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É con piacere che presento oggi un lavoro di due studiosi del Dipartimento di Lingue, Letterature e Culture Moderne (LILEC) dell’ateneo bolognese. La prima autrice, Mariangela Picciuolo, è tutor didattico di Lingua Inglese presso la Scuola di Scienze Politiche dell’Università di Bologna dal 2015 e dal 2018 è Assegnista di Ricerca presso LILEC. Attualmente è impegnata nella realizzazione del progetto di ricerca “Insegnare in Inglese all’UniBo” promosso dal DIRI (Area Relazioni Internazionali) dell’Università, il cui obiettivo è volto all’analisi degli elementi linguistici e delle strategie comunicative messe in atto dai docenti dell’UniBo che insegnano in percorsi di studio attivati in lingua inglese, al fine di rispondere alle richieste di potenziamento delle competenze linguistiche, didattiche e interculturali necessarie ai docenti dei corsi di studio internazionali dell’ateneo. Oltre all’English-Medium Instruction (EMI), le sue aree di ricerca comprendono: la multimodalità in una prospettiva linguistica sistemico-funzionale (SFL), il ruolo della multimedialità nell’ambito dell’insegnamento/apprendimento dell’Inglese L2; l’analisi critica del discorso assistita dai corpora (CADS) e la linguistica politica.

Jane Helen Johnson è docente e ricercatrice di Lingua e Traduzione Inglese. Già abilitata all'insegnamento in inglese (RSA Cambridge Diploma in English Language Teaching to Adults), insegna attualmente English for Specific Purposes (ESP, Inglese per Scopi Specifici) come parte del percorso di Laurea Magistrale in Language, Society and Communication del Dipartimento LILEC, nonché ESP nel percorso di Laurea Triennale in Servizio Sociale del Dipartimento di Sociologia dello stesso ateneo. È membro del progetto di ricerca interuniversitario sull'English-Medium Instruction (EMI) in Italia. Svolge le sue ricerche nell'ambito dell'ESP, EMI e l'analisi critica del discorso assistita dai corpora (CADS).

Il saggio che pubblichiamo ora è frutto delle ricerche incorse delle autrici nel campo dell'English-Medium Instruction e si intitola:

## **Contrasting EMI lecturers' perceptions with practices at the University of Bologna**

A vent'anni dalla Dichiarazione di Bologna, uno dei pilastri del processo di internazionalizzazione dell'istruzione superiore è l'uso della lingua inglese come lingua di insegnamento (English-Medium Instruction, EMI). L'EMI ha rappresentato una rivoluzione nell'ambito della comunicazione accademica che è da tempo oggetto di indagine linguistica. Tuttavia, il numero di corsi EMI è cresciuto ad un ritmo tale che persino la ricerca empirica sembra faticare a stare al passo (Martín del Pozo, 2017).

Il genere discorsivo "lezione accademica" è l'evento comunicativo centrale nella didattica universitaria (e.g. Flowerdew 1994; Kiewra 2002; Lee 2009; Miller 2002; Deroey & Taverniers 2011). Regista e protagonista della comunicazione in classe è tradizionalmente l'insegnante (Corradi, 2012). Non stupisce, quindi, che la ricerca in ambito EMI delle autrici sia stata inizialmente finalizzata alla rilevazione – attraverso sondaggi d'opinione – dei bisogni dei docenti coinvolti a partire dalle loro *percezioni*. Dai risultati è emerso che i docenti rispondenti sentono come prioritaria la necessità di approfondire le proprie competenze *linguistiche*. Tuttavia, studi condotti in ambito educativo e formativo rivelano che le percezioni dei docenti, in quanto ricostruzioni soggettive, non corrispondono sempre alle reali pratiche di insegnamento (Fang 1996, Ebert-May et al. 2011, 2015, Smith et al. 2014, Beck & Blumer 2016).

Questo studio intende offrire un triplice contributo alla riflessione sull'EMI. Parte da un resoconto delle percezioni che i docenti dell'UniBo hanno espresso riguardo la propria pratica d'insegnamento in inglese. Tali percezioni sono state raccolte attraverso un sondaggio che ha coinvolto 40 docenti EMI delle facoltà di Ingegneria e di Economia dell'Università di Bologna. Secondo, a partire dall'analisi delle risposte fornite, si è proceduto ad identificare le tematiche più ricorrenti e a confrontarle con la letteratura esistente. Terzo, i temi identificati attraverso l'analisi del sondaggio sono stati confrontati con i dati emersi dall'analisi delle

registrazioni di alcune lezioni erogate dagli stessi docenti che hanno preso parte al sondaggio. Tale confronto ci ha permesso di porre in evidenza in che misura le pratiche linguistiche, discorsive ed interazionali si distanzino dalle percezioni dei docenti. Dai risultati è emerso che i docenti che erogano i loro insegnamenti accademici in classi internazionali tendono ad identificare tre maggiori aree di implementazione: la competenza linguistica, lo stile di insegnamento e la capacità di riconoscere quelle “norme costruite culturalmente che regolano l’interazione docente-studente” (*trad. loro*: Hu and Li, 2017: 200). Tuttavia, il distacco tra *percezioni e realtà* nelle pratiche discorsive dei docenti mostra, di fatto, che un potenziamento significativo della qualità della didattica in lingua inglese non può prescindere dall’individuazione di procedure di formazione *ad hoc* degli stessi docenti.

**Keywords** English-Medium Instruction, Lecturer perceptions, Survey, Recordings, Interaction

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Donna R. Miller

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# **Contrasting EMI lecturers' perceptions with practices at the University of Bologna**

Mariangela Picciuolo, Jane Helen Johnson

## **1. Introduction**

The increasing internationalisation of Higher Education (HE) around the world has gone hand in hand with English-Medium Instruction (hereafter EMI) which involves a shift to English as instructional language in multilingual university settings. Several studies have analysed this language shift by focussing on lectures, mainly because of the central position of the lecture as the main spoken genre in higher education throughout the world (e.g. Flowerdew 1994; Kiewra 2002; Lee 2009; Miller 2002; Deroey & Taverniers 2011). Empirical research has shown that lectures in Italy tend to be fairly monologic and teacher-fronted, where lecturers' talking time is higher than students'. Therefore, considerable attention has been paid to lecturers' perceptions towards language shift – i.e. the transition from L1 to English as Medium of Instruction to teach academic subjects other than English itself – particularly as regards how they feel this shift may have affected their instructional practices and the strategies they use to cope with this change (Lehtonen & Lönnfors 2001; Jakobsen 2010; Tange 2010; Jensen & Thøgersen 2011). These studies generally find that lecturers consider their English competence to be sufficient, although they are also aware of problems with teaching in English in general, such as requiring more time for preparation and finding it difficult to adjust their traditional lecturing style in order to stimulate interaction in class (Jensen & Thøgersen 2011: 14). More specifically, several studies found that lecturing style was generally more monologic in EMI classes, since “the teacher dominated the lesson talk, students had difficulties expressing their meaning in L2, question-and-answer sequences were constrained” (Lo & Macaro 2015: 239). This however is certainly not the case in Italy, where the students often have better language skills than the lecturer (Broggini & Costa 2017). This applies both to incoming international students and Italian students following EMI courses, since it should be remembered that many Italian nationals choose to follow international courses in Italy rather than the same course in their own language.

Studies in Europe in general have found that lecturers often lack good oral communication skills in English (Vinke et al. 1998, Sercu 2004, Jensen & Thøgersen 2011, Helm & Guarda 2015, Dimova & Kling 2018), while their lack of self-confidence as NNS English lecturers prevents them from effectively engaging students in extended verbal exchanges (García Mayo 2006: 165). Talk-in-interaction is widely considered as an indicator of good pedagogical practice (Muijs & Reynolds 2001; Lo & Macaro 2015) and is generally accepted as beneficial to learning since classroom teaching and learning is all about “the [com]modification of the learners' and teacher's



understanding of the world” (Marton & Tsui 2004: 30), a process which is achieved jointly by both lecturer and learners through interaction “in which meaning is negotiated and co-constructed” (ibidem). Given that interaction is mainly constituted linguistically, and primarily through spoken language, poor communication would inevitably affect classroom interaction, and ultimately, learning. Good communication in the classroom is a skill that teachers can learn. However, lecturers in Italy are not obliged to undertake formal training before carrying out their compulsory teaching activities, even in their first language. As a result, teacher training for HE in general has yet to become established in Italy, with Costa and Coleman (2012) noting that 77% of the Italian universities they investigated reported no general teacher training let alone training for EMI. Lam and Wächter (2014) note that although 44% of the Italian Universities reported that “English proficiency is an important selection criterion for the recruitment of new academic staff” and “[a]cademic staff is encouraged (optional) to improve their English language proficiency”, only 9% of them require mandatory EMI training, and only 7% of these institutions offer English-language courses that are tailored to the needs of academic staff” (ibidem: 114). Training for EMI, where available, tends to be on a local level (Costa 2015), organised by the different University Language Centres for their own staff, although more recently some valuable work to offer courses outside their own context has been done in particular by the University of Padua<sup>1</sup>. Elsewhere, several countries have developed training and support programmes for EMI lecturers based on the issues that research on lecturers’ self-perceptions have raised. However, faculty perceptions of their teaching practices do not always align with their actual practices (Fang 1996, Ebert-May et al. 2011, 2015, Smith et al. 2014, Beck & Blumer 2016).

In our study we cross-reference lecturers’ self-perceptions about (1) their own language use and ability to communicate in English in the classroom, (2) their lecturing practice and ability to keep students engaged, and (3) their ability to manage multicultural classroom dynamics, as resulting from surveys and interviews and compared with the analysis of transcripts from lectures delivered by the same lecturers. Surveys and interviews about instructional practices have been preferred to classroom observation in this study, since, as Beck and Blumer (2016) point out, conducting classroom observation – including classroom recordings – presents several practical difficulties due to time and scale constraints.

Our study aims firstly to identify and describe the perceptions and experiences of a sample of EMI lecturers at an Italian University as regards their EMI instructional experience with reference to the language shift. Secondly, we aim to cross-reference our findings with existing literature on EMI

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<sup>1</sup> See the description of the LEAP project in Dalziel et al (2016).

lecturers' perceptions in order to see to what extent our results are aligned with previous research and whether any new issues emerge. By cross-referencing findings from interviews, we aim to report discrepancies between lecturers' narratives and our findings from lecture recordings. Finally, we focus on what these findings mean for designing teaching support for these lecturers.

## **2. Methodology**

In the first semester of the academic year 2018/19, as part of the research project «Insegnare in inglese all'Unibo», lecturers delivering courses in English as part of UNIBO's international degree courses were interviewed by an Italian native-speaking researcher and her tutor. The two macro areas of Economics and Engineering were first identified as being the most typically representative of EMI courses at university level. Four international Masters Degree courses at the University of Bologna were then selected within each of these two macroareas: Business and Economics, Health Economics and Management, Civil Engineering, and Advanced Automotive Engineering.

120 lecturers who taught subjects in English on these degree courses were contacted by email and asked if they were willing to participate, and invited to give a time when they would be free to meet the researcher in person in order to fill in a survey. Lecturers were told that compilation time would be about ten minutes per lecturer. Its aim was primarily to collect some preliminary data which could subsequently be used to identify recurrent themes in order to provide support for present and future teaching activities. An additional but by no means secondary aim of the survey was to gain lecturers' permission to make audio and/or video recordings of a lecture and/or office hours session. Such data could then be exploited for research purposes.

The interviews were held in Italian (the first language of all participants) and lasted between 40-60 minutes. The semi-structured survey featured a number of different closed-ended questions about the lecturer's experiences and training in teaching their subject in English, as well as questions relating to classroom practice. The final open-ended question was a stimulus to add free comments of any nature regarding EMI. The researcher took notes of respondents' contributions as they talked, and subsequently categorised the data according to topic. The approach adopted was inductive, using repeated searching and cross-comparison of data to identify patterns and regularities in our sample.

Lecturers participating in the survey were then asked to allow audio/video recording of their lecture and/or office hours session. Recordings were then manually transcribed using a simplified Jefferson (2004) annotation system. Data from the lecture recordings was then analysed, allowing cross-comparison with answers given by the same lecturers in the questionnaire.

This paper describes the context of the interview, presents the findings in relation to the topic, and finally makes suggestions for their application in an EMI context, such as providing material for ongoing teacher training in language use and teaching practices.

### 3. Findings

The interview was completed by 40 lecturers (18 from the Engineering courses and 22 from the Economics courses). Questions were devised to gather information from lecturers about their own teaching in English, such as their teaching experience and training for EMI, teaching style and classroom strategies, and class size and its implications on classroom dynamics.

The lecturers interviewed were asked to allow capture of their lecture and /or office hours sessions. Lecture recordings from a total of 11 different lecturers were collected. Some were recorded by the researcher while others were made available online for students and permission was granted to use them for our study. Table 1 shows details of recordings across the two macro areas.

MACRO AREA	no. LECTURES	TIME
PHYSICAL SCIENCES	8	approx.9 hours
SOCIAL SCIENCES	3	approx. 7 hours
total	11	approx. 16 hours

Table 1. Lecture recordings collected according to macrodisciplinary area

Out of these interviews a wealth of information has been gathered which go towards outlining areas of particular interest as regards developing material for teaching support. The following section focuses on three core themes that have emerged by comparing replies from the interview with lecture recordings of the same lecturer: English language competence; practical teaching issues; intercultural competence. While these themes feature strongly in EMI debate (Vinke et al 1998, Jensen & Thøgersen 2011, Costa & Coleman 2012), there is still little evidence to show how lecturers' perceptions about these three major issues impact on the teaching-learning process in the classroom. We shall attempt to do this by comparing what the lecturers said in the interview regarding the above-mentioned three main issues with what emerged from the transcripts. Findings will be in turn cross-referenced with existing literature on EMI lecturers' perceptions in order to see to what extent our results are aligned with previous research and whether any new issues emerge. It is important to stress, however, that the study presented in this paper is a small-scale preliminary study which is part of a larger-scale research project. Considering that only eleven lecture recordings are described here, our findings are only generalizable to the sample used. Even so,

several discrepancies were found between the analysis of lecture recordings and lecturers' beliefs and classroom practices. Throughout, findings will be distinguished according to the two macro areas: Economics and Engineering.

### 3.1. English Language competence

#### *Lecturers' perceptions*

In line with previous literature (Sercu 2004) lecturers in our sample also mention problems related to accent and pronunciation, the use of humour and irony, oral skills and improvisation in the language classroom, as well as understanding non-standard varieties of English. Despite this, they tend to self-assess their academic English language competence as sufficient, although only 7 Engineering lecturers had language qualifications (6 at C1 level and 1 at C2 level).

#### *Lecture recordings*

However, lecture recordings in our sample showed that their speech may not be fully intelligible to their listeners. This is particularly due to (a) the use of Italian-sounding intonation patterns, especially when questioning, and (b) to incorrect syntax which inevitably affects the clarity and accuracy of their speech (Vinke 1995, Klaassen & Graaf 2001: 6). Examples (1) and (2) illustrate these two points respectively:

(1) <ECON Lecturer> *ok so one person you want to talk to is x. **You already met her?***

In example (1), the lecturer does not use the interrogative form but relies on a change in intonation to indicate a question, a technique borrowed from Italian but which is less appropriate in English.

(2) <ENG Lecturer> *Thanks. What I said before, so we have to **put attention to** the quality, not only talking about fresh water is ok, but urm, and water issues that we [inaudible] about pollution and so on, so again, about water, water cycle, [inaudible] in terms of world surface water so, the, the blue column is related with precipitation then then you have to consider evaporation and surface run-off, run-off, what does, not only surface also in the ground, but run-off, means, the, amount, the amount of water that is available for anthropic utilisation.*

Example (2) contains some major errors in syntax, grammar and choice of lexis. For example, 'put attention to' shows inappropriate lexis and collocation. Possibly more appropriate renderings could be 'pay attention to', though 'think about' or 'focus on' would sound more natural. Having said this, the Italian students present will be quite happy with 'put attention to' since it is a calque of the Italian phrase. More generally, the ideas themselves are too loosely and inappropriately connected to be comprehensible.

Despite such evidence, lecturers mostly attribute miscommunication in class to the local students' poor English language competence rather than their own, claiming this is why students do not participate in oral interchanges during the class. However, in the recordings we examined, few cases of communication breakdowns appear, considering also that student talking time is much less than lecturer talking time. This implies that students have statistically fewer chances to make language errors. Example (3) illustrates a case of temporary communication breakdown:

- (3) <LECTURER> It's significant if you reject the null hypothesis o-on the previous test (.)  
[So  
<ST> [inaudible] significant?  
<LECTURER> Different from zero means (.) significant means [different from zero  
<ST> different from zero yeah]  
<LECTURER> So if you: (.) if you decide that something is different from zero it means  
that (.) it matters (.) in your analysis (.) so it's strong (.) the fact is that (.) let's say (.) not  
maybe not that strong but is something you cannot (.) get rid (.) of that.

Both the Engineering lecturer and the international student are familiar with the word 'significant', but the statistics-related context of use of this word seems to confuse the student who interrupts to ask for clarification. Flowerdew and Miller point out that "deducing the meaning of words from the context in which they appear" (1996: 25) might be extremely challenging for non-native speakers involved in oral interchanges through the medium of English.

### **3.2. Practical teaching issues**

#### *Lecturers' perceptions*

Several studies have reported that EMI lecturers sometimes show lack of pedagogical awareness (Fortanet-Gómez 2012: 59). Findings in our study confirm this tendency. Practical teaching issues were often mentioned by the lecturers interviewed, thus confirming the need for priority given to them by teacher trainers. In this regard, although 75% of lecturers in our sample had more than five years' experience in teaching in English (89% Economics and 67% Engineering lecturers) a similar proportion had not followed any course for teaching in English (89% Economics and 78% Engineering).

It is notable that, although most lecturers in our sample has never been trained as EMI lecturers, their views about their classroom practices are developed around a number of themes which recur throughout and confirm literature claims. These comprise course design and lesson planning, lecturing style and classroom management, including lecturer-student interaction.

As regards course design, lecturers feel that in a second language it is more difficult to cover the material in the allotted time and with sufficient depth. This also negatively affects classroom interaction, since it is easier to cover more material if the lecturer alone speaks. This would also explain why, when asked about their teaching style, nearly all lecturers claim they still make use of the monologic lecture style, though just over 50% also at times make use of the workshop/seminar style (favoured slightly more by Engineers than Economists).

However, almost all lecturers from both areas state they regularly adopt a number of classroom strategies to foster interaction among lecturers and students. In this regard, 70% of lecturers claim they make use of group and/or pair work at some time during the lecture, with 43% also using online discussion forums after class. However, all Engineering lecturers mentioned using questioning to promote and create classroom interaction whereas Economics lecturers first mentioned other interactive tools and strategies, such as group discussions of case studies (see also Author 2 & Author 1, forthcoming, as regards the use of questioning in the EMI classroom). Peer teaching in the form of short class presentations by student groups in order to consolidate basic concepts before the class proper begins was mentioned by lecturers from both macroareas as particularly useful for international students.

As a result, 42% lecturers from Economics and 44% from Engineering conclude that the level of interaction in their classrooms is fairly high, and they are generally satisfied with the current situation (79% Engineering, 83% Economics).

Lecturers were then asked to estimate the local / international student ratio in their classes. This was an important detail since Italian natives might be expected to be accustomed to the traditional Italian monological style of lecturing, while non-Italians might expect more interaction. Similarly, the greater the number of international students in the class, the less the lecturer could expect to rely on his/her first language to get by. 25-50% students in most Economics classes were non-Italians, while the majority of Engineering classes had up to 50-75% internationals. Lecturers were also asked how many students generally attended their classes. Results show that the average class size for both Economics and Engineering lecturers interviewed was 25-50 students, a number which would favour the use of interactive strategies.

### *Lecture recordings*

Though student/ lecturer interaction was mentioned in the interviews as a key practice, in the recordings we examined there is generally little student-teacher interaction, as is typical in teacher-centred classes where the focus is on the instructor. Students' talking time is limited in our evidence, and they are mainly asked to listen, take notes and memorize what they are being taught.

According to Deroey and Taverniers (2011), there are three main categories of interactive discourse: “discourse which regulates interaction by eliciting student contributions or providing feedback; discourse which involves the audience in the talk; and discourse which constructs relationships between the speaker and listeners” (2011: 14). All three categories imply that interaction in the classroom is generally lecturer-initiated. Findings in this study show that, firstly students are rarely asked to intervene during the lecture, and secondly, one of the most frequent ‘interactive’ techniques by lecturers involves asking students to present their work in class. Although classroom presentation promotes collaborative learning and student-student interaction (King 1990), little time in class is dedicated to lecturer-student talk. Graaff et al. (2007: 609) indicate “pushed output” – e.g. lecturers promoting students’ productive competence – as a useful strategy through which “the teacher or the communication partner” has the opportunity to (a) “encourage learners to react and ask questions aimed at functional output as well as stimulate interaction between learners in the target language”; (b) and also “provide corrective feedback” (Lyster & Ranta 1997). Therefore, by encouraging students to talk and ask questions, lecturers may also provide immediate functional feedback. Yet findings in this study show that, although EMI lecturers are aware that interaction leads to better understanding, they are reluctant to promote bidirectional speech-exchanges. To what extent this is due to time constraints, to the lecturer’s content-oriented approach, to the lecturer’s lack of confidence in his/her own oral skills, or even to a lack of awareness about effective pedagogical practices requires further investigation.

### **3.3. Intercultural competence (IC)**

#### *Lecturers’ perceptions*

IC refers to “a complex of abilities needed to perform effectively and appropriately when interacting with others who are linguistically and culturally different from oneself” (Fantini & Tirmizi 2006: 12). As Aguilar (2018) points out in her study of Southern European Engineering lecturers, “these reported no interest in handling IC in their multicultural classrooms. [...] which implies that even though attention to IC is paid in EMI pedagogy, not all EMI lecturers may handle IC” (2018: 29).

In our study, lecturers refer to several culture-related issues. They particularly refer to the need for alignment between students’ prior knowledge and the topic of the course, as well as between students’ expectations towards instructional practices and classroom interaction, and actual behaviours, thereby showing they are all somehow aware of such issues, though few explicitly state that they need to strengthen their intercultural competence for their professional development as EMI lecturers.

In lecturers' words, *language is just the tip of an iceberg* where other culture-related factors substantially impact on classroom dynamics. For example, students from different cultures have different empirical conventions (e.g. in mathematics, different countries express decimal separators in different ways), different prior academic knowledge, and different cultural expectations. Their combination might not help and could even hamper learning.

Similarly, the fact that Engineering lecturers in particular claimed to find it difficult to understand Indian students' English pronunciation, though they recognize them as proficient speakers of English, is mainly culture-based. More specifically, despite the fact that English is the world's main lingua franca, there is still "an unquestioning certainty that NS English (British or American) is the most desirable and most appropriate kind of English for international communication" (Jenkins 2007: 190). However, "these accents did not prepare students to understand most of the English accents they heard, or help them make themselves understood internationally" (ibidem: 218).

Cultural diversity also affects non-verbal language. An Engineering lecturer particularly reported some issues with Indian students related to miscommunication using non-verbal language such as head nodding.

Finally, lecturers' replies seem to mirror culture-specific and stereotypical views of *culture*, especially when drawing attention to language competence and classroom interaction. For example, lecturers commonly think Italian students are less willing to intervene during the class both because the Italian traditional instructional style is teacher-fronted, where "students rely on the teacher as the main source of knowledge and take a passive role in the learning process" (Alhamad 2018: 52), and because local students are generally considered to be less proficient in English than their international colleagues and this would prevent them from speaking out in EMI classes. As regards international students, lecturers generally tend to describe four main groups in their classes: students with good English language command and high interactional skills (Northern European and Russian students); students with poor English proficiency but highly interactional skills (Southern European students from Spain and Greece, and Southern American students); students with a low level of English language proficiency and poor interaction skills (Chinese students); and students with a high level of English language proficiency but poor interaction skills (students from the Indian subcontinent for whom English is often a second language).

### *Lecture recordings*

Although there is no consistent pattern of lecturer-student cross-cultural miscommunication in our recording corpus, it seems to us that the emphasis put by the lecturers on ethnicity risks creating a



greater distinction between local and international students, and even to compromise students' learning outcomes.

In example (4) from our lecture corpus, an Engineering lecturer uses a strongly culturally-specific reference:

(4) <LECTURER> *Let's think about how spaghetti boil. Who has never seen spaghetti boiling in a pan?*

This lecturer then explained that teaching through EMI in multicultural classes led him to realize that some of the examples he gave his students were culturally-shaped and would no longer be appropriate. Lack of intercultural awareness is not just a problem for NNS speakers. Indeed, it has been noted that using local references that would be unfamiliar to non-locals as well as referencing culture-specific features and jokes (Jenkins 2018: 8-9), as well as being unable to respond spontaneously to students' questions in an internationally intelligible manner are impediments to comprehension for international students. This implies that lecturers should be trained to develop their IC "in this increasingly internationalised landscape" (Jenkins 2018: 8-9). Therefore, further research is needed to develop proper pedagogic strategies in which to integrate IC within EMI (Aguilar 2018: 37).

#### **4. Discussion**

Much research has centred around providing relevant support for lecturers dealing with EMI and the language shift. Attention has been paid in particular to their English language competence, since a lecture is mostly speech-driven and language use inevitably impacts on learning. However, it is important, when planning material for support for lecturers, that they should be made aware of what they currently do in the lecture hall. In our survey, for example, we noted that there are several discrepancies between what lecturers perceive as challenging in their instructional practices, and what actually happens in their classrooms. As regards language, their main concern is having the right accent and correct pronunciation, in line with old-fashioned stereotypes about the primacy of the British native speaker of English. What lecturers seem not to realise, however, is that – particularly in multilingual-cultural settings where English is used as lingua franca - effective language use cannot be reduced to a stereotyped definition of 'linguistic proficiency' (Jenkins 2018: 9). Rather, effective communication is primarily based on clarity (e.g. avoiding fast speech rates, clarifying culture-specific terms or idiomatic language), structure organisation (metadiscursive skills) and correct stress placement, as well as non-verbal communication (Denver et al. 2016). As regards interaction, although lecturers seem to be aware of the positive correlation between interaction and learning outcomes, they mainly attribute the lack of interaction in their classes to

local students' low English competence and their own time constraints. However, findings suggest that lecturers give little room to student participation during the lesson, except for classroom presentations.

In our view, lecturer training could include a focus on active comparison of lecturers' perceptions with actual classroom practices. This may help to make lecturers aware of what actually happens in their classes beyond their beliefs, and allow a focus on how to improve effectiveness, since it is important to direct institutions' efforts – both organizational and economic – towards a more rational use of resources. Additionally, the language shift involved in EMI has caused lecturers to actively question the use and function of language use in classroom and this is surely a positive thing. Students would certainly benefit from this increased linguistic and pedagogical awareness and the institution should encourage and support lecturers in what seems to be a paradigm shift in tertiary education.

## **5. Conclusion**

The results of this research indicate that lecturers' training should focus on three main dimensions. As regards language, the ideologically biased notion of 'language proficiency' should be replaced by a less prescriptive view of communication effectiveness in an EMI context. As Jenkins (2018: 10) points out, promoting the idea "that the English [EMI lecturers] use as a tool of communication does not need to be the same as the English used by NESs among themselves" would increase self-confidence in those NNEST EMI lecturers "who feel negative about their English abilities" (ibid). An implication of this is the possibility that a training program might focus on two main areas which have proved problematic for the EMI lecturers interviewed: practice in listening to non-standard varieties of English; and oral skills (improvisation, syntax, intonation, questioning).

However, the findings of this study suggest that language is just "a tip of the iceberg", as one lecturer in our survey pointed out. By and large, effective pedagogical skills may overcome some linguistic barriers if EMI lecturers are trained to be good facilitators of the learning experience. This includes the acquisition of specific skills as regards interaction strategies and effective classroom management skills. Finally, EMI involves a third intercultural dimension, which means that EMI lecturers need to acquire good accommodation skills to tackle intercultural issues. These involve a greater awareness of their students' academic and cultural background as regards their expectations toward instructional style and assessment.

Further research on a larger sample size and over a longer time span is certainly required in order to be considered fully representative of the EMI faculty to whom these results will be generalized or transferred.

To conclude, by cross-referencing perceptions and classroom observation we have attempted to identify lecturers' misconceptions about their own instructional practices. Based on these findings, we aim firstly to expand lecturers' awareness about their own instructional choices and the impact of these actions on students' learning. Lecturers' language use for teaching is part of their instructional repertoire, and being aware of how content and language integrating principles can facilitate learning in foreign language curricula would improve the effectiveness of their communication. Secondly, based on these findings we aim to design training programmes for in-service EMI lecturers, incorporating follow-up interviews and direct observations in their classrooms post training, in order to assess to what extent lecturers have benefitted from coaching.

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