

## **POLICIES – POLITIQUES – POLÍTICAS**

## CLIL ENGAGEMENT AND MOTIVATION IN UNIVERSITY LECTURERS

### LA MOTIVACIÓ I EL COMPROMÍS EN AICLE DEL PROFESSORAT UNIVERSITARI

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This study reports on a CLIL implementation process at a technical university that started four years ago. More specifically, it focuses on engineering lecturers' response to CLIL, namely their reluctance to receive CLIL methodological training, and suggests policies to cope with this reluctance.

As Marsh (2008: 233) pointed out, CLIL applications can vary substantially and often an amalgam of language learning and subject learning is the outcome, resulting from the educational level, the environment and the specific approach adopted. The three aspects are going to feature the specific context of the CLIL implementation. A gradual implementation took place with bilingual postgraduate engineering students. It turned out the implementation was not CLIL proper but simply English-medium instruction. It is claimed that this is mostly due to two reasons: the average level of lecturers and students was the same (upper-intermediate) and lecturers' insufficient engagement.

A pilot follow-up study revealed interesting information. One strand of this research probed into how both lecturers and students perceived their experience and for

that purpose an open-ended questionnaire was passed to students and several interviews and meetings took place with lecturers so that they could voice their reactions and overall concerns. Both lecturers and students seemed to be satisfied. For students, vocabulary and listening-speaking skills were the most important gains but they complained about lecturers' poor English, slow delivery rate and lack of interaction. On the other hand, lecturers proved to be satisfied (100% of the participating lecturers decided to go on with the experience). Looking at lecturers as L2 learners, they were enthusiastic about practising their English and stated that English-medium instruction was a challenge: they unanimously self-assessed their English proficiency as "not good enough" to lecture in English. It was found out that their willingness to communicate (WTC) in English, a stable personality trait, and their communicative competence in English differed; their WTC apparently outweighs their self-reported appraisal, resulting from the variables influencing WTC (Dörnyei, 2003: 13). When asked about their motivations, they highlighted their wish to learn and practise English, but a desire to deploy a certain international lecturer aura and "do something different" were identified as well. The lecturers in the study did not feel that the quality of their teaching had been sacrificed because of their English; they had not included any question on language learning in their assessment because their priority was content and, essentially, they asked for more support from the university. As a consequence, the university offered them the possibility of receiving some in-service teacher training and a questionnaire (Fortanet, 2010) was passed to them to find out what kind of teacher training they preferred. By and large, they showed great reluctance to receiving any CLIL methodological training. Their demand was solely linguistic, with a special emphasis on English pronunciation, on the characteristics of spoken English in lectures and on delivery of mini-lectures. Methodology, different lecturing cultures, small talk, definitions and office hours were amongst the least interesting.

In order to shift from mere courses taught in English to CLIL, turn losses into gains (e.g. slow delivery rate and lack of interaction resulting in boring lessons) and optimise gains, the author claims that it is necessary to properly engage lecturers in CLIL, sensitizing lecturers and university policy-makers with a technical profile about the need to have a focus on form. A tailored CLIL training that provides them not only with more linguistic resources to rephrase, exemplify and clearly organise and deliver

content but also with group management techniques and genre and academic literacy awareness seems to be a good departure point. Engagement theory can be drawn on, yet for lecturers' engagement and CLIL awareness to increase, a more specific analysis of engineering lecturers' profile is necessary. From the second study above, we know that direct instruction and explicit and systematic methodological training to this type of lecturers had better be precluded and their training incorporate other kind of strategies that are more in keeping with their learning and lecturing style (e.g. Problem-Solution Learning and peer discussion). For example, they can be made to reflect upon CLIL in a very practical and quantitative way, distinguishing lecturer, student and university benefits and explicitly articulating gains and losses. They can be made to reflect on crucial requirements for CLIL benefits to emerge, in such a way that methodological issues are communicated as though 'in a wedge': guiding them until they discover by themselves. In addition, discrete components in technical lecturer behaviour are analysed in a continuum of different degrees to measure CLIL lecturer engagement: on the low end we find those lecturers who want to practise their spoken fluency in English and are not concerned about methodology, even when they lecture in their mother tongue. In the middle, we find lecturers who are completely unaware of CLIL implications and methodological requirements but who respond positively and acknowledge the role of focus on form in their lessons once they are sensitized. On the upper end is a minority of lecturers who believe in methodological issues in general and quickly adapt them to their lecturing style. Another finding is that some lecturers seem to deploy rather incongruous teaching and language behaviours.

Work is still going on to gain deeper insight into motivation factors for CLIL university engineering lecturers (Will their motivations change over time? Will these CLIL lecturers' motivation have a bearing on their students' learning achievement?) and suitable mechanisms that can somehow be institutionalized.

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