Robert Wilkinson / Mary Louise Walsh (eds.)

Integrating Content and Language in Higher Education

From Theory to Practice

Selected papers from the 2013 ICLHE Conference

PETER LANG
EDITION

Robert Wilkinson *(Maastricht University, Netherlands)*
and Mary Louise Walsh *(IESE, Barcelona, Spain)*

Introduction

Higher education has seen many dramatic changes over the past quarter of a century. Since the massification of higher education (e.g. Teichler, 2010) in the last decades of the twentieth century, universities and other institutions of tertiary education have been challenged to derive systems and approaches that allow them to cope with large numbers of students, while at the same time being confronted with reduced resources This trend has been accompanied by other game-changing trends, notably globalization and internationalization, terms which are not synonymous. Globalization, in Knight's (2008) view, covers "the flow of people, culture, ideas, values, knowledge, technology, and economy cross borders resulting in a more interconnected and interdependent world" (p. 4). The term is broad and may have positive and negative impacts, "economically, culturally, politically, and technologically" (Knight, 2008, p. 4). Globalization may be seen as a mobile process through which borders become less. Internationalization, in contrast, "emphasizes relations between and among nations" (p. 5). These three trends have combined to produce a challenging environment for higher education institutions. The Bologna process within Europe can be seen as an approach to cope with the changes concomitant with these trends. Indeed, the Bologna changes themselves have been called "unprecedented" (Huisman, Stensaker, & Kehm, 2009, p. xiii), and to some degree an extension of the European Union's Erasmus programme which started in 1987. Erasmus has the intention to promote student mobility. It may be no coincidence that the first multilingual programme established at Maastricht University, the venue for the conference which led to the current volume, also started in 1987.

The aim of projects such as Erasmus and later European policies[1] was to promote plurilingualism and for students to achieve Mother Tongue + 2 other

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1   See for example, The White Paper on Education (European Commission, 1995); the Sorbonne Joint Declaration (1998); The Bologna Declaration (1999); the Lisbon Strategy (European Commission, 2000); and the Action Plan 2004–2006 (European Commission, 2003) and Europe 2020 (European Commission, 2014).

European languages.[2] This appears to have been overshadowed by the growing need for universities to compete internationally and attract foreign students (for more detail, see Wächter & Maiworm, 2008; Doiz, Lasagabaster, & Sierra, 2011; Björkman, 2011; Wilkinson, 2013). This is the effect of globalization rather than internationalization as what is good for one particular educational institution or country may not bode so well for another with less resources. In order to attract foreign students and to appear more international, the language of instruction in the expanding circle countries of Europe tends to be English, rather than one of the other European languages (Eurydice Report, 2006, 2010; Wächter & Maiworm, 2008; Doiz et al., 2011; Björkman, 2011; Wilkinson, 2013). As internationalization has been translated to mean *Englishization* in many countries, local teachers and students are applying a variety of strategies to survive in the classroom that may or may not be the most effective. As Doiz, Lasagabaster, and Sierra's (2013a) study indicates, many students are not achieving MT+2, which was the initial aim of European policy makers. It may also be argued that some students are not achieving the level of disciplinary content required by their universities to graduate as they lack the resources and linguistic support to access and acquire the content of the course.

The environment, which is still evolving from these changes engendered by these trends, is one where universities and other institutes of higher education encounter a multicultural and multilingual student body which is very mobile. Institutions across the world face similar challenges to find approaches and methods to manage their novel context. However, the solutions they come up with may differ. Among the challenges deriving from highly mobile, multilingual, multicultural students is that of language, principally the choice of in which language or languages should the teaching and learning be conducted. The language of instruction is critical for a university[3] because it will influence not only which students may be able to enter that institution as well as what they will learn and how once they are there. This is based on the assumption that people may construct knowledge differently in different languages (see for example Boroditsky, 2011). The different approaches universities have adopted to cope with the novel environment range from retaining teaching in the local language, and requiring mobile students to adapt, to changing the language of instruction to a more widely distributed language, especially English. However,

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2   The term MT +2 was first mentioned in The White Paper on Education (European Commission, 1995).

3   The word university should be understood as including other institutions of higher education.

merely changing the language of instruction is insufficient. A different language implies choices need to be made about what content should be included; what should be deleted or added compared to a programme offered in the local language to local students. There are so many approaches to teaching in English that it is understandable that content teachers are rather surprised when presented with the theory and methodology behind teaching a course in English. The traditional English for a Specific Purpose (ESP), Immersion, Academic English General English have been overtaken by English-Medium Instruction (EMI), Integrating Content and Language (ICL) and Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL). Access to training and support to apply these methodologies is limited in some countries and institutions. This is a challenge for content teachers who have no experience teaching in a second or third language. The book *English-Medium Instruction at Universities: Global Challenges*, edited by Doiz, Lasagabaster, and Sierra (2013) provides a global overview of the effect of globalization and internationalization to some extent in higher education. In their contribution to that book, Ball and Lindsay (2013b, p. 49) highlight the multi-faceted role of university lecturers as experts not only in content, but also in language and the adequate pedagogical skills required to carve out a career at university. The authors conclude that methodological awareness is crucial for EMI as is non-native teachers' pronunciation. In the final chapter of this book, Jenny Valcke and Victor Pavón also address this issue providing interesting insight into the pronunciation strategies used by university lecturers to highlight information.

Changing the language of instruction not only has an effect on content and language teachers. It has an overall effect on the institution and on society as a whole. Choices need to be made about what academic staff, and their competences, are required to deliver the programme; what needs to be provided in terms of administrative support and in which languages. In practice, the decisions go much further. The job market and the views of potential employers need to be taken into consideration, and the impact on the local community. A sizeable proportion of mobile, multilingual, multicultural students can have a significant impact on a city, in similar ways to immigration.

Educating through a more widely distributed language has effects on national policy. Governments may feel a need to pay attention to the potential of domain loss for the local language (see for example Phillipson, 2006; although see also Haberland, 2005, for a differing theoretical perspective). (For discussion of domain loss in the sciences, see for example Ferguson, 2007; Hultgren, 2013; Cianflone, 2014.) A government may deem it unwise

if all higher education in a particular discipline ceased to be available in the local language. Moreover, concern may also arise internationally if specific languages cease to be offered to students in higher education. One could see possible grounds for anti-discriminatory action. Airey (2012) found that the local language in Sweden had been threatened by the internationalization of Higher Education. The discussion in Sweden is now focused on how to maintain disciplinary Swedish and not how to implement English-medium courses. In the case presented by Airey, there is no reference to the method or approach used in Swedish universities as it tends to be the norm that courses are taught in both Swedish and English. According to Airey, it is hard science courses that tend to have more courses taught in English, compared to a lesser amount in humanities. This is quite different to the spread reported in Fortanet-Gómez (2012) in Valencia, which showed a weighting towards Technology and Experimental Sciences and Humanities. It seems that content teachers' and policy makers' views differ greatly on which subjects should be taught in a second or third language.

These issues underpin the series of academic conferences and symposia held under the title of Integrating Content and Language in Higher Education (ICLHE). In 2003 the first international conference was hosted at Maastricht University (Wilkinson, 2004), although this had been preceded by an international symposium in Cape Town, South Africa, in 2001 (see Jacobs, this volume, for some of the history). A second conference was held in Maastricht in 2006, leading to two publications focusing on the research being conducted into ICLHE (Wilkinson & Zegers, 2007) and the practices (Wilkinson & Zegers, 2008). At the time, there was a sense of unease that the burgeoning field of ICLHE was generating an increasingly large number of small-scale studies of existing approaches and practices, but that there had been little attempt to construct a theoretical model underpinning the relations between disciplinary content learning and simultaneous language development, taking account of the socio-political environment in which the learning/teaching takes place. Research work in Gothenburg, Sweden, and in Cape Town led to two ICLHE symposia in the respective cities in 2011 and 2012 and has generated a start to constructing a theoretical model (Gustafsson et al., 2011). Gustafsson (2011), in his editorial to the proceedings of the Cape Town symposium, pointed to "the need for a shared discursive and interdisciplinary space to support the negotiation of collaborative practices and to facilitate the analysis of potential (in)congruencies between the disciplines involved". How this shared space can be conceptualized needs to be elucidated.

The current collected papers proceed from the third ICLHE conference[4] held in Maastricht in April 2013 address the issues outlined above as they arise in differing institutional and national contexts. In her keynote address, Cecilia Jacobs opens the collection with a view from the south. She provides an overview of the topics covered at previous conferences, concluding that a coherent theoretical framework is required. Following a review of the frameworks ICLHE authors refer to, she outlines the approaches adopted in materials in the multilingual, multicultural context of South Africa. Jacobs concludes by placing knowledge and how it is constructed in disciplines at the centre of a theoretical model for learning in ICLHE. She recognizes that what counts as knowledge may differ not only from discipline to discipline, but also within a discipline depending on one's progress through the discipline. Jacobs calls for a shared ontology to frame the ICLHE field.

François Grin takes a different perspective in his keynote address, looking at the economic theory of value and how it applies to language. Grin distinguishes between the utility theory of value largely based on subjective valuation, and the labour theory of value, whereby value is created through the process. He argues that the value of language stems from human activity in using a language for specific purposes. This leads him to propose the concept of linguistic work, broadly language used to achieve an activity or a process. Grin argues that the outcome of linguistic work is not the same if someone uses language A, language B, or even a combination of A and B. This has implications both for institutions and for individual learners: the language used for instruction will change the value of learning outcome. The linguistic work will not have the same value. It raises questions for universities deciding whether to provide instruction in the currently dominant language English, or whether to offer other instructional language combinations.

The subsequent chapters in this publication are grouped under four sections, policies; frameworks and design; integration; and competences. The first two sections relate more to the national or institutional contexts in which content and language integrated programmes are provided, ranging from national and local policies to the design of programmes themselves. The policy papers tend to reflect what may be seen as a growing European trend in institutional language policies in which to situate the instruction: this includes instruction in the first language. Section three, covering frameworks and design, moves from

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4 The fourth ICLHE conference will be held in Brussels on 2–4 September 2015. http://www.iclhe.org.

the policy to how it is implemented in specific contexts. The contexts discussed seven chapters in this section span the world; it is noticeable here that several contributions come from traditionally English-speaking countries, where the focus is on languages other than English. The last two sections, integration, and competences, are largely concerned with practice in what can broadly be called English-medium instruction. It is salient that two contributions in section five relate to pronunciation. Is this a sign that the impact of pronunciation is again attracting research attention, almost two decades after Vinke (1995) signalled it as one of the serious impediments to effective instruction through another language?

We wish scholars an insightful read.

Please take into account the international nature of this publication and its contributors. It may be that you find variations of words, such as "internationalisation" / "internationalization". This is due to the nature of the publication where a variety of Englishes are used. It has been quite a journey to reach this stage of publication of the proceedings. The editors would like to thank you for your time and patience awaiting the eventual publication. We have both enjoyed reading, revising and collaborating with each and every one of the contributors.

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Biographical note

Robert Wilkinson has worked for and at Maastricht University since 1984. He was involved with the introduction of multilingual disciplinary programmes from the mid-1980s, and subsequent English-medium instruction. He organized the three ICLHE conferences in Maastricht, and has written extensively on issues involved. Although now retired, he continues to be involved. bob.wilkinson2010@gmail.com.

Mary Louise Walsh is a Ph.D. student at the Universitat Autonoma de Barcelona (UAB) and is currently teaching in UAB and working in IESE Business School. She has designed and taught content courses in English to non-native students in Spain since 2009. Her research interests include: course material design, measuring linguistic and content gains, teaching methodologies in tertiary education. She also has an interest in intercultural communication in educational and business settings. mlwalshbcn@gmail.com.