EMI. In this regard, I would like to make it clear that I chose to refer to Costa and Coleman as, for the time being, their survey is the first and only large scale survey on ETPs at a national level. Then, I will go into greater detail by presenting EMI at the University of Padova. Specifically, I will introduce the LEAP project in all its various aspects; this project is the core of the present study and, therefore, gaining a deep understanding of it will greatly help the reader.

### **2.1 Introducing the case of Italy**

The spread of English as a Medium of Instruction in EMI EU countries is no secret. However, if we look at the general trend, it is possible to hypothesise (see Campagna and Pulcini 2014) that there is a clear difference regarding how English-mediated programmes are activated in the north and in the south of Europe. Indeed, as I previously observed, research seems to underline that ETPs (English Taught Programmes) started earlier and became more popular in Nordic countries, where there is a long tradition of bilingualism or bilingual education. Moreover, the new language policies such as the above mentioned *Declaration on a Nordic Language Policy*, strive for the reassessment of national languages and aim to protect and preserve them by ensuring that they are not

lost to the dominance of EMI (Pulcini and Campagna in Dimova *et al* 2015). Therefore, a sharp contrast is clear. On the one hand, there is the “northern reality” with its cautious attitudes towards EMI; while in the South, where a constant push for the use of English to promote the international agenda is present, EMI is considered as a relatively new matter and for this specific reason is continually evolving. This echoes Dafouz *et al* (2014) words; as a matter of fact, they support the idea that in southern Europe, EMI has a more recent nature and if looking at the Spanish context, English-mediated courses used to be not broadly extended. Overall, this point has already been raised by Molino and Campagna, who interestingly observe that this might be a discrepancy of the European mandate, which apparently makes it difficult to “homogenise education whilst maintaining linguistic diversity in accordance to the various multilingual tradition” (2014: 158-159). This could be challenging especially in countries that are characterised by a long history of linguistic and political diversity; and interestingly, this might be the case of the Italian case.

Situated in the south of Europe, Italy is well-known for the prestige and importance of its language. This country, indeed, is the homeland of famous and skilful poets such as Dante, Petrarca and Boccaccio, whose words are still taught all over the world. The *Accademia della Crusca* has made an exceptional contribution to the expansion and identification of the Italian language. Founded between 1582 and 1583 by Lionardo Salviati, the *Accademia della Crusca* role was to “clean up” the language and to stimulate its diffusion, a goal, which was soon achieved with the compilation of the first edition of the so-called *Vocabulario*<sup>25</sup>. Then, it was in 1861 with the *Statuto Albertino*<sup>26</sup> that the Italian language, based on the Florentine of the 14<sup>th</sup> century and standardised in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, was given its official status (Guerini 2011). Since then, “the interaction between different sectors of the national community has involved a process of language change that is more complex than that found in other European countries” (Tosi 2001: 3). Indeed, the Italian linguistic landscape is one of the most varied and the Italian language is not the only one to be predominant. Tosi (2008: 248), in his in-depth study on the language

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<sup>25</sup> The first modern language dictionary, which was inspired by those published in Spain and France. Quoted at: <http://www.accademiadellacrusca.it/en/accademia>

<sup>26</sup> The *Statuto Albertino* is known as “Albertine Statute”, where the first explicit reference to the Italian language official status occurred [www.quirinale.it/qrnw/statico/costituzione/statutoalbertino.htm](http://www.quirinale.it/qrnw/statico/costituzione/statutoalbertino.htm) (Last accessed December 2016)

situation in Italy, reports that multilingualism “is rooted in the historical background of a country whose late unification maintained a situation of linguistic diversity that is unique within Europe”. Over the years, Italy has witnessed the presence of many different dialects as well as a number of ancient group of languages called “historic” linguistic minorities (such as Cimbrian, Mocheno, French, Germanic or Greek etc.), whose rights are guaranteed by law n.482, which also reiterates that “the official language of Italian Republic is Italian” (Art.1)<sup>27</sup>. Overall, these many linguistic differences are, according to Tosi (2008), evidence of the heritage of centuries of Italy’s political fragmentation and cultural diversity. On the one hand, the Italian language, with its use in the academic context, has attempted to unify under a national identity this complex scenario; on the other, it seems still difficult to unify it with “the acceptance of the pervasiveness of English as indicated by the limited repertoire of critical studies on EMI in Italy” (Molino and Campagna 2014: 159).

Historically speaking, in Italy, the role of English changed greatly over the years. Indeed, initially French was the main foreign language studied in schools but soon it lost his supremacy and in the 1960s English entered on to the scene. Basically, it overtook French and it started to cover a hegemonic position in foreign language curricula (Tosi 2008). Fluency in English was perceived both as a mark of social prestige and an advantage in life: rich families started to send their children to study abroad and new elites expressed their need for more English classes to be provided. Tosi (2008: 298), explains that in those years “the Government quoted the Constitution”, which sanctioned “Italian as the sole medium of instruction, and resisted several attempts by private organisations to set up private English-medium schools”. More recently, English has consolidated its dominant role: with several educational reforms<sup>28</sup>, in actual fact it was the most chosen foreign language to be taught in primary schools in 1990. With the *Legge Moratti 53/2003*, which was implemented between 2010-2012, English was upgraded with the status of compulsory subject for vocational and technical schools (Campagna and Pulcini 2014). It was from 1992 that steps towards English-taught programmes were made: during the 1990s this trend witnessed a true acceleration but factual evidences on

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<sup>27</sup> Information taken from the International language course I attended that is held by Giovanni Poggeschi, lecturer at Padova University and Salento University.

<sup>28</sup> A Ministerial Decree was introduced in 1990 concerning the compulsory study of one foreign language in elementary schools (Campagna and Pulcini 2014)



internationalisation began a decade later (Costa 2012). More and more universities started to align themselves by adopting the newer internationalisation strategies, which were widely promoted by the Bologna Process (1999). As Helm and Guarda (2015: 356) explain: “it was not until 2004 that universities began to offer entire degree courses in English (generally called English Taught Programmes or ETPs), usually at post-graduate level” and in 2010 with the so-called *Legge Gelmini 240/2010* there was a “push at the legislative level for increased internationalisation at Italian universities” (Costa forthcoming). Basically, this reform of the university system expressively called for enhanced and increased cooperation between universities as well as for the introduction of study programmes in a foreign language (Costa 2012). Interestingly, according to Costa and Coleman (2013: 4), the above-mentioned section of the *Legge Gelmini* on internationalisation, is an exemplification of the fact that: “the context of Italian higher education is distinctive, but in some senses it is also representative of Southern Europe”. Needless to say, in just a few years, things deeply changed and English as a Medium of Instruction has accelerated impressively becoming a hot topic, which is widely discussed in the world of academia.

## **2.2 How Italian universities welcomed EMI**

Before discussing the next issue, I would like to remind the reader that, in the sections that follow, I will report only the main aspects that previous studies highlighted. The point is that, as little research has been conducted on the field of EMI in Italian higher education, I will include the findings that I thought could be the most useful and interesting for the aim of the present study. As far as this brief introduction is concerned, let us now move to the core of this section. As was previously explained, it could be said that Italy is a relative newcomer to EMI in Europe, and Italian universities reacted to EMI in different ways. The two most recent studies, although by now outdated, are the comprehensive work conducted by Costa and Coleman (2013) and the 2007 survey conducted by the CRUI (Conference of Italian University Chancellors). The former, by means of a questionnaire, is a survey that highlights the main issues characterising EMI across Italy. Although only 38 out of 76 Italian universities (which corresponds to 50%), both private and public, answered the questionnaire, Costa and Coleman obtained a clear picture of the overall Italian situation anyway. Instead, the latter concerns the survey on

“Education Provision in English Language in Italian Universities”, which was carried out by the CRUI in 2007 with the aim of offering an understanding of the first and second cycle degree programmes as well as winter/summer schools in English (Costa and Coleman 2013). Moreover, most recent findings are also available on the website of CRUI<sup>29</sup> regarding the academic year 2011-2012. Camapagna and Pulcini (in Dimova *et al* 2015: 72) illustrate those findings very clearly by reporting that:

[...] The majority of EMI programmes are offered by Northern universities, with Milan, Torino, Bologna and Rome leading positions. Among the 80 universities considered in the survey [...] about half run MA programmes, followed by PhDs, whereas much fewer (10 out of 180) have English-only BAs.

Moreover, EMI programmes appeared to be more popular in economics, engineering, a result, which was in line with Costa and Coleman survey findings (2013). Overall, if compared, these two studies the Costa and Coleman (2013) and the CRUI surveys are similar in the sense that they need to be updated and they differ because Costa and Coleman’s work provides a more comprehensive analysis, which offers relevant findings on ETPs at all levels. Hence, I decided to focus specifically on this last study and I will now broadly present the most interesting results.

As Guarda and Helm suggest “the survey carried out by Costa and Coleman remains the most recent and complete study of the state of the art in Italy” (2015: 356). In a nutshell, the questionnaire was sent to all 76 Italian universities and it was structured in three sections. The first one had to do mainly with *organisation*, and it addressed specific questions about the courses, their lengths or the difficulties encountered; the second section concerned the *teachers and the teaching style* and it was meant to obtain information about whether or not there was any *ad hoc* training for lecturers; finally, the third and last section concerned *students*. From a broader perspective, the survey highlights that English-mediated programmes are commonly perceived as a top-down process and the need for their “implementation is not usually felt by the lecturers but rather derived from a solely economic-political choice by the university” (Costa and Coleman 2013: 198). I would like to add that this point was also made in the interviews I

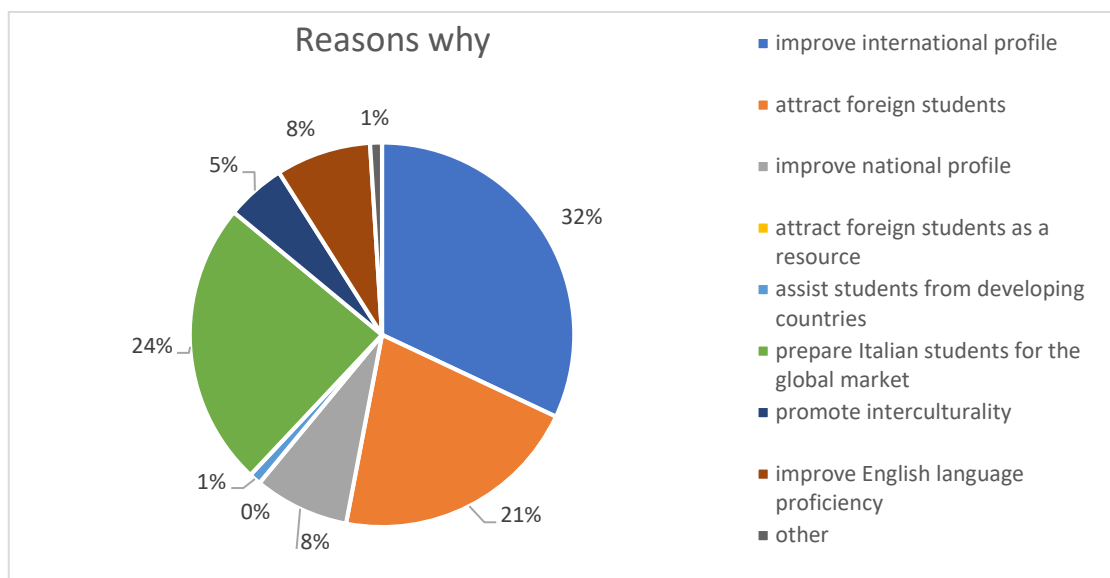
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<sup>29</sup> [http://www.fondazionecrui.it/Documents/courses\\_english.pdf](http://www.fondazionecrui.it/Documents/courses_english.pdf)

conducted with the academic staff at Umeå University; this, once again, shows that the economic factor is often a driver. However, going back to the Italian context, it seems that although Italy still lags behind other countries in the EU (Costa and Coleman 2013), universities are overall in favour of EMI programmes and at the time of writing the number of courses reported in the University<sup>30</sup> website corresponds to 256 ETPs held in fifty-four Italian universities; this is a big increase in respect to the 245 ETP courses, over 90% of which were at Master's level and offered by fifty-two institutions in 2015. Although these programmes are found throughout Italy, a great difference exists between the South and North; as a matter of fact, it seems that the number of ETPs is higher in northern Italy, where there are more private universities and where there is greater need for international links (Costa and Coleman 2013). As I previously said, engineering and economics are the subject areas where EMI programmes are most numerous. If we consider the reasons that underlie the choice of activating ETPs, two points should be taken into consideration. Firstly, there is a great difference between private and public universities, with the latter “marginally more interested in didactic-pedagogic aspects (improve English language proficiency, promote interculturality [...]) and offering a wider range of rationales” (Costa and Coleman 2013: 11). Secondly, three are the main reasons selected by the universities surveyed for introducing EMI. As shown in Figure 2, in order of importance, internationalisation ranks very high with 32%, followed by 21% choosing “attracting foreign students” and 24% corresponding to the need of preparing Italian students for the global market.

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<sup>30</sup> Ministry of Education website (last accessed December 2016)  
[http://www.universitaly.it/index.php/cercacorsi/universita?lingua\\_corso=en](http://www.universitaly.it/index.php/cercacorsi/universita?lingua_corso=en)



**Figure 2.** Reasons for activating ETPs taken from Costa and Coleman (2013: 12)

These findings are in line with what has been discussed in chapter one regarding the need for HEIs to internationalise their profile to be more competitive both a national and international levels. Interestingly, it appears that Italian universities are more interested in improving the mobility and competences of Italian students, rather than considering international incoming students as a resource.

Since the questionnaire that I sent to lecturers at Padova University includes a question about their attitude to EMI, it would be interesting to look at the Costa and Coleman (2013) findings in the *teachers and teaching styles* section. As the survey mainly addresses the universities administrative offices (such as international relations or language centres), it could be difficult to say whether the findings are shared by lecturers or not (Helm and Guarda 2015). However, it appears that the question of the language is very important and it is an aspect that raises many doubts and concerns. Indeed, as reported by Costa and Coleman, 30% of the universities surveyed affirmed that lecturers' insufficient English language proficiency was what actually made it difficult to implement ETPs; instead, students' inadequate level was problematic for 31% of the respondents. Worth mentioning is the fact that only 46% of the universities that responded to the survey affirmed that they required an international certification such as IELTS or TOEFL and 11% did not even respond. Overall, some lecturers are reluctant to take part in English-mediated programmes or "they may be 'forced' to so by the university" Campagna and Pulicini observe (2014: 11). However, looking at the other side of the

coin, universities are less likely to provide any kind of training for lecturers. Looking at the data, 77% of the institutions surveyed clearly said that they did not offer support, a total of 15% said they offered a language course, and only 8% answered that they provided a methodological training (Costa and Coleman 2013). These are quite striking data, especially if one considers that many studies like the previously mentioned one by Klaassen (2001). These researches show that a different language means a different teaching approach; EMI requires training and keeping the traditional teaching method might not be the right path to better deliver the content of a subject. This echoes what Ball and Lindsay (in Doiz *et al* 2013: 46) have already observed: “[...] in very simple terms, you cannot teach the same conceptual material to a native speaker in the same way as you can to a non-native”. Along similar lines Cots (in Doiz *et al* 2013: 117), in her study conducted at the University of Lleida in Spain, makes it clear that the introduction of EMI requires a shift to methodology “with which content lecturers are not always familiar”; the function of the instructor is to give students more attention by no longer conveying knowledge, but helping them to build their own knowledge (Cots in Doiz *et al* 2013).

To conclude, I would like to add that Padova University has taken the question of lecturers’ training and support very seriously. This can be easily noticed if one looks at the LEAP project: the University Language Centre’s great wealth of experience in language teaching in collaboration with the International Relations Office were two of the ingredients that contributed to the success of the project, proving to be key actors in the development of EMI at the University of Padova. Indeed, one of the long-term goal set by the CLA is to make the LEAP a regular offer, this would possibly raise lecturers’ awareness of the role that EMI has in the world of academia.

### **2.2.1 The *Politecnico di Milano* case: a “cultural earthquake”**

Much attention was given to the case of the *Politecnico di Milano* (PoliMi). Pandora’s box was officially opened in 2011, when the University’s rector, named Giovanni Azzone, announced that “if you want to have an international class at present, you need to have your classes in English”<sup>31</sup>. Basically, he stated that Italian would be abandoned in favour of the English language for all post-graduate degrees and PhDs in order to “be able

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<sup>31</sup> Quoted at: <http://www.bbc.com/news/business-17958520> (Last accessed December 2016)

to attract good-quality human capital from all over the world”<sup>32</sup>. This drastic statement, might be perfectly in line with a new trend witnessing an increasingly high number of English-mediated programmes activated throughout all Europe. Therefore, it might not be a surprise if the *Politecnico di Milano* opted for such a decision. This choice was the result of a top-down EMI implementation process rather than a bottom-up one, which means that the University, in order to add more value to its international profile, mainly addressed international and Italian fee-paying students.

However, such English-only oriented decisions have been widely perceived as a clash with the country’s “traditional, and still dominant, monolingual paradigm of formal education”, as Molino and Campagna point out (2014: 160). Thus, the Azzone decision had serious consequences and a lawsuit was soon triggered. On 2 May, 2012 a petition signed by a group of professors and researchers working at the University was submitted. They called on PoliMi to cancel the imposition of the English language basing their opposition on the “freedom in teaching” stated in the Italian Constitution. Moreover, they argued that this choice could have a negative impact on both students’ and lecturers’ careers as it was a language-based discrimination (Santulli 2015 in Dimova *et al* 2015). These were two of the four arguments officially discussed during a meeting of the Academic Senate. However, the question ended in court. The final judgment was published on 23 May 2013 by the *Tribunale Amministrativo della Lombardia* (Local Administrative Court).

It stated that:

The measures adopted by the Academic Senate through the contested resolutions are excessive, as on the one hand they do not favour internationalisation of the University but merely lead to the adoption of one single language and the cultural values transmitted in the language, while, on the other, they unnecessarily limit the constitutionality acknowledged freedom of both teachers and students (Santulli translation in Dimova *et al* 2015: 276)

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<sup>32</sup> Quoted at: <http://www.bbc.com/news/business-17958520> (Last accessed January 2017)

In other words, the Court acknowledged that PoliMi had adhered to the Gelmini Reform 240/2010, which highlights the universities' need for internationalisation. In detail, this law states that strategies can be adopted with different forms of action, including the implementation of courses held in a foreign language; and yet the Italian language must maintain its supremacy and those forms should not in any way exclude it. Hence, the point here is that the *Politecnico di Milano*'s choice to substitute English for Italian was considered a measure only in favour of the expansion of values that are typical of English-speaking culture (Santulli 2015 in Dimova *et al* 2015). On January 2015, the Court casts doubt on the legitimacy of the article itself, passing the floor to the Constitutional Court, the country's higher legal body, which at the present has still to decide whether this English-only university teaching violates the article or not (Motta forthcoming).

An interesting point was made by Santulli (2015), who notes that one possible problem that came along with the *Politecnico* decision should be seen in terms of language policy implementation. In her study, she analyses the PoliMi website, by focusing on both the English and Italian versions. The aim was not only to verify how the University language policy was implemented, but to highlight also "differences that reveal how language choices discursively reflect and construct different ideological attitudes" (Santulli 2015 in Dimova *et al* 2015: 269). Not surprisingly, the most interesting result of her research is that, when switching from one language to another, there seemed to be a number of discrepancies and difficulties both at cultural and linguistic levels. In practice, Santulli (2015) shows that in the English website there are several linguistic inaccuracies (such as problems in the translation and the poor language competence of the translator) as well as omissions of important parts that were present in the Italian version, but completely ignored in the English one. In Santulli's view (in Dimova *et al* 2015: 279), this lack of information might be due to the fact that the English version was specifically designed for international students as it was adapted to "what are believed to be the needs of foreign students". In this regard, worth mentioning is Jenkins's (2014: 124) 60 universities' websites research, where she points out that more studies should be conducted to "explore any meaningful differences that emerge between what it is presented in English for the international market, and what it is presented in the L1 for the home market".

Overall, I thought it was interesting to mention Santulli's study (2015), because the discrepancies that she found when analysing the website reflect the various doubts and

concerns that have been raised in many studies when dealing with EMI. I am specifically referring to the case *content loss*, which in according to Dafouz (2016: 58): “has often been mentioned as an overt reason for not implementing EMI”. Therefore, it becomes evident that when dealing with two languages, cultural specificities should be taken into consideration because a new language means a new mentality and approach. Moreover, policies should be designed in order to guarantee a high level of English proficiency without letting it lowering the content of teaching.

Criticism also emerged from numerous intellectuals, experts and linguistics, whose opinions were given voice in the volume called “Fuori l’Italiano dall’Università?”, edited by the *Accademia della Crusca*, president Nicoletta Maraschio, in collaboration with Domenico de Martino, and published in 2013 by Laterza. It includes about 90 contributions from various university professors, members of the institution and experts in different fields. From the very beginning, Maraschio (2013: v-xiv) makes it clear that the aim of the volume is neither to foment debate on whether English-only policies are a threat or a benefit and nor to put English against Italian. Instead, it seeks to enhance the discussion by proposing interesting and critical tools that might be useful to assess EMI language policies and the ways Italian universities are internationalising themselves. I decided to include some information contained in that volume since it adds some broader perspectives, which might be useful to better understand the Italian situation. Clearly, I am not going to present each point that was made; instead, I will summarise the arguments I thought that could be the most interesting, referring to what Motta (forthcoming) wrote in his article “Nine and a half reasons against the monarchy of English”. He is a scholar of Italian literature and lecturer at the University of Padova; in his essay, he pinpoints the main concerns and common fears, which have been expressed in the Maraschio volume. Basically, he explains that there are three issues of different natures. First of all, he introduces those with a more linguistic-cultural nature. Quality of teaching and quality of learning have been put into question: as we have already seen, one of the arguments against EMI is that, despite lecturers’ good command of English, the level of teaching might be lowered if compared to that in the native language (this could be, once again, the case of content loss). Teaching is, using Motta’s words, a process that requires: “[...] unlimited possession of the linguistic resources used; this would appear to be hard to achieve in the proposed scenario, apart from in some individual cases” (Motta



forthcoming). Additionally, many experts highlighted a possible risk for Italian students: abandoning their mother tongue might lead to discrepancies in the learning process and consequently students could have shown “difficulties in developing and controlling logic and argumentative structures” (Santulli 2015 in Dimova *et al* 2015: 274). Then, there are more linguistic and cultural issues to be mentioned. Although many experts do not deny the importance of the English language and its dominant role in the international arena, in the volume there is a widespread belief that the *Politecnico di Milano* decision is rather extreme in the sense that, an abuse of Anglicisms, could impoverish the Italian lexical richness. As I previously explained, the language of a country is the symbol of its historical and cultural heritage, two aspects that must be defended. This is important if looking at Italy, a country where the language acted historically as the unifying force for the country’s political and cultural fragmentations. Similarly, as Motta underlines, it is rather discouraging to think about the future of all Italian universities if English-only policies –like the one that PoliMi put forward– were to be implemented; in fact, he argues that: “the most refined and innovative expressions of knowledge in entire fields would be robbed from Italian culture, which in turn would be deprived of all analysis, elaboration and research (as well as teaching) in those fields” (Motta forthcoming).

Last but not least, the heated debate also raised fears and concerns that are more politically and culturally oriented. The vast majority of the debate’s participants, indeed, called for the freedom of the teaching style, which would be threatened if English-only policies were activated. However, this is not just a matter of lecturers’ rights, since the teaching style entails a pluralism of methods, content and knowledge as well as a variety of different perspectives in the teaching and learning process. In addition to this, there are scholars (such as Bruni in Maraschio and De Martino 2013) who fear that monolingualism would lead to monoculturalism. This somehow reminds me of Swale’s English as a Tyrannosaurus Rex; using his metaphor, the predominant English is considered as a powerful carnivore both mining the vitality of other languages and leading to a linguistic and communicative standardization. In this regard, Motta interestingly observes that plurilingualism also exists. With these new internationalisation mandates, we should be more open-minded and increase cultural complexity and biodiversity without reducing everything to one language only. He goes on to say that, for instance, internationalisation would be extremely beneficial, if intended as a means to develop both an open dialogue

and a greater educational option for students “[...], not simply a way to transfer English-speaking students into English-speaking universities in non-English-speaking countries, as happens with European extensions of American universities, where even Italian art is taught in English” (Motta forthcoming).

Overall, the clear-cut decision made by Azzone has certainly “rocked the boat” among the Italian world of academia by fomenting a lively debate that, in my opinion, might have raised and promoted awareness about English as a Medium of Instruction. Likewise, it made more evident the discrepancies that underlie the perhaps old-fashioned attitude of the Italian education system towards innovation. Indeed, the case of *Politecnico di Milano* shows that the acceptance of the progress is not to be taken for granted. With these words, I am not personally saying that the decision was right or wrong, also because if we look at the overall situation, it was the only exception to the rule. However, I am suggesting that times have changed and in this new international arena, the combination of further research in the field of EMI and the knowledge of both its positive and negative sides, would be a good way to encourage a conscious decision towards the adoption of more English Taught programmes; additionally, it would ensure that it is not a top down process driven solely by economic and market forces (Helm forthcoming).

Clearly, we should not forget that the Italian language belongs to the Italian culture and it must be defended; yet, a conscious step towards innovation should be made, shaking off years of fear of losing Italian language’s privileges and advantages. In this regard, House (2003) puts into question the widespread idea that English, in its role as a Lingua Franca, is a threat to multilingualism in Europe. In brief, she suggests that: “co-languages function not against, but in conjunction with, local languages” (House 2003:19). In Germany, for example, a study conducted on a project for the introduction of EMI showed no signs of a threat to the German language, with English, used as an auxiliary language. As a matter of fact, the project “[...] proved to be a popular model for ELF in tertiary education in Germany” (House 2003: 574). *Translanguaging*, for instance, could be a solution in this *Englishisation* process. Which term was firstly coined by Cen Williams (1994 in Wei 2014) and it refers to “the ability of multilingual speakers to shuttle between languages, treating the diverse languages that form their repertoire as an integrated system”. Hernberger & Vaish extended the notion explaining that it is “the possibility of teachers and learners to access academic content through the linguistic

resources they bring to classroom while simultaneously acquiring new ones” (2009: 316). Thus, *translanguaging* could be a useful as it would be a way of “breaking the monopoly of English as the only language of academia in science as a field” (Mazak/ Herbas-Donoso 2015 in Costa forthcoming). Returning briefly to the Italian context, as Costa (forthcoming) highlights, by given that Italian students already have a high competence in their first language, EMI should not represent a threat to the L1.

To conclude, Beccaria (2012 in Maraschio and De Martino 2013: 113) in one passage of his essay explains that our universities should transmit, stimulate and promote technical “excellence” and “the growth of a country is still, as ever, linked to creativity and to the education of the individual and of the less fortunate citizen”. In other words, Italian universities should not lag behind other European countries; instead, they should have all the various tools to compete at a national and international level without finding themselves unable to transmit science and technology “causing negative consequences on public understanding knowledge”. Moreover, I would like to add that it is not necessarily true that all reactions to the introduction of English-mediated programmes are negative; as a matter of fact, Helm says that “recent studies are also showing that most lecturers are *not* hostile to English Medium Instruction if it does not become compulsory or threaten to take over *all* university courses”<sup>33</sup>. Thus, it is needless to say that much has been already done in order to activate ETPs and examples of positive as well as successful implementation can be found. For instance, the University of Padova, despite the many challenges and problems, is on the right path.

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<sup>33</sup> Helm, F. (2014) article. Quoted at: [http://www.education.ox.ac.uk/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/HELM\\_EMI\\_ITALY.pdf](http://www.education.ox.ac.uk/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/HELM_EMI_ITALY.pdf)

### 2.3 A bird's eye on EMI at the University of Padova

As the University of Padova's annual review reports, the development of the educational offer and the incrementation of English-mediated programmes (mostly in second-cycle and third-cycle degrees) are two important strategies adopted by the University internationalisation policy<sup>34</sup>. Basically, promoting the international profile of the institution as well as attracting more international students were the driving factors that led the University to formally implement individual course units in English during the 2009-2010 academic year (Helm and Guarda 2015). More recently, in the 2011-2012 academic year the university Senate promoted and encouraged the introduction of the first English Taught Programmes. The University now offers (academic year 2016-17): 1 first-cycle degree programme in Psychological Science, 13 second-cycle degrees (two of which are held in English and French), 20 PhDs programmes entirely held in English and a total number of 17 master's programmes (which are partially taught in English<sup>35</sup>). In addition, the University provides over 400 course units in English, which are "aimed at both its students who wish to improve their language skills and students participating in Erasmus and other exchange programmes<sup>36</sup>". These are interesting results, if compared to the number of study programmes that were delivered in English in 2014-2015. In fact, there were only 9 second-cycle degrees and 9 ETPs at PhD level (Helm report 2015). Looking at Table 3, there is a clear illustration of the 13 second-cycle studies offered across the University's eight Schools.

<b>Schools</b>	<b>No. of second-cycle degree programmes in English</b>	<b>Titles of second-cycle degree programmes</b>
Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine	4	Forest Science; Italian Food and Wine; Sustainable agriculture;

<sup>34</sup> "Lo sviluppo dell'offerta didattica in lingua veicolare, quale strumento destinato ad accrescere il potenziale di attrazione dell'Ateneo, rimane una delle linee strategiche della politica di internazionalizzazione dell'Università di Padova" Rapporto Nucleo di Valutazione 2015, available at: <http://www.unipd.it/nucleo/rapporti-annuali> (last accessed 03.01.2017)

<sup>35</sup> All figures concerning the number of ETPs cited in this paragraph were obtained from the University of Padova's annual Review 2015 (Nucleo di Valutazione), available at: <http://www.unipd.it/nucleo/rapporti-annuali> (last accessed 03.01.2017)

<sup>36</sup> Visit <http://en.didattica.unipd.it/catalogues> for the complete list of course units available across the University's eight Schools.

		Degree course track “Biotechnologies for food science” of the degree Biology applied for food security and nutrition.
Economics and Political Sciences	3	Business administration; Economics and finance; Human rights and multi-level governance;
Engineering	2	Environmental Engineering; Mathematical Engineering
Law	-	Only course units available
Human and cultural heritage	3	Local Development (In English and French)
Medicine	2	Medical Biotechnologies; Pharmaceutical Biotechnologies
Psychology	1	Cognitive neuroscience and Clinical Neuropsychology
Science	-	Only course units available

**Table 3.** *Second-cycle degree courses completely held in English in the academic year 2016-17<sup>37</sup>*

Interestingly, as observed in Costa and Coleman’s survey (2013), neither the Law School nor the Science School provide any ETPs, instead they offer single course units in English. Another interesting feature concerns the total number of course units offered by the University of Padova in the academic years respectively 2014-2015 and 2016-2017. By looking at the University’s website, I obtained a broad and yet clear overview of the current situation, which I would like to offer here, in Table 4. In detail, it is undeniable the University has revealed great commitment by increasing the number of EMI individual courses in each of its Schools. To give an example, the School of Engineering has increased its course units by nearly 39%, while the school of Agricultural Science increased by 48%; only the School of Law maintained more or less the same number, with overall 40 course units registered in 2016, with respect to the 32 course units reported in 2014. Interestingly enough, the School of Medicine has decreased the number of courses with 219 individual courses held in 2014-2015 in contrast with the 65 courses provided in 2016-2017.

<sup>37</sup> Information available the University’s website <http://www.unipd.it/en/educational-offer/second-cycle-degrees?tipo=LM> (last accessed 03.01.2017)

Schools	Total number of course units in the academic year 2014-2015	Total number of course units in the academic year 2016-2017
Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine	79	117
Economics and Political Sciences	104	120
Engineering	170	213
Law	32	40
Human and cultural heritage	128	138
Medicine	219	65
Psychology	59	89
Science	123	136
<b>Total</b>	<b>923</b>	<b>918</b>

**Table 4.** Educational offer 2016-2017, course units among the University of Padova Schools<sup>38</sup>

### 2.3.1 The University Language Centre and the International Relations Office

As far as a brief illustration of the current situation of EMI at the University of Padova is concerned, I would like to move on to explain how the University Language Centre (CLA) and the International Relations Office are connected with EMI. Thus, in this subchapter I will offer some practical information that is useful in order to understand the context in which the idea of the LEAP project developed and how it was born.

Set up in 1997, the University Language Centre (CLA) aims to support members of the University with their language learning needs. The highly-qualified Language Centre staff boast years of experience with technology assisted language learning and the creation as well as use of interactive courses and resource materials<sup>39</sup>. One of the main objectives of the CLA, as is explicitly written on its webpage, is to support and encourage “autonomous learning, where learners take an active role in acquiring both language skills and knowledge”, the “courses aim to develop students’ abilities to experiment, self-assess and also work with others while establishing and reaching their own personal learning goals<sup>40</sup>”. In practice, to give you an example, the Centre provides courses and other forms of support in L2 Italian for incoming international students and researchers, it offers the teaching and testing of nine languages (including English, French, Spanish, German,

<sup>38</sup> University of Padova website <http://en.didattica.unipd.it/offerta/2016> (last accessed 03.01.2017)

<sup>39</sup> CLA website: <http://cla.unipd.it/en/about-us/> (last accessed 07.01.2017)

<sup>40</sup> Quoted at: CLA website: <http://cla.unipd.it/en/about-us/> (last accessed 07.01.2017)

Russian and Portuguese) for mobility programmes or outgoing students (Dalziel forthcoming). Furthermore, it offers short courses of Arabic for students, lecturers and members of the administrative staff. In the 2016-2017 academic year, in collaboration with the Doctoral Degrees – PhD Office, the Centre is providing 6 courses of Academic English for doctoral students at the University of Padova (31st series). Moreover, the CLA recently organized a project for members of the University’s administrative staff involved in internationalisation aiming to develop English-language support. As Dalziel, the former Head of the Centre, points out (forthcoming), the CLA, which is sensitive to changes in the student make-up and language needs, has always tried to propose initiatives and courses aimed to meet the various University’s needs. Thus, in this respect, one might say that it is not of any surprise if it had such a fundamental role in the organization of the LEAP project and as a direct consequence, in the development of EMI support at the University of Padova. Similarly, Dalziel explains that: “it is thus perfectly in line with the Centre’s activity to be actively engaged in the process of EMI introduction, offering support based on its great wealth of experience in language teaching” (Dalziel forthcoming).

The Language Centre of Padova University is one of the first centres in Italy to have run this kind of project and established a support system for lecturers teaching through English (Helm, Dalziel & Guarda 2015 final Report<sup>41</sup>). The idea of supporting lecturers started during the academic year 2011-2012, when the Centre administrative staff noted an increasingly number of requests concerning the need of courses for lecturers teaching in English. Hence, an experimental 30-hour course was set up: it was entitled “Content Teaching in English” and held by Suzanne Cloke, a Language Centre teacher; it “involved fifteen lecturers from a range of disciplines who had already taught in English or who were expecting to teach a course in English during the following academic year” (Helm, Dalziel & Guarda 2015 final Report). Overall, the course received extremely positive informal feedbacks, which confirmed its usefulness. It was in this context that the International Relations Office entered the scene; indeed, it approached the CLA in order to encourage the development of the course and to adopt “a more systematic look at possible EMI support for lecturers” (Helm, Dalziel & Guarda 2015 final Report). In 2012, the International Relations Office obtained University funding and asked to Dalziel, who

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<sup>41</sup> Available online at: <http://cla.unipd.it/centro/progetti/progetto-leap/> (last accessed 08.01.2017)

at the time was the CLA deputy Head, and her colleague Francesca Helm to present a “wide-ranging and comprehensive project for the provision of EMI support at the University of Padova” (Dalziel forthcoming). Thus, the idea of the LEAP project (Learning English for Academic Purposes) was born and before the beginning of the academic year 2013-2014 it was launched. As I will later explain in greater detail, the first edition of the project had two main objectives (Helm and Guarda 2015: 359):

- Identifying the needs, concerns and expectations of lecturers involved in EMI at the University;
- Offering professional development and support for lecturers who held/were going to hold courses in English;

Thus, it is clear that the University Language Centre aims to promote a project, whose ultimate aim is to propose a medium-long term strategy to support EMI and the University of Padova (Helm, Dalziel & Guarda 2015). Worth mentioning is the fact that, overall, EMI support at the University of Padova was the result of both a bottom-up and top-down processes. As I mentioned above, the very first Language Centre encounter with EMI occurred during the above mentioned academic year 2011-2012, when many lecturers approached the CLA asking for courses supporting them in teaching in English. Hence, in that case, the lecturers were those who acted as agents, while in the case of the LEAP project “the agency shifted to the university administration with ‘institutional actors’ (Dafouz and Smit 2014: 11)” (Dalziel forthcoming). As Dalziel explains: “the LEAP project “represents an example of a ‘top-down’ approach to innovation and change in language education” (forthcoming). I am highlighting this because when I analysed Umeå University *Language Policy*, I noticed that although the University provided guidelines concerning how to implement EMI, there was no information available explaining how to activate lecturer training courses. In other words, there was neither a specific project nor a long-term strategy organized at University level. This instead is a goal that the CLA attempts to achieve with the LEAP project in all its various aspects.

Before moving on to the next section, there is another important element to be discussed. In general terms, it could be said that a language centre plays a very important role because, at many universities, it is in charge of the provision of student and sometimes lecturer language support (Wherter *et al* 2014). However, there is an ongoing debate on



whether language proficiency has to be developed with the methodological and intercultural aspects of teaching or not. To put it in another way, much attention has been drawn to the question concerning which type of content the lecturers training courses should present. Experts like Tange (2010: 142) observe that the more lecturers are experienced in EMI, the more likely they are to point “to cultural diversity as the main problem –and potential resource– in the multicultural classroom”. Hence experienced lecturers’ priorities appear to be more of a pedagogical and intercultural nature, whereas those who are new to EMI have mainly linguistic issues. Along similar lines, Tatzl (2011 in Wherter *et al* 2014: 447) makes it clear that teaching in EMI contexts: “rests on three pillars: language proficiency, effective lecturing behaviour and personal attitude”, recommendations that in Tatzl’s view should also include the methodological aspect. This point was made by Ball and Lindsay (2013 in Doiz *et al* 2015) in their study conducted at the UBC, where lecturers appreciated the opportunity to have their methodological possibilities increased and their language skills improved. Likewise, Dearden and Macaro<sup>42</sup> (2016: 470) echo the previous literature and show that among the lecturers surveyed in their small-scale study, only a few acknowledge that: “the idea that EMI was not simply a matter of translating course material and presentation slides from L1 to L2 and/or that it might require a more interactive pedagogy to ensure comprehension”; yet, no comprehensive training was offered in the universities they taught in.

Thus, from a more practical perspective, it seems that this combination of English-medium pedagogy courses and language support is not contemplated by most of European HEIs. For instance, one should look at the already mentioned research conducted by O’Dowd on university practices in EMI training in the academic year 2014-2015. He shows that among the 70 institutions surveyed, 77% provided courses which only focused on the development of lecturers’ language skills and less than a half of universities offered courses dealing with education methodology. According to O’Dowd, indeed, the absence of bilingual methodology was to be related to the overall belief that “in university education language proficiency in itself is sufficient for teachers to teach subjects through another language” (O’Dowd 2015: 8). Similarly, Costa and Coleman (2013) report that, of the universities they surveyed, only a total of 8% said they also provided

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<sup>42</sup> It was a small-scale study investigating the attitudes of university teachers engaged in teaching their academic subject through the medium of English in Austria, Italy and Poland.

methodological training; although the study needs for updating, it is quite clear that the question regarding the content of the training courses should not be taken for granted as it seems that only a few universities provide a complete lecturers programme.

I would say that the University of Padova represents a positive example showing how this issue has been successfully developed. In this regard, I would like to mention what Pittarello, counsellor for Higher Education projects and International Relation Officer at the University of Padova, said about her experience. In detail, she observes interestingly that there is a widespread trend, which sees many European HEIs shifting their focus from (in Ackerley, Dalziel *et al* forthcoming):

[...] the language competences/linguistic training of their (international relations) staff – who is increasingly confronted with the challenges posed by dealing with an international audience – to a wider and more comprehensive training, which focusses on developing an intercultural mindset in its staff. I welcome this trend with special pleasure, as it all returns to the two aspects I have always been fascinated with, that is language and culture, and which led me to become a conference interpreter and now to be proud to work as International Relations Officer for the University of Padova.

Undoubtedly, the University of Padova made a step forward: thanks to the support provided by its Language Centre for the lecturers involved in EMI, it became clear that teaching methodology and language support were inexorably linked. For instance, the LEAP project focused on both and it “represented the very first opportunity to reflect collectively on their [lecturers] own university teaching together with peers from different disciplinary areas” (Helm, Dalziel & Guarda 2015). Let us now move to the section that follows, where I will provide further details about LEAP.

## **2.4 The LEAP project in its early stages**

As underlined in the previous sections, the University of Padova was one of the first Italian institution to provide such EMI lecturer training. The LEAP Project (*Learning English for Academic Purposes*), was designed with the aim of offering to lecturers practical support as well as a research dimension (Guarda and Helm forthcoming). In the next lines, I will give some practical information about LEAP 2013-2014 by briefly outlining the findings presented by Helm, Dalziel and Guarda (2015) in their final Report and by Guarda and Helm in their book chapter entitled “A survey of lecturers’ needs and feedback on EMI training” (forthcoming). Then, I will focus on LEAP 2015-2016, which is the object of the present study.

The first LEAP Project, which was launched in 2013-2014, was a pilot project activated by the Language Centre and funded by the University of Padova thanks to the encouragement and the financial support of the International Relation Office. Basically, the role of the Language Centre was to present the International Relations Office with a comprehensive project for the provision of lecturers’ professional development and EMI support (Dalziel forthcoming). Professor Dalziel, who at the time was deputy Head of the CLA, in collaboration with her colleague Helm developed four different options that could be adopted as long term strategies for the future. These were structured as follows:

- Personalized one-to-one advising sessions referred as “Language Advising” service;
- 9-day residential Summer School in Venice, on the island of San Servolo;
- 100-hour Blended course (60 hours face to face; 40 hours online) taught over a period of 5 months;
- Two-week intensive course in University College Dublin Applied Language Centre;

However, of these, the last one was not to be organized by the CLA since it involved an already existing two-week intensive course held in Dublin University and specifically designed for lecturers in EMI (Helm, Dalziel & Guarda final Report 2015). Overall, it should be stressed the that the main objective of these courses was to foster reflection and discussion on how teaching methodology might change when switching to another

language, rather than prescribing what specific methodologies should be adopted. In addition to these four options, as Dalziel explains (forthcoming), a one-year research assistant, Marta Guarda, and a final conference (which took place in December 2014) were included; moreover, a final report was written by Helm, Dalziel and Guarda (2015), who evaluated thoroughly the project in order to obtain an understanding of the lecturers' experiences and to discover their concerns or specific needs. Overall, among all the lecturers representing the eight Schools of the University, of the 115 who had applied for the LEAP, 70 were selected. This relatively limited number of places available was due to the International Relations Office primary interest in improving the quality of existing EMI courses; therefore, the priority was given to lecturers who were already involved in EMI (Guarda and Helm forthcoming).

The final evaluation consisted in collecting the lecturers' feedback on each LEAP activity by means of questionnaires and/or semi-structured interviews. Thus, both a quantitative and a qualitative approach were adopted; moreover, a thematic analysis with the support of the software NVivo was extremely helpful and responded to the researchers' need to "explore and interpret the experiences and perception of the lectures involved in the LEAP project" (Guarda and Helm forthcoming). Looking at the overall level of satisfaction that the LEAP had among its various participants, despite the initial difficulties, it was both successful and positive. The feedback received, certainly helped the Language Centre, not only because it shed the light on the options that needed to be reformulated, but it was also encouraging as it highlighted the important role that LEAP played for lecturers involved with EMI. Furthermore, the final Report (2015) underlines that expectations were largely met; the only exception was to be related to the Dublin course, "partly due to the fact that on arriving in Dublin participants were presented with a course outline which was quite different from the one they had been shown in Padova<sup>43</sup>". One of the most important outcomes, which has been highlighted both in Helm, Dalziel and Guarda final Report (2015) and in Guarda and Helm book chapter (forthcoming), was the creation of a *Community of Practice*. In other words, this instance was meaningful as lecturers could share their experience and exchange opinions as well as support. It appeared that lecturers, in their comments, clearly expressed the benefits "they had gained

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<sup>43</sup> Quoted from the final Report (2015) available online at: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B0OX2RoLSSyzOGNqbzlxOW5mMWs/view> (last accessed 14.01.2017)

from collaborating together, building relationships, and learning from each other. [...] As a result, at the end of the courses several lecturers expressed their desire to cultivate the community further, for instance by promoting what one of them called “a community of internationalisation” (Guarda and Helm forthcoming). In addition to this, as Guarda and Helm (forthcoming) point out, lecturers were satisfied with the LEAP activities: firstly, because they helped them with a more conscious use of technology in the class, a strategic tool, which ensures understanding and would increase students’ participation; secondly, these activities encouraged a more student-centred learning by promoting student research and interaction; thirdly, the project overall helped to enhance lecturers’ awareness of “their responsibility of their responsibility to make sure that the contents of their courses come across in the classroom” (Guarda and Helm forthcoming).

Looking at the other side of the coin, however, it could be said that one of the main shortcomings was time management: the organisation proved to be time-consuming, and therefore it made it difficult for some lecturers to fully participate in certain activities (such as the meetings organised during the “Language Advising” service) due to their many academic commitments. In detail, as is written in the final report<sup>44</sup>, sometimes “appointments were put off for two months, reflecting the workload of the lecturers at peak times in the academic year”. Additionally, as I will better explain in section 2.4.1, some activities like the Summer School in Dublin, turned out to be rather expensive for the CLA “for it to be proposed as a permanent, regular offer” (Helm, Dalziel and Guarda 2015). Thus, the CLA decided that the future Summer and Winter Schools should be held in Padova instead.

To conclude briefly, I would say that it should not be of any surprise if the LEAP project 2013-2014 obtained such promising feedback from all the participants. This, indeed, clearly show the commitment made by the Language Centre of the University of Padova, including the staff, the advisers and instructors who took part in the project, in order to offer the best support of the University lecturers. Let us now move on to the last section of this Second Chapter, by looking more closely at the LEAP project 2015-2016.

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<sup>44</sup> Final report web edition (2015), available at: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B0OX2RoLSSyzOGNqbzlxOW5mMWs/view> (last accessed 15.01.2017)

### **2.4.1 The LEAP project 2015-2016**

Let us now focus on the LEAP project 2015-2016 by describing the various activities and initiatives that were organised by the CLA for Padova University lecturers involved in EMI. As a result of the successful LEAP activated during the academic year 2013-2014, the Language Centre promoted a new edition of the project, which took place in 2015-2016. First of all, I would like to make it clear that the activities formulated by the CLA were inspired by those organized in the 2013-2014 edition and a detailed description of each option's objectives can be found in the CLA website<sup>45</sup>. Overall, lecturers could choose only one of the four activities offered, except for the workshops as they were available for all lecturers throughout the whole duration of the project. The activities can be formulated as follows:

- Lecturer Support Service;
- “Teaching and Communicating in English” course;
- Winter School 2015;
- Workshops with national and international EMI expert.

The first of the four options is entitled Lecturer Support Service in order to distinguish it from the “Language Advising Service”; an initiative specifically designed for students, which is also offered at the CLA. The Lecturer Support Service maintained its one-to-one formula so as to provide a personalised support for 20 lecturers, who teach or will teach in English. The utility of this service is that there are various issues (such as teaching styles and EMI) available and it is up to each lecturer to choose which one to be discussed in more detail, basing on his/her needs. Specifically, the service has the function of helping lecturers with their language competence, raising awareness of the strategies that could be adopted to encourage students' participation in class as well as to facilitate the comprehension; moreover, it addresses issues that are of a more practical nature regarding, for example, the suitable materials to be used in class. The Lecturer Support Service comprises three advising sessions: an initial meeting, lesson observation and a follow-up meeting (Helm, Dalziel and Guarda final Report 2015). During the

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<sup>45</sup> More information available at: <http://cla.unipd.it/centro/progetti/progetto-leap/> (last accessed 15.01.2017)

introductory meeting, lecturers are given the chance to discuss, with an instructor, their expectations and specific personal needs concerning both methodological and linguistic issues. Then, an advisor observes the lecturer lesson to give constructive, non-judgemental and helpful feedback; finally, during a follow-up session each lecturer has the possibility to discuss, in greater detail, very individual issues concerning the lesson observed.

The second option corresponds to the former Blended Course and it came to be called “Teaching and Communicating in English”. This choice was made since, in the previous edition, most participants found it hard to complete the online component of the course (Dalziel forthcoming); thus, the Blended Course was replaced by 40-hour and then 30-hour face-to-face course, which took place over a three-month period from April 2016 to June of the same year. The “Teaching and Communicating in English” course was available for 20 lecturers having an overall B2 level of English. Held by an internal professor, two were the course main objectives<sup>46</sup>:

1. Helping lecturers to develop their language and communicative skills in order to teach in English;
2. Providing lecturers with the helpful tools to explore different teaching methods and approaches.

Additionally, as well as pronunciation and intonation, the course covered topics such as student testing and informal interaction in and outside the classroom. More information will be available on this course in the next chapters, where I will present my research findings.

An important initiative organised by the CLA was the Winter School, which took place from the 2<sup>nd</sup> to the 6<sup>th</sup> of February 2015. Unlike the previous Summer School held in San Servolo island, the CLA staff proposed the University of Padova itself as the location for the initiative. Basically, as Dalziel underlines (forthcoming), the point was that: “despite the advantages to having residential courses, such as the collegiate and relaxed atmosphere created with lecturers away from the call of duty, the costs and organisational duties of off-site courses would have been hard to meet on a long-term basis”. Thus, the

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<sup>46</sup> My translation from: <http://cla.unipd.it/attivita/docenti/teaching-english/> (last accessed 15.01.2017)

new formula consisted in a 5-day intensive course, with 30-hour tuition in all; the sessions were taught by internal Language Centre teaching staff and two guest tutors, namely Brian Conry from Dublin Trinity College and Robert O'Dowd from Universidad de León in Spain, who are both experts in the field of internationalisation, English-Medium Instruction and Academic English. Moreover, 14 local and 4 international lecturers attended the sessions (Dalziel forthcoming). As for the entry requirements, participants had to present at least a B2 level of English according to the Common European Framework of Reference. There were two main goals of the Winter School: firstly, “to develop lecturers’ language and communicative skills and build their confidence in teaching through English; secondly, it was meant to stimulate participants to share, explore and apply methodologies for teaching and evaluating students through English” (Winter School February 2015). The Winter School also included a series of participatory workshops, which entailed the use of a wide range of interactive teaching methods. Feedback from the Winter School at the date of Helm, Dalziel and Guarda (2015) evaluation was not collected; however, in their final report, it was clearly written that informal comments highlighted a high degree of satisfaction among the participants. Hopefully, my evaluation will provide further information about this course and how lecturers welcomed it.

Finally, two-monthly three-hour workshops were offered starting from April 2016. They were open to a maximum of 25 lecturers of the University of Padova involved in EMI, with the aim of covering topics such as introducing your course, pronunciation, student-teacher interaction and assessment in EMI. I would like to add that these workshops seemed to be tailored for all those lecturers “who could not commit to a more time-consuming option” (Dalziel forthcoming); as a matter of fact, this proved to be a good solution, especially if one looks at the LEAP 2013-2014, time management became one of the most problematic aspect because of lecturers’ various academic commitments. Finally, at the time of writing, there are two workshops available, which will take place on the 30<sup>th</sup> January and the 1<sup>st</sup> February, held by Professor Ernesto Macaro –whose study in collaboration with Dearden (2016) was mentioned before– the Director of the Centre for Research and Development on English- Medium Instruction at the University of Oxford.





## **Chapter 3 Methodology and Data collection**

Having discussed all the elements of the theoretical framework in Chapter One and Chapter Two, and having offered an insight into the vast world of EMI both in northern and southern Europe, I now would like to move on to Chapter Three. As mentioned above, my role is to evaluate the LEAP project 2015-2016 from lecturers and staff perspectives in order to understand not only whether this project has been successful in providing lecturers with both language and methodological supports, but also to provide possible solutions to the problems and concerns raised by the lecturers themselves. Hence, to conduct my research, I will put into practice the knowledge I gained during my stay at Umeå University. As I will explain in the section that follows, I attended a 15-credit Evaluation course, which was held by Professor Ingrid Schild. This course provided me with useful tools in order to be able to identify different evaluation models and to design a programme evaluation plan for a specific purpose; moreover, it helped me to understand the role that evaluation plays in our society and the practical problems that an evaluator has to deal with. In addition to this, in my research I will use the Helm, Dalziel and Guarda Final Report (2015) as a starting point; the reason is that this report could be considered as a sort of evaluation to the extent to which it sought to gain an overall understanding of how the LEAP project 2013-2014 managed to help lecturers who were involved in EMI at the University of Padova. Thus, Chapter Three is structured as follows: firstly, I deemed it appropriate to include a brief paragraph to introduce the topic of evaluation by explaining what evaluation means and its main features. Thus, it will be easier for the reader to understand the reason why I chose to apply some aspects of evaluation in my study. Secondly, I will outline the procedures and the methods adopted and finally, I will report the data collected by offering an in-depth analysis.

### **3.1 A brief introduction to Evaluation as practice**

Before moving to the core of this section, I would like to make it clear that I will only focus on specific aspects concerning the vast topic of evaluation as they turned out to be extremely useful for the aim of the present study. The Evaluation course that I attended in January 2016 was divided into two modules: the first one, from a more practical point of view, introduced different evaluation models and guided students in designing

programme evaluations for specific purposes. The final assignment consisted in a group work aimed to task students' skills and abilities to design a programme evaluation, which was based on a specific case provided by the professor. The second module, instead, had to do with meta-evaluations: it guided students in the analysis of different forms of evaluation use and helped them to understand how to evaluate evaluations. Personally, I found the overall course to be extremely useful not only because I learned how to undertake a programme evaluation, but I also gained a deeper understanding of the various methods that should be adopted when conducting an evaluation. In this regard, I would like to make it clear to the reader that, although research and evaluation share similarities, they still differ in many ways. On the one hand, they use the same methods for data collection and analysis and they attempt to find causes of problems and possible solutions; on the other hand, research aims to develop new knowledge, whereas evaluation arrives at a judgement as it seeks to “determining merit, worth, or significance” (Scriven and Coryn 2008: 92) of something (such as a policy, an intervention or a programme). Hence, in the next lines, I will briefly present the concept of evaluation, I will outline the main steps to be followed in order to conduct a programme evaluation successfully; in particular, I will focus on two phases: the choice of the evaluation questions and the methods. In order to provide a comprehensive overview, I will draw mainly on the work of Carol Weiss (1998), a prominent evaluator and professor at Harvard University, and Peter Rossi whose book *Evaluation: A Systematic Approach* (Rossi *et al* 2004) has become the classic text in the field of evaluation of social programmes.

To start with, before explaining what programme evaluation is, I would like to give a brief definition of the terms *policy* and *programme* as they are two elements with which evaluation deals. As for the former, I would use the words of Weiss (1998: 7) as she explains that “a policy is an officially accepted statement of objectives tied to a set of activities that are intended to realize the objectives in a particular jurisdiction”. Thus, policy evaluations “applies evaluation principles and methods to examine the content, implementation or impact of a policy”<sup>47</sup>. Instead, programmes could be defined as (European Commission Directorate General for the Budget 2004: 16):

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<sup>47</sup> Quoted at: <https://www.cdc.gov/injury/pdfs/policy/Brief%201-a.pdf> (last accessed 01.02.2017)

[...] sets of actions delimited in time and resources, which may encompass several different projects, measures and processes directed towards the achievement of specific objectives; moreover, programmes have a definite time schedule and budget.

The point here is that these definitions suggest that evaluation is an active part of policy and programming processes. Evaluation is usually undertaken in order to feed into decision making, as Weiss (1993: 94) points out: “the policies and programmes with which evaluation deals are the creatures of political decisions” and evaluation has the role to influence decision making by leading to the improvement of programmes and policies. Thus, a possible definition of evaluation is the one provided by Weiss<sup>48</sup> (1998):

[...] the systematic assessment of the operation and/or the outcomes of a program or policy, compared to a set of explicit or implicit standards, as a means of contributing to the improvement of the program or policy.

In other words, Weiss (1998) supports the idea that evaluations are important as they give directions to policies and practices and they ensure that the evaluation itself will be able to improve future programmes. Not surprisingly, she further explains that (Weiss 1972 in Msila and Setlhako 2003: 323) the purpose of evaluation is a *process* “to measure the effects of a program against the goals it set out to accomplish as a means of contributing to subsequent decision making about the program and improving future programming”. Along similar lines, Rossi *et al* (2004: 2) explain that evaluation can be defined as a social science activity that is directed at: “collecting, analyzing, interpreting, and communicating information about the workings and effectiveness of social programs”. Basically, both Weiss (1998) and Rossi *et al* (2004), understand evaluation use as a way to investigate and assess the effectiveness of interventions in order to improve social conditions. Overall, despite the different nuances, these definitions are important as they help us to understand that overall an evaluation:

- Should have a **purpose**, it should not be a goal in itself;

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<sup>48</sup> From *The Evaluation Exchange*, Volume IV, Number 2, 1998 pp.4. Retrieved from: <http://www.hfrp.org/var/hfrp/storage/original/application/5a4d2e4b3f79525ef39c5e31d2e8efbf.pdf> (last accessed 31.01.2017)

- There should be a potential for **change** in connection with the evaluation;
- Evaluation should be more than descriptive – it should also be **analytical**;
- Evaluation can serve as a **channel of communication** between evaluand and evaluator.

The purposes for undertaking an evaluation are multiple. Overall, evaluation helps programmes or policies to work better: aid decisions whether a programme or a policy should be continued, expanded, improved or even cut (Rossi *et al* 2004); as it is stated in the EU Commission document entitled *Evaluating EU Activities* (2004), evaluations may contribute to the design of the intervention or to assist and report on the achievement of the intervention (i.e. its accountability, effectiveness or utility). Another purpose might be, for instance, to increase the effectiveness of programme management and administration as well as to help allocate resources to better programmes (Weiss 1972).

According to Radhakrishna and Relado (2009), one of the first steps to be made to conduct an evaluation is to obtain a clear understanding of the objectives of the programme to be evaluated; this understanding could help to identify and develop the purpose of the evaluation (i.e. programme improvement, justification or generation of new knowledge) and to formulate key questions for the study. As a matter of fact, this is considered to be one of the structuring phases of an evaluation because it helps to select the right type of data collection method. Indeed, well-crafted questions should “guide the systematic planning of research” and formulating the questions precisely “enables you to design a study with a good chance of answering the questions” (Light *et al* 1990: 13). The evaluation questions can be written in process form or in outcome form. Basically, this means that depending on the type of evaluation to be conducted, the questions assume different forms. To put it in another way, if an evaluator is conducting a process evaluation, which means that the evaluation purpose is to document a programme’s implementation (for instance by showing what are the practical problems encountered, looking at how the programme impact or outcome was achieved), the questions to be asked should be oriented to understand how well the programme is working. Instead, if the evaluator undertakes an outcome evaluation, it means that the evaluation is supposed “help to measure immediate changes brought about by the program” (Radhakrishna and Relado 2009: 2) and the questions addressed will be related to the possible changes in

results, effects or consequences of the programme being evaluated (look at Table 5, below).

<b>Evaluation Questions</b>	<b>What they measure</b>	<b>Why useful</b>	<b>Useful Methods</b>
<b>Process</b>	How well the program is working	Tells how well the plans developed are working	Quantitative Qualitative
	Is it reaching the intended people?	Identifies early any problems that occur in reaching the target population  Allows adjustments to be made before the problems become severe	Combination
<b>Outcome</b>	Helps to measure immediate changes brought about by the program	Allows for program modification in terms of materials, resource shifting, etc.	Quantitative Qualitative Combination
		Tells whether or not programs are moving in the right direction	

*Table 5. Summary of Process and Outcomes Evaluation Questions (Radhakrishna and Relado 2009: 2)*

The next critical step regards the methodology. Data collection is a very important phase and choosing the right method helps the evaluator to find interesting results; as Rossi *et al* (2004) suggest, methods not only have to offer meaningful answers, but they should also be practical. In detail, I am referring to qualitative and quantitative evaluation methods. The former, which is actually one of the most common, is an effective approach that can be specifically useful in order to obtain a detailed and textured knowledge of the specific needs in question; such method, ranges in complexity and it goes from the use of various observation techniques, to interviews (which can be structured, semi-structured or unstructured) conducted with a few persons or a whole group. Interviews can be an extremely effective way to collect data because of their flexibility of inquiry, the attention to the meaning and perspectives of a programme's participants, and their dynamic account of development over time (Weiss 1998). Indeed, interviews often provide the evaluator with the richness of details or quotations, which captures the essence of the evaluation

(Weiss 1998). Moreover, qualitative methods “can also be used to answer questions relating to how satisfied people are with your program or what should be changed or improved” (Francisco *et al* 2001: 23). However, looking at the other side of the coin, there are several limitations: for instance, this method might be less systematic, findings are not always replicable and generalisations to a broad group of people might be limited (Francisco *et al* 2010).

Instead, using Francisco’s *et al* (2010) words, a quantitative evaluation method “can be used to answer a number of questions about how much change occurred as a result of an intervention”. The results obtained can be ideally expressed in numbers, which means that it might be easier for the evaluator to compare them in the analysis phase. Moreover, a quantitative approach gives the evaluator the opportunity to collect data from a large number of people, which consequently might help to obtain a greater understanding and to make a statistically significant difference (Francisco *et al* 2010). On the other hand, one limitation can be found in terms of new knowledge provision; indeed, a quantitative evaluation method “can only prove what one already believes”, that is to say, it confirms one’s hypotheses without necessarily adding extra information. Overall, according to Weiss (1998) and Rossi *et al* (2014) the combination of both quantitative and qualitative methods, is often one of the best way to conduct an effective evaluation.

Finally, there is another important aspect to be taken into consideration before moving to the next section. Specifically, I am referring to the stakeholders, who are the essential components of a programme evaluation. Indeed, as Rossi *et al* (2014) explain, the stakeholders are those individuals engaged in the roles and activities that constitute a programme. In other words, they are (Rossi *et al* 2010: 55):

[...] those who commission the evaluation, called the evaluation sponsor, and [...] other individuals, groups, or organizations that have a significant interest in how well a program functions.

Clearly, in the context of programme evaluation, the evaluator should interact with the programme stakeholders by guiding as well as involving them continuously and actively in the process of the evaluation (Reineke 1991). Similarly, Weiss (1998) suggests that the stakeholders play a fundamental role as they clarify the possible evaluator’s doubts and eventually they can make effective use of the evaluation findings. In this regard, I would

like to clarify that in my study I will also mention the term *stakeholders* but in slightly different terms (see Section 3.2.1). The point here is that, I will not undertake a proper evaluation because, as the reader might have observed, evaluations are generally conducted for large-scale studies, which involve a broader evaluation target and clearly this is not the case. Instead, I will use what I have learned in the Evaluation course (the methods and the terminology) in order to understand whether or not the LEAP 2015-2016 has been positively welcomed by lecturers and whether it supported lecturers successfully in teaching through English. Therefore, as I will explain in the next section, in my study I considered all the possible stakeholders and I included the lecturers who took part in the LEAP project 2015-2016 as their feedback is an essential component for the success of my study.

To conclude, I would also like to point out that it is difficult to explain, in a few lines, all the other important phases (planning the research design, data collection and findings dissemination) that an evaluator should follow when undertaking an evaluation. The topic of evaluation is vast, rich and it includes other issues that in this context would be too specific. Thus, here, I attempted to outline the main features of evaluation that I found to be the most useful and helpful for the purpose of my research. In the next section, I will describe in greater detail the procedures and the methods adopted in order to conduct my research.

## **3.2 Evaluation design**

This section is concerned with presenting the evaluation design; to be precise, I will explain clearly the evaluation scope and the questions I asked myself and, which this study seeks to answer. In additionally, I will offer an in-depth explanation regarding the methods I adopted to collect data. Since this study includes four different groups of stakeholders (see Section 3.2.1), I will specifically refer to the methods I used for each of them. Hopefully, this will make it easier for the reader to understand the data analysis phase.

### **3.2.1 The Stakeholders**

As explained in the previous section, in an evaluation context, generally the stakeholders are those individuals who explicitly ask for an evaluation to be conducted as they have a



clear interest in a programme and its outcomes (Rossi *et al* 2004). Moreover, stakeholders can be both directly or indirectly involved in the programme and it is the role of the evaluator to understand their specific interests and their concerns about a certain programme. In other words, involving the possible stakeholders in an evaluation, is useful because an evaluator can ask them questions about the knowledge they have of a programme or about the programme implementation difficulties. In this regard, I would like to make it clear that in my study the term *stakeholders* includes to all the individuals who directly or indirectly participated in the LEAP project 2015-2016, which means that not only have I included the stakeholders who were most interested in obtaining feedback on the LEAP project's overall usefulness and effectivity, but also those who actively participated in the project. In brief, I am referring to four groups of key stakeholders:

1. The lecturers who took part in the LEAP project 2015-2016 initiatives;
2. The staff at the University Language Centre (CLA);
3. The staff at the International Relations Office;
4. The LEAP instructors who held the various LEAP project 2015-2016 initiatives.

I would like to point out here that when I mention the various initiatives offered by the LEAP project 2015-2016, I am referring to those listed in Chapter Two. In other words, the activities were the Lecturer Support Service, the "Teaching and Communicating in English" course, the Winter school 2015 and the various workshops with national and international EMI experts.

Returning briefly to the stakeholders: the first group is made up of the 193 lecturers who participated in the project's initiatives; as mentioned above, their feedback is important as this project was particularly tailored to their possible needs and it aimed to offer EMI provision, which could somehow boost their confidence and help them to hold lectures in English. Furthermore, I included the group of LEAP instructors. They play an important role because they are the first ones to have a stake in the project as they organised and designed the LEAP project initiatives and activities themselves; therefore, they needed this evaluation in order acquire an overall understanding of whether the LEAP project 2015-2016 went well or not. Furthermore, I included the staff from the CLA and the International Relations Office as possible stakeholders. Basically, I chose

the former as the staff provide administrative and technical support for the LEAP project. For instance, this staff has the task of advertising the project to the University lecturers; additionally, they deal with important administrative issues such as the payment of the national and international EMI experts who are hosted by the University to hold workshops for both the LEAP instructors and the lecturers. Furthermore, I had the opportunity to talk to Roberta Rasa, who is the Administrative Head of the International Relations Office. I deemed it appropriate to consider the International Relations Office as a stakeholder because, as explained in detail in Chapter Two, it provided the financial support for the LEAP 2013-2014 and therefore it participated, although indirectly, to the activation of the project itself. Overall, I would like to make it clear that both the feedback collected from the working staff at the University Language Centre and at the International Relations Office, is important as it might help to build a more rounded knowledge of the LEAP project. Let us now move to the core of this chapter: the evaluation scope, questions and method.

### **3.2.2 The Evaluation Scope, Questions and Method**

The scope of this study is to evaluate the LEAP project 2015-2016 from lecturer and staff perspectives. In detail, the aim is to understand whether this project has been successful in providing lecturers, who were and are involved with EMI, with both a language and methodological support. In addition, my study attempts to provide suggestions and possible solutions, which might be helpful for future LEAP editions. In order to obtain an overall idea of the situation, the data that I analysed were not only collected from the feedback of the lecturers and the staff (at the University Language Centre and the International Relations Office), but also from another group of stakeholders (the LEAP instructors) and from the initiatives I took part in, which were somehow tied to EMI at the University of Padova. For instance, I participated to the round table meeting entitled “Opportunità e limiti dell’inglese come lingua veicolare – Critical issues in English-medium Instruction”, which took place on February 2017 and was chaired by Professor Fiona Dalziel. This meeting was interesting as it enhanced the discussion about EMI at Padova University and saw the participation of the International Relations Office Pro-rector, called Alessandro Paccagnella, Daniela Mapelli who is the Pro-Rector for

teaching, various University lecturers, and the Oxford University EMI expert Ernesto Macaro.

Overall, I would like to remind the reader that this study might be considered as a sort of evaluation to the extent it both seeks to determine the effectiveness of LEAP and at the same time, it attempts to develop new knowledge about EMI at the University of Padova. Indeed, from a broader perspective, this study will contribute to the large body of research conducted in the field of EMI at tertiary education level, where heated debates have arisen regarding whether EMI could benefit universities or not.

Thus, my overarching evaluation questions are:

- What are the lecturers' overall perceptions and attitudes towards EMI and, in particular, towards the LEAP project 2015-2016?
- Which aspects of the LEAP project 2015-2016 are linked to positive outcomes and which are linked to negative outcomes?
- In which way, can LEAP be improved?

To answer to these evaluation questions a combination of a quantitative and qualitative approach to data collection was adopted. I chose this type of approach because of its many advantages; indeed, a multivariate method is considered the best solution in order to acquire in-depth knowledge of the way a project or a programme is working (Weiss 1972). Thus, on the one hand, the qualitative approach responded to my need to gain a rounded and detailed knowledge of how the LEAP project 2015-2016 worked; moreover, it shed light on the activities and initiatives of the project that, according to lecturers should be further developed or improved. On the other hand, a quantitative approach, as it is generally well-suited for studies aiming to collect more comparable and generalizable data, enabled me to yield more objective information concerning lecturers' perceptions of the LEAP project 2015-2016 and their overall attitudes towards EMI.

<b>Stakeholders</b>	<b>Approach</b>	<b>Methods</b>
Lecturers who participated in the LEAP project 2015-2016	Quantitative	Questionnaire Open-ended and close questions
Staff from the University Language Centre	Qualitative	Semi-structured Interviews
Staff from the International Relations Office	Qualitative	Semi-structured Interviews

**Table 6.** Summary of the methods adopted for data collection

As shown in Table 6, I chose to gather the lecturers' feedback by means of a questionnaire. I thought that this could be the best method to use for of two main reasons: firstly, since there were overall 193 lecturers who participated in the LEAP activities and initiatives, I had to choose a method which could help me to elicit information effectively and to compare them easily. Secondly, this study was somehow inspired by the one conducted by Helm, Dalziel and Guarda (2015) on the LEAP project 2013-2014. That research included the use of questionnaires to assess for instance, whether lecturers found each activity of the project useful or not; similarly, I chose to maintain the same approach in order to be more coherent and, hopefully, to be able to compare data. Hence, the questionnaire was based to a small extent on Helm, Dalziel and Guarda's (2015) study, and in part was build ad hoc for this evaluation.

Since I was not familiar with questionnaire design, I followed the useful guidelines provided by Radhakrishna in his article entitled *Tips for Developing Questionnaires/Instruments* (2007). Designing a well-structured questionnaire takes time, especially because "not following appropriate and systematic procedures in questionnaire development, testing, and evaluation may undermine the quality and utilization of data" (Esposito 2002 in Radhakrishna 2007: 2). According to Radhakrishna (2007: 2), questionnaires should be valid, reliable as well as accurate, and understanding "the relationship of the level of measurment and the appropriateness of data analysis" is essential. Thus, taking into consideration Radhakrishna's (2007) guidelines, an online questionnaire was developed using MySurvio<sup>49</sup>. This could facilitate lecturers' busy

<sup>49</sup> Available in the Appendix

schedules as they could complete the form independently, anytime. The questionnaire was followed a piloted by a group of three lecturers, who participated in the previous LEAP project activities, including the ones offered in the 2015-2016 edition. The piloting turned out to be extremely useful as I had the chance to understand whether the questionnaire was clear, well-structured and easy to complete. Then, the final version of the questionnaire was elaborated and administered to the mailing list of the University lecturers, who participated in the LEAP project 2015-2016.

In practice, the evaluation questionnaire was anonymous and contained 18 questions with a combination of open (8) and closed (10) questions, including Linkert scale items. The language of the questionnaire was English, considering the English-only orientation of the courses where lecturers taught. Specifically, the questionnaire was structured in two parts. The first one was aimed at finding out information about lecturers' previous experience with EMI, whereas, the second part sought to investigate the lecturers' attitudes and perspective towards the LEAP project 2015-2016, including their overall level of satisfaction and their suggestions for future editions. The 8 open-ended answers to the questions were analysed using a thematic analysis. This method has been widely used in many studies regarding EMI (such as in Airey 2011; Helm and Guarda 2015; Guarda and Helm forthcoming) from lecturers' perspectives; especially, to analyse data collected from interviews. I chose to use thematic analysis not only because it supported the qualitative side of this evaluation, but also because it could help me to identify and group the themes that came up recurrently in each answer. In other words, my plan was first to copy in another document the various lecturers' thoughts and responses; then, I highlighted them by writing brief notes about the overall themes that were arose. Basically, as Bogdan and Biklen (1992: 145) suggest, this allowed me to work with data and to organize it in order to look for recurrent patterns, which might help me to "discover what it is important and what is to be learned".

As for the working staff at the University Language Centre and at the International Relations Office, I opted for a qualitative approach only. One of the most common methods used in a qualitative approach are interviews, which can have an unstructured, semi-structured or structured format (Gill *et al* 2008). Interviews, in fact, have been used effectively in various studies regarding EMI (Van der Worp *et al* 2014; Kuteeva and McGrath 2014; Werther *et al* 2014) as they allow the researcher to explore the

experiences, and the views of individuals (in this case those of lecturers directly involved with EMI) with the aim of providing a deeper understanding of matters that would not be obtained with a quantitative method only. Usually, semi-structured interviews consist of a number of key questions, which “help to define the areas to be explored, but also allows the interviewer or interviewee to diverge in order to pursue an idea or response in more detail” (Britten 1999 in Gill *et al* 2008). Hence, in my study, I chose to conduct four semi-structured interviews: firstly, to unearth detailed information regarding how the staff at the CLA and the International Relations Office consider the LEAP project overall; secondly, whether the staff encountered any difficulties during the project development. In detail, the interviews were conducted in Italian and the participants were: two members of the CLA administrative staff, namely Cristina Michelotto and Elisabetta Di Venere, and Caroline Clark, current Head of the Language Centre and LEAP instructor. Furthermore, I interviewed Roberta Rasa, who is the Administrative Head of the International Relations Office. In this regard, I would like to make it clear that before starting the interviews, I asked the participants if I could record them because I wanted to be more present during the conversations, without having to focus on writing.

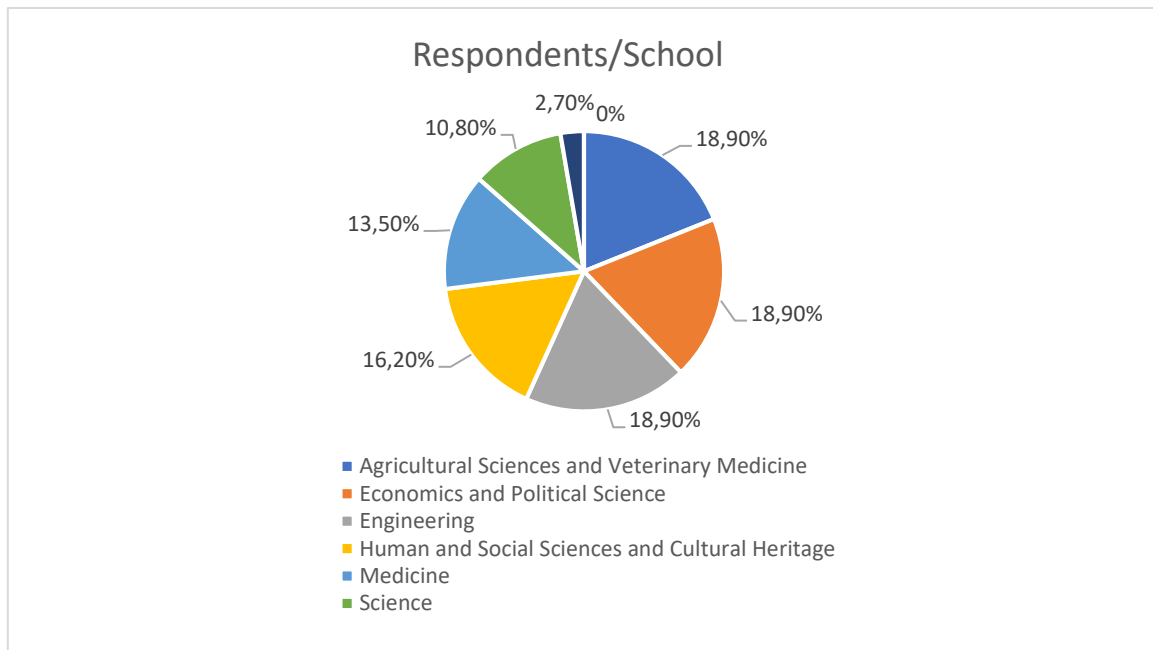
### **3.3 Findings and data analysis**

As far as the methods are concerned, this section is devoted to the presentation and the discussion of findings. Here, I will offer an overall and yet clear picture of the LEAP project 2015-2016 and the main issues concerning EMI that have been and, still are, widely discussed at the University of Padova. The point here is that the LEAP project turned out to be a way to enhance the discussion about EMI and certainly, it somehow helped to raise the awareness among the various University stakeholders. Hopefully, the outcomes of my data-analysis will help me to respond to the evaluation questions (section 3.2.2) about the LEAP project 2015-2016 from lecturers and staff perspectives. Before going in greater detail, I would like to make it clear that in this section I will discuss the results focusing on each group of stakeholders. In other words, I will start by reporting the feedback of the lecturers, followed by the one that of the staff at the CLA and International Relations Office.

### 3.3.1 Analysis of the lecturers' feedback

Here, I will report on the findings of the quantitative and qualitative analysis that I conducted based on the questionnaire answers of the lecturers who participated in the LEAP 2015-2016 initiatives. Firstly, I will present the results concerning the first part of the questionnaire; in other words, I will provide factual information regarding the lecturers' previous experience with EMI. Then, I will focus in somewhat greater detail on the second part of the questionnaire by outlining and discussing the lecturers' perspectives and feedback on LEAP. As indicated previously, the answers of the eight open-ended questions will be analysed using a thematic analysis, which means that I will group the themes that came up with a certain level of recurrence.

Unfortunately, the overall response to the survey was somewhat poor: of the 193 lecturers who were invited to answer the questionnaire, only 37 responded, which corresponds to 19%. Of these a total number of 26 taught at second-cycle degree level, one at single-cycle degree, 7 at first-cycle degree and 3 at doctoral level; moreover, of these, 4 lecturers taught in more than one degree cycle. Figure 3 below, provides an overview of the distribution of respondents organized by the University's eight Schools. It is clear that the majority of participants (18.9%) teach in the Schools of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine, Economics and Political Science as well as Engineering.



*Figure 3. Percentage of lecturers who answered the questionnaire organized by school*

### 3.3.1.1 Questionnaire outcomes and analysis: part I

#### *Lecturers' previous experience with EMI*

In asking how long lecturers have been involved in EMI, the overall distribution seemed varied. In fact, most of participants (18) responded they have taught through English for two and three years, 8 respondents said for less than one year, 4 answered they have been involved with EMI for more than five years and 3 participants for four years.

When I asked to outline whether their previous experience with EMI was positive or negative: most of respondents (94.3%) asserted that it was positive, only 5.7% said it was negative and two lecturers did not answer the question. In detail, those who described the experience in positive terms used the terms such as *stimulating*, *challenging*, *useful*, *insightful* and *positive*. This echoes what Helm and Guarda (2015: 361) wrote in their paper “Improvisation is not allowed in a second language”. Indeed, they reported that lecturers who were involved with EMI at the University of Padova, overall showed a positive attitude towards EMI as in many described their experience using “adjectives such as *exciting*, *stimulating*, *rewarding*, *interesting* and *positive*”. Based on the comments of lecturers who commented positively on their experience with EMI, I would say that there are three important themes to be highlighted:

- Theme 1: EMI as a challenge
- Theme 2: EMI impact
- Theme 3: Cultural background

I will now describe each of the four themes providing direct quotes from the data when appropriate.

#### ***Theme 1: EMI as a challenge***

I would like to start by quoting what one of the participants wrote about his/her EMI experience: “It was a challenge for me, I like challenges and the result was good” (SU28). Similarly, many lecturers described their EMI experience as a challenge, both in positive and negative terms:

[...] positive because EMI challenges both teacher and students. I prefer to prepare the lesson in English (SU3);



I enjoy the challenge of teaching to foreign students, coming (also academically) from different backgrounds (SU7);

Positive experience as a challenge for my teaching approach, and for positive students' reaction (SU26).

Basically, it appeared that teaching through English became a good as well as challenging process for lecturers; firstly, to improve their interactions with the national and international students and secondly, to change their teaching methods. Some lecturers, indeed, specifically indicated that teaching in English benefitted their teaching approach in the sense that it enhanced reflection on their teaching style and their communication skills. Lecturers explained that EMI was a stimulating experience as it helped them to look at various innovative ways of teaching, which they might have not considered when lecturing in their L1. In detail, some felt that EMI:

[...] stimulated the search for more innovative ways of teaching and for different contents [...] (SU2);

The lessons were well organized and gave me the opportunity to know some teaching skills which are important when teaching in a multi-language class (SU17);

My lessons (not only in English) will be improved by my additional knowledge in teaching methods. In addition, for the first time I discuss with colleagues from other departments on teaching methods! (SU27)

In addition, what emerged from the participants' answers was that the EMI experience turned out to be an effective way to broaden lecturers' vocabulary in various fields; in detail, two lecturers observed that teaching in English was an opportunity to learn how to use a more specific language in order to be able to convey the concepts effectively. This, somehow recalls what Guarda and Helm (forthcoming) observed in their study; as a matter of fact, they point out that when lecturers were asked to list their perceived strengths in teaching through English at Padova University, they explained that they were motivated to use and learn that language. Hence, not only this might give account to the outcomes of my questionnaire but it might also suggest that overall lecturers "nourished positive attitudes towards the use of English, which in turn may increase their commitment to the implementation of EMI" (Guarda and Helm forthcoming).

## ***Theme 2: EMI impact***

Another interesting aspect to discuss is that most of respondents mentioned the possible impact that EMI could have on students. On the one hand, lecturers are aware that some students might have a low English proficiency, which appears to be a concern also pinpointed by those interviewed by Guarda and Helm's (forthcoming): "the issue of students' level of proficiency was felt as a source of concern for some lecturers". In detail, Guarda and Helm (forthcoming) study highlighted that challenges also arose "in relation to the language used in exams". Similarly, in my study, I found out that one lecturer was concerned about the language, especially because he/she "realized many of them [students] lacked the knowledge of many terms that I normally used during the lessons (SU3)", despite the good feedback received in class. In addition, another source of concern related to students' English competence is the case of *content loss*. This is an issue, which has been widely discussed in many studies regarding EMI and much of the current debate still revolves around it. Airey *et al* (2015), for instance, acknowledge that many researchers questioned the feasibility of EMI because the "limitations in English-language skills may inhibit student ability to explore abstract disciplinary concepts". In my study, there were two lecturers who explicitly mentioned it by observing that, due to the students' inadequacies in English, they had to shorten the content of their lectures. To give you an example, they pointed out that:

It may be harder for them to understand difficult concepts, if they are taught in a non-native language (SU12);

Negative [experience with EMI] because of the reduction in some topics (especially the quantitative ones), due to the foreign language used (SU26);

Students' satisfaction but reduction on the subjects' extension and deepening; Less thorough understanding by the student (SU34)

However, I would say that overall lecturers observed that English-mediated courses were extremely important in that they motivated both the Italian students and the lecturers themselves. One respondent, for instance, wrote that his/her experience was "positive since students (I mean Italian students) are very motivated to take course in English, so it's somewhat easier to teach them (SU10)". Considering other comments, it is clear that

many lecturers felt that their students were satisfied with the English-mediated courses. This is suggested, for instance, by these comments:

Students love it. They find it difficult in the beginning, but they realize it is very important for them, so they try hard to get involved and even get the examination in English (SU24);

Very good response from present students (SU36);

The experience could be considered generally positive considering that most part of students have recognized their improvement of knowledge on the topic of the teaching (SU13);

Interestingly, two lecturers also mentioned that they had a positive experience with EMI as they had the opportunity to work with a type of language which is of a more specific nature: “using EMI allow the students to work on the most updated scientific literatures with access to novel findings in the field of study” (SU11) and “the language we use is closer to what students read in the newspapers (in the economic field the language is often English)” (SU23).

Finally, when looking at the way lecturers described EMI negatively: not only did they refer to students’ inadequacies in English and the problems derived from it, but also there were two lecturers who provided contrastive answers. This was probably due to their overall negative attitude towards EMI; as a matter of fact, one respondent wrote: “in my opinion, only an English mother tongue teacher can teach in English; it' ridiculous to think that students can learn conveniently a topic from a person (could be also a very qualified one) who is not talking in his/her language” (SU29); instead, the other felt that his “original course has been forcedly changed in an EMI course, to follow some requirements imposed by University and the School for enhancing internationalization process [...]” (SU22). This might not be of any surprise, especially because sometimes lecturers feel obliged to teach through English. This was an issue also highlighted in Costa and Coleman (2013: 15) comprehensive survey as they observe that: “many teachers are reluctant to participate in English-medium teaching unless obliged to do so”. Similarly, Werther *et al* (2014: 453) add that when they asked Dutch lecturers at the Copenhagen Business School (CBS) to explain how they came to teach into English, most of them openly admitted that they had simply to adjust to the University’s decision; thus, it seemed that EMI was considered as “an inherent skill that can be conjured up at will and requires no language management”.

### ***Theme 3. Cultural background***

The third and last theme has to do with cultural background; specifically, I am referring to the fact that lecturers positively observed that being able to teach through English, turned out to be a way to interact with more international students. On the one hand, this was perceived as a “threat” because of foreign students’ good English proficiency; on the other, lecturers felt that it was challenging as the presence of international students could stimulate the debate in class. Participants, indeed, indicated that:

It is a challenging experience to teach in English. Positive because I practice English and I met a lot of foreign students (SU32);

I met different cultures, it is a stimulating experience (SU21).

In this regard, I would also like to share what Paola Gatto, one of the lecturers who took part in the discussion developed during the round table meeting of the 1st February, said about international students. Basically, as a lecturer teaching in an English-mediated course, Professor Gatto admitted that the international students’ good English competence is a concern because it might somehow undermine lecturers’ own English confidence; however, she adds that foreign students should not be a “threat” but a source of richness, instead. As a matter of fact, she explained for instance, that when she does not remember how to say a word in English she tries to involve international students asking them the translation of that word.

#### *Lecturers’ concerns about teaching in English*

One of the open-ended questions included in the questionnaire focused on the lecturers’ concerns about teaching in English. I asked this question especially because I wanted to understand whether or not the weaknesses pinpointed by lecturers changed if compared to those listed in Helm and Guarda’s (2015) research.

In response to this question, it is interesting to notice that lecturers sometimes felt that some of their major concerns were not to be related to their own weaknesses but to students’ ones instead. This somehow recalls what I have explained above; indeed, a few respondents indicated that students might have difficulties in understanding technical

terms in English, others pointed out that although they enjoyed teaching English, the student sometimes “might need extra attention” (SU1); whereas, another observed that he/she was particularly concerned in “facilitating the involvement of students who are not fluent in English in class discussions” (SU23). The topic of interaction was raised by another lecturer, who basically complained about Italian student’s passive behaviour: “it is difficult to interact with the student at the start. It is mainly a passive attitude. Then they slowly get relaxed and assume a more active role (questions and answers, etc.)” (SU24).

One of the most frequent concerns also seemed to be lecturers’ lack of fluency and other general English skills such as speaking skills and pronunciation (see Table 7). This, according two of the 37 respondents, could limit considerably the informal interactions with their students (such as to tell funny stories or to improvise). This finding seems to be in line with the previous research conducted on EMI: Helm and Guarda (2015: 363) found out that lecturers were concerned about their speaking skills, in particular, one respondent wrote “when interacting with students at a more informal level”. Moreover, Airey (2011: 45) pointed out that Swedish lecturers experienced fluency problems to some extent, such as “higher level of hesitations, false starts and use of filler phrases in the English lectures”. Likewise, Klaassen and Graaf (2001) listed pronunciation, fluency and lack of humour as the main problems encountered by Dutch lecturers.

<b>Lecturers’ Concerns</b>	<b>No. of mentions</b>	<b>Sample quotes</b>
<i>Fluency</i>	7	“My main concerns are those of not being fluent during the teaching activity” (SU13)
<i>Speaking Skills</i>	1	“Speaking for a long time [...]” (SU14)
<i>Pronunciation</i>	2	“[...] the pronunciation” (SU14)
<i>Vocabulary</i>	3	“Mastering the language and all the vocabulary needed to teach” (SU28)
<i>Comprehension</i>	1	“[...] understanding different types of speaking” (SU14)
<i>Being understood by students</i>	8	“Being able to express properly the concepts” (SU2)
<i>Content delivering</i>	3	“Not all the contents have been delivered because of the language” (SU32)

<i>Informal interactions</i>	2	“My wry sense of humour sometimes doesn't translate seamlessly into another language” (SU20)
<i>English level of students</i>	6	“Students may have difficulties in understating the technical terms in English used during lessons” (SU11)
<i>Students' behaviour</i>	2	“It is difficult to interact with the student at the start. It is mainly a passive attitude” (SU24)
<i>Quality of teaching</i>	2	“it is absolutely out of discussion that I can better explain the concepts tied with my field of research (i.e. musicology) in Italian” (SU8)

**Table 7.** Lecturers' concerns about EMI, inspired by Helm and Guarda (2015: 363)

As regard the teaching skills, the answers show that some lecturers do not consider themselves to be good “switchers” as they feel that their lectures are more effective and clear in Italian rather than in English. Indeed, three of them acknowledged that teaching in another language could possibly reduce the content of their subjects; for instance, one lecturer specifically wrote that he felt that teaching in could lead to “less contents transferred less deepening, more stressing” lessons (SU33). By contrast, two lecturers had quite a positive view, one wrote: “I think I'm a better teacher in my native language but it was interesting especially for pushing me to be more consequential and concise. I could compare myself with students from all over Europe and learn about their knowledge and skills [...]” (SU25). Similarly, the second respondent wrote:

I have no special concerns. I just would like to improve my capacities. Yet there is a point: it is absolutely out of discussion that I can better explain the concepts tied with my field of research (i.e. musicology) in Italian. So, I think that during an English lesson it can be useful to express some relevant concepts in Italian and then repeat them in English. (SU8)

In this regard, Guarda and Helm's (forthcoming) comment that the promotion of multilingualism (see Chapter Two), which consists in using both the local languages as well as English, “can enhance the quality of education and open up better employment opportunities for students”. In the context of Guarda and Helm (forthcoming) study, indeed, they explained that multilingualism “was promoted through the adoption of flexible language practices to ensure understanding in the EMI classroom”. Along similar

lines the Oxford University EMI expert Ernesto Macaro, explained that: “a bit of Italian here and there is fine”<sup>50</sup> as long as there is a good interaction in the class.

Apparently, for other lecturers, the quality of teaching was a problem to be mainly related to their lack of confidence as well as the uncertainty of their own level of English. For instance, one indicated: “I think that I am not able to express myself in English very well and I am afraid that the level and the quality of my lectures in English is lower than my lectures in Italian” (SU18).

Despite the difficulties, there were a few lecturers who clearly stated that they did not have any concerns. One of them, for example, was thankful as he/she had the opportunity “to practise the scientific languages, i.e. the research language which allows information share all around the world” (SU31). A further interesting aspect is that one respondent mentioned positively the LEAP project: “Most of my concerns has diminished over time, also thanks to the support of the LEAP project” (SU23).

#### *How EMI can benefit the University of Padova?*

In the first part of the questionnaire, lecturers were also asked to explain why EMI could benefit the University of Padova (“In your opinion, in which ways can EMI benefit the University of Padova?). I would like to point out here, that the comments I analysed, reflect the observations and considerations that I included in the previous chapters specifically concerning the way EMI and internationalisation are intertwined. It was not of any surprise to read that the vast majority of the lecturers (21) mentioned the term *internationalisation*, despite the various nuances, when listing the ways EMI could benefit Padova University. It seemed that lecturers’ comments were perfectly in line with the large body of research explaining the many factors driving HEIs to activate ETPs; many of these factors, indeed, were nominated by the participants of my study. The findings also echoed what Costa and Coleman (2013) found out when asking to the Italian universities they surveyed the reasons for introducing EMI courses. Let us now look at the responses in greater detail. As with in the previous section, I will analyse the results following two main themes.

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<sup>50</sup> Transcript of Ernesto Macaro presentation on EMI during the round table meeting, which took place on the 1<sup>st</sup> February, 2017.

The themes are labelled as follows:

- Theme 1: Internationalise the University
- Theme 2: Improve the teaching experience

### ***Theme 1: Internationalise the University***

It can help make our University more open and more international. As it used to be in the XVI century. We are very far from that now. And we have the potential and the competencies to be a centre attracting foreign students (SU7);

UniPD (and Italian education system) suffers a “local barrier”. EMI can help to overcome it. (SU12)

It was interesting to observe that some lecturers indicated EMI as a possible way to effectively internationalise the University of Padova. Two respondents mentioned that welcoming international students could favour the University’s rise in rankings and consequently increase the visibility of the University itself:

Increase its international reputation and rank, attract new students, with pay-offs also in the field of research (SU2);

Greatly improving the attractiveness of our curricula with foreign students, better overall score in world rating of universities. (SU36)

Similarly, for others, the activation of English-mediated courses could “strengthen links with foreign universities” (SU30). These comments are perfectly in line with the University goals listed in the *Nucleo di Valutazione 2014-2015*<sup>51</sup>. In fact, in this document it is explicitly stated that in the last few years, the University has started adopting more internationalisation strategies; improving the institution visibility at an international level as well as increasing its attractiveness were considered the main goals to be achieved.

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<sup>51</sup> Quoted from Nucleo di Valutazione (2015: 167): “Negli ultimi anni l’Ateneo ha intensificato le azioni di internazionalizzazione, ritenendo prioritario l’obiettivo di acquisire maggiore visibilità in campo internazionale e aumentare le capacità di attrazione di docenti e studenti provenienti dall’estero”.



This also recalls the comments of the lecturers I interviewed during my stay at Umeå University. Indeed, they seem to have an overall positive attitude towards EMI as it was perceived a way to sharpen the University's international profile. Thus, returning to the context of Padova, I would say that lecturers overall agreed that EMI could enhance both students and lecturers' mobility. For instance, this is suggested by the comment of one lecturer explaining that "EMI will help in improving the quality of the students and increase the opportunity for international exchanges" (SU11); similarly, another indicated that EMI could be a way to attract foreign students as well as enhancing "teaching exchange experiences" and "at the same time providing our (Italian) students internationalization chances" (SU34). These findings echoed what many studies have already highlighted: Earls (2016: 330), for instance, points out that HEIs (the University of Padova, in this case) are "proactively recruiting and encouraging a greater number of permanent and exchange international students to pursue their degree programmes" and to improve the attractiveness of institutions' programme offerings.

Another interesting point raised concerns the impact that EMI might have on home students ("It could make our offering more competitive in an increasingly global environment" SU20). This is suggested, for instance, by the comments of Professor Barolo from the School of Engineering during the round table meeting. In a nutshell, he exhaustively explained that the School of Engineering is international, and once engineering students enter the job market, they are supposed to know how to communicate and interact effectively in English by using a specific as well as technical engineering language and vocabulary. In other words, as Professor Barolo highlights that at the School of Engineering English is considered an essential tool, which enables students to access an international work environment. I would say that this issue belongs to a broader discourse, seeing EMI as a possible way to ensure home students' competitiveness in the global market as well as a greater possibility of access in global opportunities. As Lueg (2015: 58) explains, there are many studies conducted in European contexts showing that English proficiency is needed at workplaces and that many are the "perceived advantages on the job market obtained being a main reason for students' choice of EMI". Along similar lines, Van der Worp *et al* (2016) show that the internationally operating companies which participated in their study set "language requirements for new job openings"; and English in most cases was a basic requirement.

In their study Guarda and Helm (forthcoming) write that there was a number of lecturers who recognised “that EMI can have a positive impact on the students both on the intercultural and language level”; as a matter of fact, one of the lecturers surveyed said that “students need practicing their professional competences in English” because English is the key, which allows them to study and working abroad (Guarda and Helm forthcoming). In this regard, at the University of Padova, this issue was not highlighted by lecturers only. In fact, the International Relations Office Pro-rector, Alessandro Paccagnella, during the round table meeting, said that it is fundamental that students learn foreign languages such as English, not only because in this way they can participate in the University exchange programmes (such as Erasmus +), but they are also ready for the work environment.

### ***Theme 2: Improve of the teaching experience***

I would like to highlight one last point, which is related to the theme called “improve of the teaching experience”. Basically, comments suggest that lecturers perceived the introduction of ETPs and the presence of international students in their class, as a way to improve their teaching methods. This is suggested by the comments below:

Every professor can improve his/her way of teaching and this is the opportunity to do it. Furthermore, such skills turn out useful not only in English speaking classes but in Italian ones too (SU17);

Improving the quality of teaching of its teachers (SU18);

More foreign students exchange of knowledge new teaching methods. (SU25)

What could be observed here is that some lecturers seem to have acknowledged that lecturing in another language entails a change in the teaching methodology and welcoming foreign students in their class might not be as negative as they might think (“it is a condition to sustain participation by non-Italian students, which is a value for the class quality” SU35). In other words, the findings seem to suggest that some lecturers recognized the need to improve their pedagogic competences; this is a result, which might contrast Cots’ (2013) view that lecturers are not willing to be open and adapt to a new methodology. However, one respondent argued that: “teachers are usually focused on what they did in the past. Sometimes is difficult to change the way of teaching because

you do not know what to do”. This might be a problem also shared by other lecturers, yet one could argue that the LEAP project, for example, was designed specifically to solve this specific problem as it provides lecturers with useful tools in order to help them to change their teaching approach. In this regard, in his intervention at the round table meeting, Professor Barolo made an interesting point. Basically, he said that the issue is not that at the University of Padova many lecturers are not prepared to teach in English; instead, the main concern should be that lecturers do not know how to teach in general. Hence, showing lecturers the strategies, the tools and tricks to be able to teach effectively, independent from the language they have to teach through, is very important. I would like to add that Professor Barolo himself participated in some of the LEAP project initiatives and he felt that they helped him a lot in that sense. However, looking at the literature, it is shown that overall the problem is raised especially when there is a switch in language: as Ball and Lindsay (in Doiz *et al* 2013: 49) observe, learning and teaching in a language other than the mother tongue, especially at advance levels, requests a greater awareness and it “demands a focus on methodology and practice that is more difficult to ignore”.

Finally, one lecturer indicated that: “teachers from different fields of sciences and departments might meet, discuss and compare their teaching experience. Something absolutely new for most of the teachers of our University” (SU27). I chose to include this comment because it somehow refers to the *Community of Practice*. As Guarda and Helm (forthcoming) suggest, many of the lecturers who participated in the LEAP project were satisfied because they had the opportunity to share their experiences with other colleagues. To put it another way, the creation of a mixed group of lecturers is one of the LEAP project’s main values, as lecturers play an active role “in the creation of a community with a shared interest, namely that of improving their teaching practice” (Guarda and Helm forthcoming). Likewise, the lecturers who participated in Ball and Lindsay’s (in Doiz *et al* 2013: 59) study, showed an overall level of satisfaction as they appreciated the opportunity they were given to “get together with colleagues from other disciplines and to discuss and practice issues that combine discourse awareness with their own language improvement and an increased awareness of methodological possibilities”.

### 3.3.1.2 Questionnaire outcomes and analysis: part II

In this section, I will focus on the aspects regarding the LEAP project 2015-2016; in other words, I will provide information concerning the lecturers' experience with the various LEAP 2015-2016 initiatives. Hopefully, this will make it possible to understand not only whether respondents found the LEAP project useful or not, but also if they were overall satisfied with their LEAP experience. Additionally, as this study also aims to understand in which way this project could be improved, I will report and analyse the comments provided by the lecturers in order to find useful suggestions. I would like to make it clear that, I analysed data following a thematic analysis when dealing with the open-ended questions; instead, I used figures and graphs to report the quantitative aspects so as to make it easier for the reader to understand more clearly the information I provided.

#### *The LEAP project 2015-2016: practical information*

First of all, lecturers were asked to respond to two questions aimed at providing general information about their overall experience with the LEAP project 2015-2016. Questions were formulated as follows:

1. In which years did you take part in the LEAP project?
2. In 2015 and 2016 which initiative/initiatives of the LEAP project did you take part in?

As for the former, Table 8 illustrates the distribution of lecturers who participated in the various LEAP project activities over the years. Apparently, in 2016 there was the highest number of participants, whereas in 2014 the lowest number.

Year	No. of lecturers	No. of lecturers in %
2013	9	24,3%
2014	7	18,9%
2015	14	37,8%
2016	23	62,2%

**Table 8.** *In which years, did you take part in the LEAP project?*

When asked in which 2015 and 2016 initiative/initiatives of the LEAP project lecturers took part in, the distribution of answers varied and, as data suggest, some respondents participated in more than one single initiative. In brief, it seemed that most of the lecturers (18) participated in the course called “Teaching and Communicating in English”, while 13 lecturers went to the various workshops organised throughout the academic year 2015-2016; in detail, 8 lecturers ticked they went to the extended workshop on presentation skills, which took place on September 2016 and it was held by the international EMI expert Brian Conry from Trinity College Dublin, Ireland. As for the Lecturer Support Service, only 7 lecturers participated. Finally, 4 respondents indicated they took part in the Winter School proposed by the University during the academic year 2014-2015.

*The LEAP project 2015-2016: lecturers’ evaluation*

When asked to rate on scale from 1 (dissatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied) the overall level of satisfaction of LEAP project initiatives in 2015 and 2016, findings show that slightly more than half (51.4%) of the participants responded that they were satisfied with the LEAP project 2015-2016 offer and only one lecturer was completely dissatisfied. Overall, the average rating was 3.4 out of 5; this is quite a significant outcome as it shows that the lecturers appreciated the initiatives.



**Figure 4.** *How satisfied are you with the LEAP project initiatives in 2015 and 2016?*

I deemed it appropriate also to ask them two open-ended questions regarding the activities lecturers took part in during the various initiatives offered by the LEAP project 2015-2016; in particular, the aim of these questions was to understand which activities lecturers appreciated the most and which ones they found the least useful. The point here is that

one of the aims of an evaluation is to address the right questions in order to be able to understand whether or not a certain project or programme is moving in the right direction. Basically, this is what this study seeks to do: thanks to the lecturers' responses I will provide feedback, which hopefully will contribute to the overall improvement in the LEAP project offer.

### ***The most useful activities of the LEAP project 2015-2016***

As mentioned above, in one of the two questions, lecturers were asked to comment on the activities that they had appreciated most ("Which activity/activities (e.g. signposting, assessing students, pronunciation, encouraging student interaction etc.) did you find most useful and why?"). In Table 9, I have summarised the various answers by dividing them into different groups, depending on the activity lecturers mentioned recurrently.

First of all, the majority of the respondents indicated they had appreciated the activities which were intended to improve as well as encourage *interaction with students* in class. This is suggested by this extract: "encouraging student interaction was the most useful activity because I tend to forget about this important part during teaching" (SU13). Interestingly, two lecturers also mentioned the *interaction with other colleagues*, which might echo what was previously explained about the creation of a Community of Practice. Additionally, some respondents found the *signposting* activities very useful ("Signposting. It was something I did not know" SU12). This type of activity was part of the "Teaching and Communicating in English" course offer, as it covered a wide-range of themes such as: teaching style, students' assessment and teaching methods. In this regard, I would like to point out that a few participants also appreciated the *assessing students* activity, which I will discuss in somewhat greater detail in the section that follows.

For other respondents, learning and exploring new *teaching methods* turned out to be an important aspect. Interestingly, one lecturer explicitly mentioned the usefulness of promoting a more student-centred approach, while another suggested that it was useful have his/her lesson recorded and commented. These findings (on signposting and teaching methods) are interesting because they apparently stand against Costa's (2012) view on the poor interest that Italian university professors generally have in receiving methodological training (Helm, Dalziel and Guarda 2015). Moreover, these results are

significant as they show that the LEAP project might have stimulated the participants to try new approaches and strategies in order to make their lessons more interactive and less monologic. Along similar lines Guarda and Helm (forthcoming) for instance, observed positively that:

[...] the analysis showed that the LEAP courses had stimulated the participants to try new strategies and tricks so as to engage students and foster relationship building in the classroom: “I feel more confident and relax and I've got some ‘trucchi’ to get students more involved in the dynamic of the lecture” (Survey, SS7).

Many respondents (13), instead, reported that they found helpful some of the activities aimed at improving their English skills such as their *pronunciation, fluency and vocabulary*. Only one lecturer mentioned the *use of technology* in class (“use of technology in teaching” SU1). The use of technology was also commented by lecturers interviewed by Guarda and Helm (forthcoming); in this regard, they (forthcoming) wrote that “[...] a few lecturers said that, after LEAP, they had started to adopt - or increased the use of - technology such as multimedia or virtual learning environments as a strategy to stimulate interaction, active participation and group work”. Overall I would like to point out that these are not surprising results because the activities that lecturers appreciated the most, were designed and tailored for them with the aim to help them to overcome the problems they might encounter when teaching in English.

Activities	No. of mentions	Sample quotes
<i>Encouraging interaction</i> (students and colleagues)	18	“I retain that encouraging student interaction has been the most innovative activity I learnt because it is not commonly used in the Italian school” (SU17)
<i>Teaching method</i>	6	“[...] the interaction with other colleagues” (SU14) “pronunciation, methods of teaching” (SU27)
<i>Assessing students</i>	4	“[...] assessing students” (SU5)
<i>Use of technology</i>	1	“use of technology in teaching” (SU1)

<i>Signposting</i>	11	“Signposting. It was something I did not know” (SU12) “All of the them: signposting [...]” (SU4)
<i>Pronunciation</i>	16	“Definitely pronunciation, because it was my main area of interest” (SU20)
<i>Fluency</i>	2	“Useful to improve my fluency” (SU10)

**Table 9.** *The most useful activities of the LEAP project 2015-2016 in lecturers’ view*

### ***The least useful activities of the LEAP project 2015-2016***

The second open-ended question I addressed to lecturers was “which activity/activities did you find least useful and why?”. I would say that analysis of the comments turned out to be easier, mainly because most of the lecturers (overall 17) were satisfied with all the project activities. Of these, indeed, 11 answered “none” to the question, 5 commented that all activities were useful and one wrote: “I can't remember, I was enthusiast of the whole course” (SU1). Instead, those who explicitly mentioned which activities they did not appreciate, mainly referred to *signposting* (2), *pronunciation* (3), *teaching methodologies* (2) and *assessing students* (3). In detail, one of the two lecturers who complained about the need for learning new teaching approaches explained that it was more useful to exchange: “experiences among professors” (SU33) and to simulate lectures, instead.

Interestingly, the different lecturers’ levels of English proficiency seemed to be an issue for two respondents. This aspect is exemplified by the following comments:

Everything was interesting. [...] the level of speaking of each participant is different and it depends on the previous experience with English (SU14);

I would not say that there were activities which were not useful. The most critical issue was that the participants were not well aligned with their background knowledge of English (SU12)

The comments also suggest that the *mini-presentations* that each participant had to make were listed among the least useful activities. This, indeed, is confirmed by the comments



of two respondents: one stated that “listening to all colleagues' presentations (we were too many and it got boring: the last day was entirely dedicated to this activity, but I understand that for each one of us it was a useful experience)” (SU3) was not useful; the other felt that everything was interesting except for the presentations: “I didn't like the final presentations by each one of us” (SU14). I would like to add that one lecturer also mentioned *the Winter School* among the least useful activities. It would be interesting to understand the reasons behind this choice; however, he/she did not provide any further comment.

To conclude this brief section, I would like to point out that although lecturers did not provide rich comments to the two questions, I had the opportunity to gain insights into the lecturers' various opinions anyway. For instance, it was interesting to observe that while some lecturers felt it was useful to learn more about how to assess students; others argued that it is a specific criterion, which normally depends on each lecturer and therefore, it cannot be taught. This, however, does not seem to be in line with what Ball and Lindsay (in Doiz *et al* 2013: 56) suggest. Indeed, they state that: “the assessment types and criteria that are applied to NNS students is an issue of some debate, but a crucial one nonetheless”. In Guarda and Helm's (forthcoming) study for instance, the language used in exams was one of the various issues raised by lecturers and a lack of a consistent policy, which could provide useful guidelines in this merit, was perceived a problematic. Thus, in this sense, one might say that the LEAP project was and still is useful to the extent it also provides some interesting hints and guidelines, which would not be offered otherwise.

#### ***After the LEAP project 2015-2016***

In order to make the evaluation more effective and useful, I also asked lecturers to indicate whether they felt they were given the support in the areas they needed the most (“To what extent do you feel you were given support in the areas you needed the most?”). Basically, they had to rate from 1 (not at all) to 5 (exceeded), the level of support they were given. The findings show that the majority of lecturers (a total number of 24) rated 3 and 4, 7 lecturers indicated 2 and surprisingly 5 lecturers declared they did not find any useful support in the area they needed the most. The average rate was 2.9, which might suggest that respondents were satisfied overall.

Clearly, as this study aims to gain a broader knowledge concerning how well the project worked, in the last part of the questionnaire I asked lecturers two specific questions, which could help me in that way. Firstly, I asked them whether they felt they benefitted from the LEAP project. Specifically, they had to rate from 1 to 5 their overall improvement in the skills required for EMI. Secondly, in an open-ended question, they were asked to indicate whether, after the LEAP project 2015-2016, their attitude towards EMI changed, and if so, in which ways.

As for the former, I obtained promising outcomes: the average rate was 3 (see Figure 5) and only two lecturers felt that the LEAP project did not have any impact on their EMI skills. Instead, the majority of the participants (14) rated 3 and 12 lecturers rated 4.



**Figure 5.** Average improvement rate

The process of data analysis of the other open-ended question, which concerns lecturers' attitudes towards EMI after the LEAP project, resulted in interesting findings. When reading the comments, I observed that many respondents used the terms *enthusiastic*, *useful* and *positive* in order to describe their attitudes towards EMI and if the LEAP courses had led to a shift, it was not in a negative way. This can be exemplified in the comments below:

I already had a positive attitude towards EMI, however this has improved much after the LEAP project (SU2);

I've always been enthusiastic about EMI, so no, I wouldn't say the LEAP project has changed much of my attitude. It just gave me a bunch of ideas to try out in class, perhaps. (SU7);

Not really, even I must recognise that I've changed my mind about some aspects of EMI and be more interested in EMI activity (that I consider more strategic if not indispensable in postgraduate courses). (SU22);

Oh, I changed my attitude. After LEAP project, I think teaching in English is useful for students, not native speakers too (SU31).

One of the most interesting outcomes, was that seven lecturers indicated that the LEAP project had a positive impact as it boosted their confidence. This result is important because it is somehow in agreement with what the LEAP instructors have observed. One of the major problems that lecturers showed is their lack of confidence, which could be a serious obstacle especially for their performance in class. Moreover, as mentioned above, some lecturers feel that international students have better English and this concern might impact negatively on their performance in class (such as less spontaneity and fewer asides). Thus, the LEAP project offered a solution to these problems as it aims to support lecturers by showing them different paths, which might help them to gain confidence and improve their teaching methods. In this regard, one respondent, wrote:

“[the LEAP] has made me more confident, not only because it has taught me the language skills but also because it has given me the opportunity to learn new techniques for class work, to reflect on what and how to teach and other pedagogical issues, has improved my network with others colleagues with similar issues” (SU2)

This comment leads to another important point. As a matter of fact, the analysis showed that lecturers felt empowered by the awareness that it is important to be open to new teaching methods as it helps to understand more “the problems related to teaching in English” (SU23). Three respondents indicated that thanks to LEAP, they shifted their focus by paying more attention to the students’ needs and involvement (“I pay much more attention to the student's involvement”). This result, matches what Guarda and Helm (forthcoming) reported in their research: “the analysis showed that the LEAP courses had stimulated the participants to try new strategies and tricks so as to engage students and foster relationship building in the classroom”. Similarly, two respondents mentioned that that they started to focus more the pronunciation and the “language details” (SU24) in order to make their lectures clearer to students.

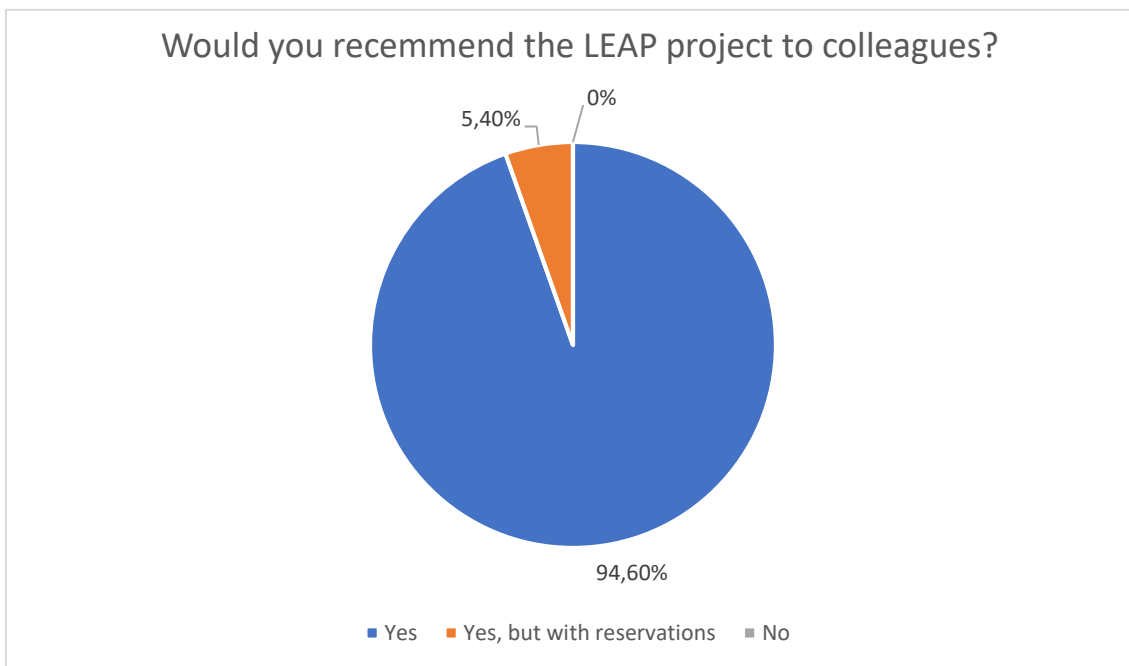
One respondent also indicated that thanks to the LEAP courses, he/she was given the opportunity to know more about the initiatives organised by the University Language Centre. This is an interesting point, especially considering that one of the problematic aspects mentioned by the staff at the CLA was that before the LEAP project, the Language Centre did not have enough visibility (see section 3.3.2).

Only two lecturers referred explicitly to what teaching in another language means. One of them, indeed, highlighted that the course had an impact on his/her EMI attitude as it raised awareness of “what means to teach and to learn in another language”; the other one, instead, surprisingly commented that “it was simpler to teach in English” (SU32). To conclude, two respondents explicitly indicated that the LEAP project should be mandatory for all the lecturers involved in EMI at the University of Padova.

### ***LEAP to the future***

In this brief section I will present and analyse the data I collected concerning the suggestions provided by lecturers about how to improve the LEAP project offer. The first step to be made was to ask lecturers whether they would recommend LEAP to colleagues. Although the number of lecturers who took part in the initiatives promoted by the project has risen over the years, the LEAP project aims ideally to reach all the lecturers teaching through English at the University of Padova, and not just a few of them. Thus, understanding both whether the lecturers have been satisfied with it and whether they would recommend the various LEAP courses to colleagues, would be extremely important for the future of LEAP itself.

As illustrated in figure 6, when asked whether they would recommend the LEAP courses to colleagues all participants said they would (Figure 6) and 2 lecturers specified “yes, but with reservations”.



**Figure 6.** *Would you recommend the LEAP project to colleagues?*

The second step, was to obtain a broader knowledge regarding lecturers' further suggestions for the LEAP project. The analysis of the feedback data showed that the majority of them (8) indicated as problematic the way the various LEAP activities/initiatives were spanned over time. This issue also finds support in the answers that lecturers gave when explicitly asked to rate if they felt that the distribution of the initiatives over the year suited their need. The average rate was 2.9 and the level of satisfaction of 10 respondents was low (2/5 and 1/5). However, as explained in the previous chapter, time management turned out to be a problematic aspect even in Helm, Dalziel and Guarda's (2015) research. Basically, in their study, this was a problem related mostly to the various activities that were organised during the language advising sessions. In this context, instead, lecturers felt that the distribution of the LEAP initiatives did not fit in their schedule. Specifically, they indicated that it was difficult to combine the LEAP courses with their many academic commitments. For instance, this can be exemplified by the following extract:

“My main problem was related to the dates of some initiatives, that overlapped lessons/exams. Could some initiatives be moved outside the periods of most intense teaching (during the terms)? Or repeated in other periods, like June/July/September? I understand that there are technical problems in doing so, yet if possible it could be useful,

at least for some of us who have heavy teaching duties and laboratory works to follow” (SU10).

This aspect was confirmed by the other respondents: one asked if lecturers could be given more possibilities of choice, while another suggested that advertising the workshops in advance could be a possible solution in order to ensure a higher number of lecturers at the initiatives (“To schedule the workshops 2 months before, to know earlier is a chance to easier participation” SU 31). Moreover, one respondent answered to organise “lessons in other more central places” (SU8).

Overall, lecturers seemed to suggest that an increase in the number of activities offered would be appreciated. On the one hand, some respondents explicitly mentioned “more practical activities” (SU37) and “something more interactive” (SU29); on the other hand, there were two lecturers who expressed their interest in having more courses specifically tailored to improve the language skills in different research areas (“specialize course by area (science, law, medicine) SU34; “specific courses on the language skills related to research areas engineering, architecture [...]” SU6). From the comments analysis, it also appears that three lecturers asked for more workshops and, in particular, for workshops devoted to pronunciation; this is not surprising, especially if one considers the high number of respondents who admitted that pronunciation was one of their various concerns about teaching in English. The rest of the respondents gave different answers to the question: one, for instance, commented positively the “Teaching and Communicating” course and showed interest in participating to that initiative again (“I would like to attend a new edition of the course “Teaching and communicating in English” (“I appreciated Suzanne Cloke’s course very much!), hopefully an advanced course to further improve my skills” SU18). Instead, another one mentioned the Winter School: “[...] I would repeat initiatives like the Winter School: full immersions in the topic in a short period outside semester is a perfect way to approach the issue”. By contrast, however, the same lecturer indicated that he/she would have benefitted more from individual activities: “personally, I would benefit more from an individual support service” (SU24). Another suggestion comes from one lecturer who asked for an increased number of activities such as “assisting/recording lectures and commenting on specific attitudes/teaching skills of the lecturers” (SU26).

The analysis of the comments also suggests that the LEAP offer should perhaps be organised differently, for instance by basing the courses on the various participants' levels of experience. In other words, one lecturer wrote that the courses should be differentiated in order to organise new activities for the newcomers and others for those who already know the project. This could be exemplified by the following extract: "different courses for different users: for example, regular long courses for new users, and update/refresh short courses for experienced users" (SU1). Similarly, another respondent asked for different and more focused courses, which should be based on the participants' various needs: "involve more people and have people with similar skills/needs attending to more focused classes" (SU20). To conclude, eight respondents stated that the LEAP offer suited their needs and they did have any further suggestions. This is confirmed by these extracts: "I have no suggestions" (SU17), "Keep going" (SU3) or "Continue with this programme [...]" (SU33).

### **3.3.2 Analysis of the staff interviews**

At this point, I have presented as well as analysed the lecturers' feedback. Although there was a poor number of responses, I was however able to obtain useful insights, especially into the lecturers' overall experience with the LEAP project 2015-2016, their attitudes towards EMI and into lecturers' major concerns about teaching in English. One might argue that the findings I have presented are unremarkable since they often echoed the large body of research already reported elsewhere. However, what I learned from the lecturers' comments is interesting to the extent it turned out to be a way to foster as well as enhance the discussion about the problems and concerns about EMI in the context of Padova University. As mentioned above, however, lecturers are not the only group of stakeholders. Thus, in the next lines I will offer an overview of the data I collected from the four interviews I conducted with the staff at the University Language Centre and at the International Relations Office. In this regard, I would like to make it clear that the findings will be analysed in a discursive form by highlighting only the aspects that I found to be useful to the purpose of my study.

The information I expected to gather through the interviews with the CLA staff were clearly related to the LEAP project 2015-2016 as well to the general impressions and thoughts the staff had on LEAP. One of the first questions that I asked, indeed, was to

understand whether this project brought any benefit to the CLA itself over the years. For instance, Cristina Michelotto from the administrative staff, admitted that the Language Centre has always been considered a “satellite” of the University’s departments and that to the various LEAP initiatives and the support for the University internationalisation policy, helped in the sense that they increased the CLA’s visibility. She also added that when the Summer School in San Servolo island took place, the lecturers who participated were all enthusiast about the LEAP experience and they told to the CLA staff that if needed, they would advertise the project<sup>52</sup>. Similarly, Elisabetta Di Venere, from the teaching administrative staff, explained to me that: “the number of lecturers who got to know the LEAP project raised increasingly and many of them became familiar with the CLA”<sup>53</sup>, also because one should consider that the LEAP offers and activities are completely free. It was also interesting to listen to Caroline Clark’s comments. She is the Head of the Language Centre and also a LEAP instructor herself and she explicitly told me that with the LEAP project, lecturers started to appreciate the CLA more. Basically, she said that this increased interest in the various workshops and activities offered by the Language Centre had had a positive washback effect on CLA visibility. Moreover, she observed that was interesting to share experiences with lecturers involved with EMI as they fostered the awareness of the importance that the teaching of language is not merely addressed to students, but to lecturers as well; and somehow, the LEAP project managed to increase this awareness. Interestingly, talking about lecturers, Caroline Clark also told me that, one of the features of the LEAP project that made a difference was the Community of Practice; in other words, she referred to the value of having a mixed group of lecturers, who can liberally talk about their concerns and difficulties, and can express themselves by sharing their experiences without feeling in competition. This, as Caroline Clark said, would not be possible with a group of lecturers coming from the same field.

Of course, I also asked the interviewees a question regarding the difficulties they encountered during the LEAP project 2015-2016. One interesting observation was provided by Elisabetta Di Venere, who told me that one of the main concerns expressed by the administrative staff regarded the number of applications; specifically, she

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<sup>52</sup> My translation from: “Quando era stata fatta la Summer School, i docenti che erano lì erano stati entusiasti e avevano detto che se c’era bisogno avrebbero fatto pubblicità.” (Dott. Michelotto)

<sup>53</sup> My translation from: “Sicuramente il numero di docenti che è venuto a conoscenza è aumentato sempre di più e anche proprio diciamo che molti di loro provano simpatia nei confronti del CLA”.



explained that sometimes they registered a too high number of applications for the various initiatives. In fact, for each LEAP initiative there is a limited number of places and in 2015-2016, for instance, 41 lecturers applied for the “Teaching and Communicating in English” course and there were only 20 places available. However, Elisabetta Di Venere positively commented that: “it is easy to reduce the number of applications without causing the lecturers’ disappointment”, especially because there are specific criteria which might help in the decision (such as giving priority to those lecturers who are new with the LEAP project). Interestingly, Elisabetta Di Venere also felt that sometimes lecturers misunderstand the aim of the LEAP project, as several thought that this project was more like an English course. It is worth mentioning that she also noticed that even a few lecturers, who were and are involved with EMI, do not understand that the final goal is to learn how to use the strategies and tools in order to teach in a second language. In this regard, one would argue that this problem could be solved if the LEAP project were advertised more. On the other hand, the advertising sources available are limited: usually, when the academic year starts, the staff at the CLA send to the University lecturers a mail indicating the LEAP offer for that specific academic year; then the initiatives are further advertised on both the Language Centre and University websites. As Roberta Rasa (from the International Relations Office) pointed out during the interview, in order to solve this problem, it would be also interesting to understand in which terms lecturers talk about the LEAP project between themselves; in this way, if many lecturers start asking for more initiatives like those provided by the LEAP, it would be easier to adopt other measures.

Moreover, what emerged from the analysis is that problems were also to be found in economic terms; as a matter of fact, there have been some issues regarding the modality of payment of the international EMI experts, who came to hold the various workshops. However, as Cristina Michelotto observed: “when you start a project, for instance, it is difficult at first [...] from the administrative point of view, you find yourself in front of new realities, however if this helps to improve us, then it is worth it”. Moreover, despite the problems encountered, “welcoming such international guests to our university”, as Caroline Clark said, “was a way to sharpen the international profile of the University”<sup>54</sup>; moreover, the CLA, has always tried to organise activities and workshops for lecturers

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<sup>54</sup> My translation from: “[...] abbiamo accolto esperti internazionali anche come modo per migliorare il profilo internazionale dell’università” (Caroline Clark)

cost-free. This seems to be an important aspect, as was highlighted by two of the four interviewees.

When asked to comment whether the LEAP project had reached the expected outcomes, it seemed that the responses were all somehow tied with the washback effect that the LEAP had on the CLA visibility. Clearly, the Language centre does not earn any money from the project as it is an institutional activity and the funding are provided by the CLA itself or in collaboration with the International Relations Office. However, as Cristina Michelotto said: “if there is a general positive feedback and the offer is offered every year, then it means that the project went well. So far lecturers were not given any support and this [the LEAP project] is the very first one”<sup>55</sup>.

Finally, as done with lecturers, I deemed it appropriate to ask the working staff a question regarding possible suggestions and final considerations for a future LEAP project edition. First of all, Caroline Clark commented that overall, after three years of LEAP, she witnessed a change: lecturers divided into two groups; as a matter of fact, many of them were extremely enthusiast about the project, while others did not mature any interest. However, she added that hearing negative things from lecturers should not be an obstacle. Secondly, she also commented that one possible idea for the future is, for instance, to offer more workshops held by the LEAP instructors: “we have an internal expertise who knows about teacher training, so we should increase more this contribution especially because now lecturers are more familiar with it”<sup>56</sup>. In addition, she observed that all these workshops should not be an end in themselves, but “they must lead somewhere”. In this regard, she mentioned that the long-term goals would be not only to make the LEAP project an integral part of the CLA offer, but also to adopt a consistent language policy, designed including all the University strata: from the students, to the staff and the lecturers. “I feel that now it’s time to talk about the students and to bring the lecturers’ issue to the next level, that is language policy and quality marking...To the present, lecturers are more familiar with EMI, however we lack a working group and the

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<sup>55</sup> My translation from: “Nelle casse amministrativamente non porta nulla, è un’attività istituzionale. Il ritorno di immagine serve però, se il feedback è positivo e se il servizio è proposto continuamente [...] allora significa che è andata a buon fine. I numeri ci sono, le richieste ci sono. Fino ad ora i docenti non hanno avuto nessun riferimento, è stato il LEAP il primo” (Cristina Michelotto)

<sup>56</sup> My translation of Caroline Clark comment: “L’idea per il futuro è di iniziare anche noi a proporre workshops perché abbiamo un expertise interno che sa di teachers training...togliere l’esterno e inserire più del nostro soprattutto ora che i docenti hanno più familiarità”.

University support”<sup>57</sup>. In other words, implementing a language policy would be a useful guide for the University as a whole. On the same issue, Roberta Rasa commented that even though the LEAP project was and still is a new as well as an interesting experience, “talking about a possible language policy is not on the agenda, at least for now...but I am sure that someday we will do it”<sup>58</sup>.

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<sup>57</sup> My translation of Carole Clark comment: “Secondo me è il momento di parlare degli studenti e anche quello di portare avanti il discorso dei docenti verso language policy e valutazione...Ad oggi abbiamo i docenti che sono più familiari con EMI, abbiamo persone in grado...a manca un appoggio dall’alto e un working group”

<sup>58</sup> My translation of Roberta Rasa comment: “In questo momento non è una delle cose principali e non è nell’ordine del giorno. Sono convintissima che ci si arriverà, il LEAP è stata un’esperienza nuova e sicuramente molto interessante”.

## Final Considerations

In this study, I evaluated the LEAP project 2015-2016 from lecturers and staff perspectives. My aim was to obtain a greater understanding of the lecturers' attitudes towards EMI, which aspects of the LEAP project 2015-2016 were linked to positive and negative outcomes and to provide suggestions and further recommendations that might be useful to improve the offer of the LEAP project. The ultimate goal, however, was to provide a study, which could contribute to the large body of research conducted on EMI. Thus, in this final section, I would like to offer an overview of the main issues raised in the analysis phase in order to understand whether this study has succeeded in providing a useful response to the evaluation questions. In this regard, before moving to the core of this section, I would like to point out that this study might be limited in various respects. Firstly, the evaluation findings cannot be generalised to other contexts as this study specifically aims to gather information regarding the context of the University of Padova. Secondly, a positive bias might be present in the data I analysed, since the lecturers who answered my questionnaire could be the ones who invested more in EMI. Moreover, as mentioned throughout the evaluation, the overall response was poor as I collected the feedback of 37 lecturers out of 193. This was probably due to their many academic commitments. However, I would like to make it clear that when I designed the questionnaire I was perfectly aware that I could encounter this problem; and it was for this reason that I chose pilot the survey with a group of three lecturers as it would help me to understand whether the questionnaire was quick and clear. Overall, I would say that this study led to interesting results and, in the section that follows, I will summarise them by adding personal comments.

*Did the study succeed in responding to the evaluation questions?*

Overall, the study managed to cover the issues presented in the evaluation question. As a matter of fact, thanks to the lecturers' feedback and the data collected from the four interviews, I managed to gather interesting information, which answered three evaluation questions:

- What are the lecturers' overall perceptions and attitudes towards EMI and in particular, towards the LEAP project 2015-2016?

- Which aspects of the LEAP project 2015-2016 are linked to positive outcomes and which are linked to negative outcomes?
- In which way, can LEAP be improved?

First of all, the study showed that lecturers have an overall positive attitude towards EMI not only before their participation to the various LEAP project 2015-2016 initiatives, but also after. Indeed, as explained in section 3.3.1.1 and 3.3.1.2, lecturers' comments highlighted three important themes labelled as: EMI as a challenge, EMI impact and Cultural breeding.

As for the former, lecturers felt that EMI was a challenge both positive and negative terms. Not only did they perceive EMI to be a way to think about other teaching methods and communication strategies, but also it helped them to broaden their vocabulary as well as to learn a specific academic language, which could be useful in order to convey the concepts to students clearly. However, looking at the other side of the coin, there were a few lecturers who expressed negative feelings about EMI and the main issues they raised concerned: content loss and the fact that sometimes lecturers might feel obliged to take up courses in English. In this regard, I think that there are interesting considerations that I would like to include. Clearly, content loss is a problem and it must be taken into consideration when dealing with EMI. Many studies, including this one, have shown that not being able to transfer the message as well as to include in the lesson all the contents are some of the lecturers' main concerns. However, as the EMI expert Ernesto Macaro pointed out, when teaching in a language, which is not the mother tongue, there would be some reduction of content, even when the language is not at the right level of the students'.

One should rather think about this issue in terms of cost benefits; if the course taught in English does not present any long-term detriment to the content, then it means that it was successful. During the round table meeting, Professor Barolo shed light on another aspect that should be taken into consideration; in brief, he argued that sometimes there are subjects that students find difficulties to understand even in Italian and one question that lecturers should ask themselves is whether the difficulty is merely due to the language they teach through or on the subject content. The second aspect regards lecturers' reluctance to teach in English. In this case too, studies have shown that this might happen

and it was also an issue raised by one of the members of staff I talked, at the Psychology Department at Umeå University. The latter admitted that they had issues with one lecturer, who did not want to take up a course in English; but eventually, had to do it. Other studies present similar problems, for instance the one conducted in the Swedish context by Airey (2011: 43) indicated that that lecturers were given “a very short notice before their first experience of presenting something in English” and that the “change to teaching in English is often unreflected and parhazard”.

Returning to the context of this study, the data showed that lecturers also indicated that EMI had an impact, especially on students. On the one hand, English-mediated courses turned out to be effective as they motivated the home students since they were enthusiastic about the courses; on the other hand, students were also given the possibility to learn and to work with a vocabulary used in specific fields. The third and last theme concerned the cultural background. This was interesting because it showed that, thanks to EMI, some lecturers felt the interaction with international students had increased. This has both positive and negative washback: in fact, having a culturally mixed class could be motivating as it gives lecturers the opportunity to exchange ideas with students coming from all over the world; however, this might also be somehow problematic in the sense that international students have a different behaviour. The latter are more used to the type of student-centred teaching method (which lecturers are learning also thanks to LEAP) and therefore, they appear to be more demanding than the Italian ones. Moreover, as this study shows, some lecturers felt that their level of English was not as high as that of the foreign students, a concern which led those lecturers to doubt their skills.

It was also interesting to understand that among the reasons why EMI could benefit the University of Padova, lecturers mentioned improving the University’s international profile, an aspect which was also highlighted by the lecturers I interviewed during my stay at Umeå University. The second reason was that it could raise lecturers’ awareness of what teaching in another language means. It seemed that lecturers are now more aware and they feel they need to improve their English as well as to change the dynamics in the classroom. Moreover, among the various comments, several lecturers indicated that they enjoyed sharing their experiences with colleagues from different fields. This was an interesting aspect that should be enhanced especially in future LEAP editions as it was mentioned by all the stakeholders.

Moving on to summarise the lecturers' feedback on LEAP 2015-2016 and the positive/negative outcomes of LEAP overall, I would start by observing that, on the whole lecturers were satisfied with the LEAP project 2015-2016 offer (see section 3.3.1.2): not only because the average level of satisfaction was high, but also because all lecturers said they would recommend the LEAP project to their colleagues. Moreover, when asked to indicate the least useful LEAP activities, most of them (17 out of 37) wrote that they did not find any activity not useful. However, I think that the main difficulties encountered by lecturers were to be seen in terms of time management because of their various academic commitments; which, also explains why a few of them wished the initiatives have organised differently, such as during the whole duration of the academic year. From the staff point of view, instead, there were clearly problems of a more practical nature and it was interesting to understand that one member of the administrative staff admitted that lecturers sometimes misunderstood the aim of the LEAP project. However, I agree with Caroline Clark when she explains that these projects take time. At the very beginning of LEAP 2013, things were difficult and from that time the CLA has witnessed a change in lecturers EMI perceptions.

I would like to add a few final considerations concerning the suggestions for the future LEAP project. Firstly, as Caroline Clark suggested, one possible solution to the time management issue, would be to organise more workshops and to advertise them advance in order to increase the lecturers' presence. As this study shows, lecturers appreciated this type of activity, probably because it is manageable and they can fit it easily into their schedule. Secondly, as lecturers expressed enthusiasm in having had the opportunity to share their experiences with colleagues that are not in their departments, it might be interesting to organise cross disciplines discussion groups, where they can talk freely about various topics. This would also help them to improve their speaking skills and their abilities to start small talk, which could be useful especially when they have to interact with students in class. Furthermore, I would like include the observations that Ernesto Macaro made during the round table meeting. The point here is that he was asked to list the competences that EMI lecturers should have. In response to this question he said that:

It goes well beyond of having a high level of general English and it also goes beyond being able to hold an international conference and presentation, because the researchers there already have a knowledge of something<sup>59</sup>.

These are the three important competences that a lecturer involved with EMI should have: firstly, to be able to understand the relationship between the language and the content the lecturer is putting across; secondly, to be able to communicate with experts on various fields and thirdly, to understand the students' skills and the strategies that students use in order to survive in the university environment, which is possible by changing the teaching methodology. Thus, having acknowledged this, in my opinion, in future LEAP should work with lecturers considering these three competences and helping lecturers to achieve them. As was discussed during the round table meeting on "Opportunità e limiti dell'inglese come lingua veicolare", in the future, the presence of an effective, consistent institutional language policy, which everybody has to put input into, might be the solution for the many problems raised by the activation of ETPs at the University of Padova. As Airey et al (2015) suggest, that a language policy should be a day-to-day work driven by "disciplinary issues, rather than the desire to ameliorate longer-term societal and cultural trends". Moreover, Ernesto Macaro said<sup>60</sup>, one should think about the overall picture in terms of cost benefits by asking about the long-term vision. Therefore, what is to be investigated is whether: EMI has improved overall students' interaction, if there was no long-term detriment to the content, and if EMI has increased both the competences in English in the country where ETPs are activated and the international communication between that country and the rest of the world. Clearly, at the time present, the University of Padova has made important step towards EMI, and a language policy could come as the ultimate University goal. However, I think that is important at least to start thinking about it because as Caroline Clark pointed out, a practical language policy would be a resource for the University as a whole.

I would like to conclude this study, with one last observation. From a broader perspective, it was also interesting to gain a greater understanding of EMI both in Nordic

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<sup>59</sup> Extract from the transcript of Ernesto Macaro presentation during the round table meeting "Opportunità e limiti dell'inglese come lingua veicolare", 1<sup>st</sup> February 2017.

<sup>60</sup> Extract from the transcript of Ernesto Macaro presentation during the round table meeting "Opportunità e limiti dell'inglese come lingua veicolare", 1<sup>st</sup> February 2017.



countries and in the South of Europe. Eventually, I understood that the culture of language is a fundamental aspect, which should be taken into consideration when dealing with EMI. In this regard, it would be difficult to compare, for instance, the University of Padova with the University of Umeå because they are two culturally different realities and the problems encountered with the EMI implementation are not always the same. Indeed, in Sweden, despite the many challenges, it has been possible to talk about language policies and EMI courses also due to an early exposure to the English language. By contrast, as Roberta Rasa pointed out, in Italy things work differently: “English is not spoken that much...in Italy there are cultural problems and for instance, many times it happens that when there are not foreign students in EMI courses, the home students feel that speaking in English is an effort, rather than an added value”<sup>61</sup>. Hence, I hope that the present study both managed to offer a clear picture of the way EMI is developing at the University of Padova and to explain the main issues, which the ongoing debate on EMI raised at both national and international levels.

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<sup>61</sup> My translation from: “In Italia non si parla così tanto l’inglese e anche culturalmente ci sono problemi: molte volte gli studenti nei corsi EMI dove non ci sono studenti internazionali non parlano in inglese e il fatto di farlo in inglese non viene visto il valore aggiunto, ma uno sforzo in più” (Roberta Rasa).

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## Appendix

### 1 In which school do you teach?

- Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine
- Economics and Political Science
- Engineering
- Human social Sciences and Cultural Heritage
- Law
- Medicine
- Psychology
- Science

### 2 In which degree course do you teach?

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### 3 How long have you been involved in English-Medium Instruction (EMI)?

- Less than 1 year
- 1 year
- 2 years
- 3 years
- 4 years
- 5 years
- 5+ years

### 4 Is your overall experience of EMI mainly positive or negative?

- Positive
- Negative

**5 Could you briefly explain why you feel that your overall experience is positive, negative or both?**

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**6 In your opinion, in which ways can EMI benefit the University of Padova?**

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**7 What are your main concerns about teaching in English?**

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**8 In which years did you take part in the LEAP project?**

- 2013
- 2014
- 2015
- 2016

**9 In 2015 and 2016 which initiative/initiatives of the LEAP project did you take part in?**

- The Winter School
- The course “Teaching and Communicating in English
- Lecturer Support Service
- Workshops
- Extended workshops on presentation skills (September 2016 – Brina Conry)

**10 How satisfied are you with the LEAP project initiatives in 2015 and 2016?**

From 1 (dissatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied)

- 1/5
- 2/5
- 3/5
- 4/5
- 5/5

**11 Which activity/activities (e.g. signposting, assessing students, pronunciation, encouraging student interaction etc.) did you find most useful and why?**

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**12 Which activity/activities did you find least useful and why?**

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**13 Do you feel that the distribution of LEAP initiatives over the year suited your needs?**

From 1 (not at all) to 5 (exceeded)

- 1/5
- 2/5
- 3/5
- 4/5
- 5/5

**14 To what extent do you feel you were given support in the areas you needed most?**

From 1 (not at all) to 5 (exceeded)

- 1/5
- 2/5
- 3/5
- 4/5
- 5/5

**15 How would you rate your overall improvement in the skills required for EMI as a result of LEAP?**

From 1 to 5

- 1/5
- 2/5
- 3/5
- 4/5
- 5/5

**16 After the LEAP project, has your attitude towards EMI changed, and if so, in which way?**

**17 Would you recommend the LEAP project to colleagues?**

- Yes
- Yes, but with reservations
- No
- Other

**18 What would you suggest for the 2017 edition of the LEAP project?**

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## **Valutazione del Progetto LEAP 2015-2016: dalla prospettiva dei docenti e dello staff**

RIASSUNTO ESTESO IN LINGUA ITALIANA

Lo scopo che si prefigge questa tesi è quello di fare una valutazione dell'edizione del progetto LEAP (*Learning English For Academic Purpses*) che ha avuto luogo nell'anno accademico 2015-2016. Il mio compito in pratica è quello di capire non solo le attitudini dei docenti rispetto all'inglese come lingua veicolare per l'insegnamento (EMI) presso Università di Padova, ma anche quello di avere un'idea più chiara riguardante il modo in cui sia lo staff (presso il Centro Linguistico di Ateneo e all'Ufficio Relazioni Internazionali) che i docenti stessi vedono il progetto LEAP. Inoltre, con questo studio spero di contribuire alla corposa ricerca che è già stata fatta riguardo al vasto tema dell'inglese come lingua veicolare per l'insegnamento, ed in particolare spero che possa offrire al lettore uno sguardo sul modo in cui EMI si sta sviluppando nell'Ateneo di Padova.

Devo ammettere che prima dei miei sei mesi di soggiorno come studentessa Erasmus, il tema dell'inglese come lingua veicolare per l'insegnamento mi era del tutto sconosciuto e non ero di certo consapevole che potesse essere un argomento discusso largamente nel mondo accademico. Il vero momento in cui ho maturato un profondo interesse per il LEAP è stato mentre parlavo con la mia Professoressa di Evaluation, Ingrid Schild. In particolare, stavamo parlando riguardo all'importanza che la lingua inglese ha sia nel campo educativo che nella ricerca, ed in particolare nei paesi del Nord dell'Europa. La Professoressa Ingrid, mi fece osservare che in generale esiste una sorta di mito che dice che le persone che vivono nei Paesi del Nord abbiano un livello di inglese molto alto. Tuttavia, nell'Università di Umeå ad esempio, ci sono stati numerosi docenti svedesi che erano riluttanti a volere insegnare tramite la lingua inglese.

Così, decisi di scavare più a fondo per conoscere qualcosa in più riguardo al EMI nel contesto dell'Università di Umeå, per capire anche quali fossero le maggiori problematiche legate all'insegnamento in lingua inglese. Più facevo domande a docenti o membri dello staff, più trovavo interessanti informazioni che sicuramente hanno aiutato ad arricchire la mia conoscenza sull'argomento. Uno degli aspetti più interessanti che ha catturato la mia attenzione, è stato sapere che l'università nella pratica non forniva

alcun tipo di supporto per i docenti che dovevano insegnare o che insegnavano già in un corso in lingua inglese, al contrario erano i vari dipartimenti a dover scegliere se offrire un qualsiasi tipo di supporto o meno. Quindi, con queste informazioni in mano, scrissi alla mia Relatrice Fiona Dalziel, per sapere qualcosa in più riguardo a EMI nel contesto italiano e nello specifico, riguardo al nostro Ateneo. Rimasi sorpresa quando la Professoressa Dalziel mi disse che il Centro Linguistico di Ateneo (CLA) era stato uno dei primi in tutta Italia ad aver promosso ed attivato un progetto, chiamato LEAP project, atto ad aiutare i docenti che aveva a che fare con EMI.

Questa tesi è suddivisa in quattro capitoli, di cui però il quarto è dedicato alle considerazioni finali. Il primo capitolo introduce il lettore al concetto dell'internazionalizzazione a livello dell'educazione terziaria e si prefigge lo scopo di fornire un background teorico corposo atto a far capire non solo il contesto in cui la mia tesi si sviluppa, ma anche per comprendere in che modo EMI e il processo di internazionalizzazione stesso, siano così legati. Inoltre, come spiegherò in maniera più dettagliata, questo capitolo farà riferimento al contesto del EMI nei paesi del Nord Europa, ed in particolare nel contesto svedese visto che è lì che ho passato sei mesi della mia vita. Il secondo capitolo invece, è focalizzato sul vastissimo tema dello sviluppo del EMI nei paesi del sud Europa, in particolare in Italia. Nel dettaglio, in questo capitolo ho anche fatto riferimento al lavoro di Costa e Coleman (2013) in quanto questo ad oggi, è il primo di larga scala fatto sulla tematica dei corsi in lingua inglese. Il mio scopo è stato quindi quello di analizzare con occhio critico la situazione italiana per poter dare voce a tutte le varie opinioni e problemi che sono stati trovati nel momento in cui vennero attivati i primi corsi in inglese. Una volta presentato il contesto italiano, sono scesa nel dettaglio focalizzandomi su quello dell'Università di Padova e nello specifico, ho analizzato e introdotto il progetto LEAP in tutti i suoi aspetti. Il terzo capitolo invece, è quello in cui ha introdotto e sintetizzato il concetto di *evaluation* in modo tale che il lettore potesse capire meglio lo scopo e le varie fasi della mia analisi. In particolare, in questo capitolo ho spiegato: lo scopo che si prefigge il mio studio, le domande che mi sono poste e chiaramente le metodologie che ho utilizzato per analizzare i dati. Inoltre, il capitolo contiene sia la presentazione che l'analisi dei risultati ottenuti dal questionario mandato ai docenti e delle risposte che lo staff mi ha dato durante le interviste. L'ultima sezione della tesi, invece, riassume gli aspetti più importanti osservati nella fase di analisi ed

inoltre fornisce delle considerazioni finali riguardanti sia il LEAP che EMI nel contesto del nostro Ateneo. Infine, nell'appendice, ho inserito il questionario mandato ai docenti, in modo che potesse essere consultato.

Entrando nel merito dei contenuti, il primo capitolo fornisce un'introduzione al concetto di internazionalizzazione da intendersi come un *processo* di integrazione di una dimensione internazionale, interculturale o globale negli scopi e nelle funzioni dell'educazione terziaria (Knight 2012). Quando ci si rapporta con questo fenomeno, ci sono due aspetti che devono essere considerati: l'internazionalizzazione "in casa" e l'internazionalizzazione "all'estero"; essi sono due componenti chiave e sono strettamente legati. In breve, il secondo è un termine usato per descrivere il movimento di persone, corsi di laurea, politiche, progetti, idee e servizi oltre al confine nazionale di un paese (Knight 2012). Mentre l'internazionalizzazione "in casa" riguarda tutte quelle attività che non includono l'educazione oltre il confine. L'aspetto importante da considerare è che questo fenomeno ha influito in maniera preponderante sulle scelte fatte dalle università; infatti, dopo il Bologna Process, che ha incoraggiato l'internazionalizzazione nel contesto europeo, sempre più atenei hanno iniziato ad adottare strategie per rendere più internazionale il loro profilo. E se è vero che nella storia, le università sono sempre state in qualche modo snodi internazionali, adesso hanno aumentato questo loro aspetto. Tuttavia, per quanto questo fenomeno abbia alle basi obiettivi che prevedono un maggior numero di scambi internazionali, di studenti stranieri così come di una maggiore promozione di doppi diplomi e accordi bilaterali; alcuni studiosi hanno suggerito e criticamente osservato che le università, al giorno d'oggi, sono mosse da fattori economici. L'esperto in EMI Coleman, ad esempio, parla in termini di brand e spiega che gli atenei si comportano come se fossero dei brand atti ad attrarre sempre più grandi numeri di studenti stranieri. In questo discorso si inserisce anche l'argomento del EMI: in poche parole, il ruolo egemone che la lingua inglese ha nel mondo è ormai cosa nota e non c'è da sorprendersi se le università, per migliorare il loro profilo internazionale, abbiano incrementato il numero di corsi tenuti in lingua inglese. Tuttavia, non è tutto oro quel che luccica, e chiaramente questo ha portato alla luce problematiche che tutt'ora vengono discusse: problemi che non solo riguardano i docenti ma anche gli studenti stessi.

In breve, quando si parla di EMI dal punto di vista dei docenti, che si trovano quindi ad insegnare in una lingua che non è quella madre, si deve tenere conto di alcune problematiche. Prima di tutto, insegnare in un'altra lingua presuppone che si adotti un metodo di insegnamento diverso perché ci si deve rapportare con un modo diverso di spiegare i concetti e ci sono più variabili che un docente deve tenere a mente; in secondo luogo, un problema riscontrato in molti studi su EMI è il fatto che molto docenti spesso si rifiutano o dimostrano poco interesse anche se alla fine sono dovuti a farlo lo stesso; inoltre quando si insegna ad un audience che è culturalmente variegato, è importante che un docente si sappia rapportare in un certo modo e questa particolare attenzione non sempre viene data.

Un interessante concetto che ho utilizzato nella mia tesi è stato quello fornito da Campagna e Pulcini che vede l'Europa divisa in due: da una parte ci sono i paesi del Nord, come la Svezia, in cui le problematiche che riguardano la questione linguistica e la preponderanza dell'inglese sono sicuramente diverse da quelle presenti nei paesi del Sud. In particolare, al Nord la cultura linguistica vede un'esposizione alla lingua inglese molto più forte e questo è anche confermato dal fatto che ad esempio, nella politica linguistica svedese (a livello nazionale) si parla in termini di protezione della lingua svedese e di uso in parallelo di questa con quella inglese. Molti studi fatti sul EMI, in paesi come la Svezia anche Olanda o Norvegia, nonostante alcune problematiche siano le stesse trovate più a Sud; ci sono lo stesso più casi in cui EMI ha funzionato bene. Tuttavia, il caso dell'università di Umeå dimostra risultati contrastanti. Da un lato bisogna riconoscere che questa università ha una politica linguistica, dall'altro però non delinea nello specifico i modi in cui EMI deve essere attivato. Dall'altro lato, sulla base delle interviste fatte durante il mio soggiorno, ho capito che generalmente, a parte qualche caso spot, c'è un'attitudine positiva nei confronti del EMI e molti docenti spiegano che la scelta di fare più corsi in inglese aderisce alle politiche di internazionalizzazione adottate dall'università.

In Italia invece la questione si fa più complessa, in quanto solo due studi sono stati fatti sui corsi in lingua inglese e ad oggi sono da rifare in quanto necessitano di essere aggiornati. L'aspetto importante che va considerato in questo particolare contesto è che, l'Italia ha un passato che ha visto una profonda frammentazione politica ma anche linguistica; la lingua italiana è importante perché è riuscita a fungere da unificatrice in

questo quadro così frammentato. Così se da un lato la lingua italiana ha unificato sotto la sua ala questo scenario, dall'altro non c'è da sorprendersi se sia difficile accettare la preponderanza della lingua inglese. Come viene illustrato nel secondo capitolo, l'inglese come lingua veicolare per l'istruzione è stato accolto in maniera diversa in tutta Italia e un caso che ha fatto particolare scalpore è stato quello del Politecnico di Milano. Il vaso di Pandora fu aperto nel 2011, quando il Rettore del PoliMi, Azzone, dichiarò che tutti i corsi di magistrale e dottorati dovessero essere fatti in lingua inglese. Questa decisione accese un dibattito che non solo finì davanti al TAR della Lombardia, ma suscitò una reazione da parte dell'Accademia della Crusca. Molte furono le critiche e le osservazioni fatte in merito a questa decisione e in parte, le ragioni erano anche rivolte alle questioni riguardanti l'eventuale impoverimento della lingua italiana e anche riguardo ad un fattore prettamente culturale da intendersi come un monoculturalismo della lingua inglese.

Rivolgendo lo sguardo al nostro Ateneo, come è stato sottolineato in precedenza, l'esperienza linguistica del Centro Linguistico di Ateneo, in collaborazione con l'Ufficio Relazioni Internazionali, nel 2013 ha dato il via ad un progetto atto a sostenere ed aiutare i docenti che stavano già o dovevano tenere corsi in lingua inglese. Il LEAP project è un progetto estremamente importante che dal 2013 ad oggi è sempre stato parte dell'offerta del CLA e che ha riscosso successo da parte di molti docenti. La struttura del LEAP ha cambiato la sua forma nel tempo in quanto sulla base delle valutazioni dei docenti fatte nel 2014-2015, si è cercato di adattare meglio le iniziative proposte, alle esigenze dei docenti stessi. In generale, il progetto consta di più iniziative che hanno scopi diversi e che si prefiggono l'obiettivo di aiutare i docenti su vari fronti. Innanzitutto, nell'offerta LEAP 2015-2016 c'era il "Teaching and Communicating in English", ovvero un corso di 30 ore con 20 posti disponibili e finalizzato a migliorare le strategie comunicative dei docenti e ad insegnare loro come approcciarsi a nuove metodologie di insegnamento; il secondo elemento è chiamato "Lecturer Support Service", è un servizio finalizzato a dare un feedback individuale ed un supporto a 20 docenti. L'utilità del servizio sta nel fatto che ogni docente può scegliere le tematiche e gli aspetti da discutere in modo dettagliato; inoltre il "Lecturer support Service" include tre sessioni di advising: un incontro iniziale, l'osservazione della lezione da parte di un istruttore LEAP esperto ed infine un incontro finale. Inoltre durante tutto l'anno accademico sono stati attivati una serie di workshop con esperti nazionali ed internazionali sul tema del EMI; parte dell'offerta del LEAP sono



anche le Winter/Summer Schools, ovvero dei corsi intensivi in cui i docenti possono migliorare diversi aspetti: dalla comunicazione in inglese, alle metodologie di insegnamento o all'uso della tecnologia in classe.

Nel mio studio dunque ho valutato il progetto LEAP 2015-2016 proprio per avere un'idea chiara e completa riguardante il livello di soddisfazione dei docenti, il loro rapporto con EMI e ovviamente anche gli eventuali suggerimenti per una futura edizione del LEAP. Inoltre per avere un'immagine che potesse racchiudere tutti gli aspetti positivi e non del LEAP ho voluto anche raccogliere informazioni da alcuni membri dello staff sia dell'Ufficio Relazioni Internazionali che dal CLA. Per condurre al meglio la mia valutazione ho utilizzato un metodo sia quantitativo che qualitativo. Per i docenti ho elaborato un questionario anonimo in lingua inglese con un totale di 18 domande di cui una parte a risposta aperta e un'altra a risposte chiuse. Una volta fatto il questionario l'ho spedito a tre docenti per assicurarmi che le domande fossero chiare e che il tempo per completarlo fosse breve. Le risposte aperte sono state analizzate con il metodo di analisi tematica, quindi ho sottolineato i commenti ed i temi ricorrenti e li ho riportati nella discussione. Per quanto riguarda le interviste, ho condotto quattro interviste semi strutturate ed ho avuto modo di parlare con Cristina Michelotto ed Elisabetta di Venere, che fanno parte dello staff amministrativo del CLA; inoltre, ho intervistato la Direttrice del Centro Linguistico Caroline Clark. Per quanto riguarda l'Ufficio Relazioni Internazionali ho fatto un colloquio alla Direttrice Amministrativa. In questo caso l'analisi è stata diversa, in quanto ho presentato in modo discorsivo i risultati.

Nel complesso è emerso che i docenti che hanno risposto sono stati 37 su 193 e tutti sono stati contenti dell'offerta proposta per il LEAP 2015-2016. I docenti infatti, hanno apprezzato diverse attività organizzate in particolare quelle di signposting, altre dedicate alle strategie per l'insegnamento in lingua inglese o quelle finalizzate a migliorare le loro competenze nella lingua inglese (nello specifico lo speaking). Uno dei problemi che ho evidenziato nello studio è che i docenti hanno mostrato delle difficoltà non solo a livello di interazione con gli studenti ma alcuni di loro anche hanno riscontrato che a volte questo problema è causato dalla preparazione che gli studenti stranieri hanno in lingua inglese; apparentemente sembra che i docenti italiani si sentano intimoriti e meno fiduciosi, cosa che ricade nella loro performance in classe. In secondo luogo un altro problema è stato quello riguardante gli studenti italiani, se da un lato i docenti hanno osservato che EMI

ha un impatto positivo in quanto dà una spinta motivazionale allo studente, dall'altra parte c'è il problema linguistico, in quanto molti di loro non sono sufficientemente preparati in Inglese. Un altro aspetto interessante è che alcuni docenti hanno indicato che una delle difficoltà avute è da intendersi in termini di logistica; il punto è che a causa dei loro svariati e numero impegni accademici, spesso e volentieri non hanno potuto partecipare alle varie iniziative organizzate.

Dal punto di vista amministrativo invece, il LEAP non ha mai creato grandi problematiche: da un alto lo staff ha ammesso che ci sono state delle difficoltà nei metodi di pagamento per i docenti stranieri che dovevano tenere i workshop, dall'altro lato Elisabetta di Venere ha spiegato che una delle paure è quella di ricevere un numero di domande di iscrizione molto più grande rispetto al numero di posti ammessi per partecipare ad una determinata iniziativa. Tuttavia, come lei mi ha spiegato, si è sempre riusciti ad accontentare tutti, anche perché ci sono dei criteri stabiliti in parte con l'Ufficio Relazioni Internazionali, che sono atti a dare la precedenza a docenti che ad esempio non hanno mai partecipato ad alcuna iniziativa. Inoltre lo staff ha osservato che il LEAP ha portato un grande beneficio al CLA, infatti per anni il Centro linguistico è stato considerato un "satellite" dei vari dipartimenti dell'Ateneo ma grazie al LEAP, sempre più docenti hanno avuto modo di entrare in contatto con il CLA e alcuni di loro, si erano anche proposti di aiutare il centro stesso ad essere pubblicizzato. Secondo lo staff e la Direttrice del CLA, il LEAP è riuscito a riscuotere così tanto successo grazie al fatto che ha sempre favorito lo scambio tra i vari docenti: molti di loro infatti, hanno più volte menzionato e apprezzato il fatto di aver avuto la possibilità di scambiare opinioni e di condividere le loro esperienze con altri colleghi provenienti da dipartimenti diversi.

Infine, tra i possibili suggerimenti per un'edizione futura del LEAP c'è sicuramente quello di organizzare e pubblicizzare in anticipo le varie iniziative, magari includendo più workshops; questi infatti sono stati apprezzati dai docenti proprio perché facili da essere inseriti tra i vari impegni di natura accademica. Inoltre, favorire dei gruppi di discussione misti potrebbe essere importante, soprattutto per tutti questi docenti che hanno descritto come utili le attività di condivisione. Infine, un ultimo suggerimento potrebbe essere quello di iniziare a pensare ad una politica linguistica a livello di Ateneo, come ha spiegato Caroline Clark, tutti queste iniziative, workshops ed attività varie devono portare a qualcosa e di certo non sono fini a sé stesse; forse, adottare una politica linguistica

efficace e ben strutturata potrebbe anche aiutare a risolvere i problemi legati allo sviluppo dell'inglese come lingua veicolare per l'istruzione all'Università di Padova.