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TEACHING ELF-AWARE PEDAGOGICAL STRATEGIES TO EMI PROFESSORS OF ARCHITECTURE

ENSINANDO ESTRATÉGIAS PEDAGÓGICAS
BASEADAS NO ILF PARA PROFESSORES DE
ARQUITETURA QUE USAM O INGLÊS
COMO LÍNGUA DE INSTRUÇÃO (ILI)

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Abstract: The internationalization process of Spanish universities has increased the need for teacher training courses to EMI professors. These training programs have a dual objective, to improve content lecturers' linguistic skills in English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) and to develop methodological strategies that can facilitate the learning process in an academic setting. The current paper describes the implementation of a teacher training program developed at the University of Málaga designed for EMI professors of Architecture. The program had three phases: A Needs Analysis (NA) stage (2015), two teacher training courses (2015 & 2016), and a last stage was devoted to tracing the language progress and the attitudinal changes of the participants with regards to ELF and ELF-aware pedagogy (2016).

Keywords: Teacher training, English as a Lingua Franca, English as a Medium of Instruction in Higher Education; Technical English for Architecture.

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Resumo: O processo de internacionalização das universidades espanholas tem criado uma demanda crescente de cursos de treinamento de professores que usam o Inglês como Língua de Instrução (ILI). Esses programas têm o duplo objetivo de melhorar as habilidades linguísticas dos professores na área de Inglês como Língua Franca (ILF) e desenvolver estratégias metodológicas que possam facilitar o processo de aprendizagem no ambiente acadêmico. Este artigo descreve a implementação de um programa de treinamento de professores na Universidade de Málaga, concebido para professores de Arquitetura que usam o inglês como língua de instrução (ILI). O programa contou com três fases distintas: uma atividade de Análise de Necessidades (AN) (2015), dois cursos de treinamento docente (2015/2016) e um último estágio cujo objetivo foi mapear o progresso linguístico e as mudanças atitudinais dos participantes no tocante ao ILF e a uma pedagogia orientada para o ILF (2016).

Palavras-Chave: Treinamento de professores Inglês como Língua Franca; Inglês como Língua Instrucional no Ensino Superior; Inglês técnico para Arquitetura.

INTRODUCTION

Louis Sullivan, the American architect considered the father of Architectural Modernism established in 1896 that “form follows function”. I would like to transmute this statement from Architecture to English as a Lingua Franca (ELF henceforth) research, and, in this case, “form follows function” is a simplistic way of understanding ELF, in which all formal aspects of English as a Lingua Franca can be altered solely for the sake of a communicative purpose. Fortunately, in 1908, Frank Lloyd Wright, the prolific architect and educator, qualified Sullivan’s famous quote by adding: “Form follows function - that has been misunderstood. Form and function should be one, joined in a spiritual union.” The way I see it, and again establishing a parallelism between Architecture and ELF research, this is what researchers such as Anna Mauranen (2012), Jennifer Jenkins (2014) and Barbara Seidlhofer (2004), among many others, have tried to establish. That English as a Lingua Franca can be described for a specific communicative purpose, being creatively shaped by ELF users within a particular context. This explains the complexity of moving from ELF implications to ELF applications (DEWEY, 2012), particularly in terms of developing an ELF-aware pedagogy. Then, in 2016, Danish architect Ole Scheeren went beyond Sullivan’s and Wright’s conceptions of architecture and promoted a new design philosophy: “form follows fiction”, understanding that architecture should be a space to create stories. Again, this concept of ‘fiction’ could be applied to ELF research in teacher training and education. The fluid and flexible nature of ELF should help language learners, educators and English Language Teaching (ELT henceforth) professionals tell a story, in the sense of

enabling ELF speakers to use English creatively and playfully to communicate with each other without the “detrimental straitjacket” (SCHEEREN 2016) of prescriptivism, or the oversimplified notion that ELF is just about contextual function.

1 RESEARCH BACKGROUND

In the past 5 years, the number of university content courses taught in English in Andalusia has increased at a 200% rate. At the University of Málaga, the number of English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI henceforth) subjects taught at the Architecture school has tripled. From 3 EMI subjects out of 46 in 2013-14 to 12 EMI courses in 2016-17. This rapid increment in the number of content courses taught in English by Non-Native English Speakers (NNEs henceforth) in higher education institutions (HEIs henceforth) in the south of Spain parallels the same trend worldwide (CRAWFORD CAMICIOTTOLI, 2005, 2010; DOIZ ET AL, 2011; FEAKE, 2013; HINO, 2015; JENKINS, 2014; MAURANEN ET AL, 2010; MAURANEN, 2012; NICKERSON, 2013). Similarly, the interest that content professors, language policy administrators and academic managers have shown in EMI courses has also increased, thus providing opportunities for teacher trainers to study, analyze and implement training programs for NNEs university professors who have the intention of teaching their content courses in English.

The current paper provides an insight into the implementation of a research project that took place between 2014 and 2017 at the School of Architecture at the University of Málaga (Spain). The main objective of this project was to identify content lecturers’ language and methodological needs in order to train them to become EMI content instructors. This program was implemented in three different stages: first, a Needs Analysis (NA henceforth) was conducted to identify the language and methodological needs of the Architecture professors involved in the study. Observation, video-recording of lectures, surveys and interviews were used to this purpose combining Qualitative Content Analysis (SCHREIER, 2012), Action Research methodology (VAUGHAN; BURNAFORD, 2015) and Discourse Analysis (PALTRIDGE, 2015). Second, two teacher training courses were designed to improve professors’ language skills along with their pedagogical skills within an ELF-aware approach (SEIDLHOFER, 2004; DEWEY, 2012, 2015; HINO, 2015; BAYYURT; SIFAKIS,

2015). Third, a series of interviews, a survey and a group discussion were implemented to trace the language progress and the attitudinal changes of the participants in the present study related to an ELF-aware approach.

The School of Architecture at the University of Málaga is relatively new. It was created in 2005 and it only admits 70 new students per year, which makes it the most difficult school to access in Andalusia and the fifth most restrictive in Spain² given the very high demand for this degree and the relatively low offer of seats. Students willing to access the degree in Architecture in Málaga have to score an average of 8.444/14³ or higher in the university access examinations (*Selectividad*). This means that Architecture students at the University of Málaga are well-known for their academic excellence, including their high proficiency in English. The growing interest in this degree, however, does not correspond with the professional situation of architects in the area. Because of the global Credit Crisis and the Housing Bubble (2008-2012), the number of registered members both in the national Institute of Architects (COA) and the local Institute of Architects (COAM) has decreased, even if there are more Architecture graduates than in 2007. This means that the number of Spanish and Andalusian architects seeking employment internationally is in the rising. Such escalation has been used by the administrators of the School of Architecture in Málaga as a rationale to encourage professors to teach their content courses in English.

2 NEEDS ANALYSIS FINDINGS

In April 2014, our research group was requested by the Dean of Academic Affairs to conduct a linguistic NA as a preliminary step prior to designing a teacher training course for Architecture professors willing to teach their content courses in English. The main objectives of this NA were:

1. To find out if there were communication issues because of the use of ELF in this EMI context;
2. To diagnose if there were any methodological problems in the EMI courses in Architecture;

² Available at: <<http://notasdecorte.es/arquitectura>>. Access: April 27, 2016.

³ In Spain, the highest grade a student can obtain at university access examinations is 14. The majority of students score a national average of 5.6 points but to be able to access the Architecture degree in Málaga a student must obtain 8.444 or above (almost 3 points above the national average).

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3. To identify productive ELF communicative strategies;
 4. To recognize effective teaching strategies.

Following current research on NA for ESP and EMI (Basturkmen 2010; Peterson, 2009; Ruiz-Garrido & Fortanet 2015), a survey for professors, loosely based on Peterson's, was designed (Appendix 1). Eleven professors (19% of the School faculty) took the survey. A summary of the data extracted from the survey indicated that:

- None of the surveyed professors had taught their courses in English before;
- 81% (9/11) were interested in using EMI in the future;
- All of them found learning about teaching methodologies in English 'very useful';
- 100% of the participants considered asking questions, providing feedback and answering questions as a learning priority;
- Professors also expressed a desire to learn English for Academic Purposes to disseminate the results of their research internationally.

Then, the process of observation through video recording started. A corpus of five two-hour lectures was collected, (making up a total of 10h of non-participant observation): including three sessions of Architectural Design (6h), and two Building Construction sessions (4h). Additionally, four students were interviewed in order to understand their perceptions, their difficulties and their learning process in these two English-medium content courses. In these two content courses there were a total of 43 students from 7 different nationalities (Spanish, Italian, German, Korean, Polish, Turkish, Mexican). The results of the observation for the NA established a number of language and methodological issues that needed to be addressed in the EMI training course to follow. Some of these obstacles were:

Communication problems	Methodological problems
Certain prepositions of space, when misused, created a breakdown in communication.	Lecturers' visual aid consisted of numerous images without context, data or additional information, often skipping dozens of slides at a time.
Lessons were not well-structured or well-organized. There was a clear absence of discourse markers beyond the most basic ones (and, but, because). It was difficult to follow long-runs.	Lessons were not well-structured or well-organized.
There was a misuse of paralinguistic devices (intonation, pauses, pace, tone, gestures, etc.).	Student engagement was very limited, because professors did not provide many occasions for interaction or they were perceived as 'intimidating'.
Professors' listening comprehension skills needed to be improved. Sometimes they misunderstood students.	Students were interrupted mid-sentence.
Backchanneling was mostly absent on the professors' part.	Professors lacked the necessary training to adapt to students' diversity (learning styles and cultural backgrounds).
Professors' language proficiency, particularly in terms of technical vocabulary affected the course of the lecture.	The constant repetition of certain terms (i.e. 'house') made the lecture sound tedious.

Examples of some of these problems are shown in the following dialogue excerpt⁴:

<beg sess 2_17:32>

PROFESSOR: And? What is your opinion about this house.

Now this is very important for ME your opinion

STUDENT E: <coughs>

PROFESSOR: OK the (.) the fIRst perception (.) what is your fIRst perception relationship with the (.) with this house (.) OK (.) student E (.) tell me.

STUDENT E: eh, the integration with the: (.) <looks at screen> the <pvc> arounding {surrounding}</pvc> (.) no?

PROFESSOR: What?

STUDENT E: Like (.) it's like really similar to a tree. <looks at professor>

PROFESSOR: what?

STUDENT E: even the texture of the wood (.) and=

⁴ The Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English transcription conventions (VOICE 2.1) were used to transcribe the corpus and draw conclusions from the data.

PROFESSOR:=texture
 STUDENT E: =and (.) yes (.) the texture and the (.) the reflex (.) <hand gestures a reflection> no? of the trees on the windows that's?=
 PROFESSOR: =reflex?
 STUDENT E: no?
 PROFESSOR: Yeah. <looks at student E>
 STUDENT E: so it's like integrating with the.
 PROFESSOR: with the landscape?
 <end sess 2_18:32>

As can be derived from the conversation and from what was also later mentioned by one of the student interviewees, there seems to be communication disturbance in this excerpt because the professor does not seem to fully understand students' utterances (see the repetition of *what?*). At the same time, he was perceived as particularly intimidating, "because of his intonation and his er questions, very very direct." (Polish interviewee). In methodological terms, this particular session, and in general, all 5 recorded sessions, denoted the lack of teacher training on behalf of the professor(s). There was no clear macro-structure, nor micro-structure for the lecture. For example, the building discussed in the "Texture dialogue" was never introduced by name or by architect(s), it was never mentioned in contrast or in parallel to other projects discussed in either previous or later sessions, there was no introduction of the project, no context or purpose were mentioned, no connection was established between the building and the course assignments/assessment, or why it was worth studying.

The implications of the findings of the NA were that participants had more methodological needs than language needs. Once the NA process concluded, having identified a number of items that either disrupted communication or affected the learning process negatively, the teacher training process started. The information derived from the surveys and the student interviews was also taken into consideration.

3 TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAMS (2015 & 2016)

As part of the University of Malaga's Training Program (*Plan de Formación del PDI*), two courses were designed to address the three areas in which both school administrators and Architecture professors felt they had more pressing

linguistic needs in English. The 40-hour courses comprised the following modules:

- 1) Teaching Architecture Courses in English (14h).
- 2) Developing oral skills for conference lectures (12h).
- 3) Developing academic writing skills (14h).

The current paper only discussed the ELF-aware pedagogical strategies that were taught in the first module. This module was subdivided into four sections: a) Basic principles for teaching EMI in combination with ELF; b) Multimedia and online resources to develop one's lectures in English; 3) Teaching strategies in EMI (Architecture); 4) Teaching Styles and Assessment. Twenty-five lecturers took part in the first EMI training course, representing academic subjects from Installations to the History of Architecture. Although most participants were proficient in English language use, none of them had experience using English to teach their subject, and surprisingly enough, none of them had received any teacher training, not even to teach in Spanish (their L1). Right from the beginning, one of the problems that we had to tackle with was the language proficiency heterogeneity in the classroom: with participants whose CEFR⁵ levels ranged from A2 to C1. Prior to enrolling the course, professors were advised that the course would require a minimum language level of B1, and they were suggested to take an online automated language test that would establish their level. However, enrolment was open to anyone willing to participate, regardless of their language proficiency.

Another issue was the vast heterogeneity of courses that the 25 in-service trainees enrolled in 2015 were willing to teach in English and the various teaching styles and modes. For example, it is not the same to teach a Technical Drawing seminar, a Building Construction workshop, or an Urban Design lecture. This was solved by identifying the common EMI features that all these academic events share methodologically, for example in terms of structure, linking to previous/later material in the course, eliciting time for questions or comments, describing assessment, providing feedback, having a reflective practice, etc.

On the first section of the module, participants were provided with information about EMI and Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL henceforth), and how ELF is an intrinsic part of the internationalization process

⁵ Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

of European HEIs. Participants were informed about the important role of NNEs in the use of English worldwide in order to make them understand that they were part of a growing movement in *expanding circle* (KACHRU, 1986) HEIs where professors teach their content courses in English. Later on, EMI professors were provided with a summary of ELF findings (SEIDLHOFER, 2004; BJORKMAN, 2008a, 2008b; COGO; DEWEY, 2011), particularly focusing on ELF pragmatics, adaptation and negotiation strategies. They were also exposed to recent research findings of ELF lectures and the emphasis on structure and clarity, speaking rate, etc. (HINCKS, 2010; AIREY; LINDER, 2006; AIREY, 2011). After that, participants were asked to role-play the beginning of a teaching session, regardless of the mode. Finally, there was a discussion of the ELF elements present in these mock lessons, and some general feedback on how to improve communication with students using ELF strategies was provided.

The second section of the module consisted of teaching architecture professors how to introduce certain digital resources in the EMI classroom. There was specific emphasis on the use of short videos, glossaries, and social media (*Pinterest*). By the end of this module, there was a debate on how the digital tools discussed could be implemented in each of the subjects involved in the program and how they could facilitate Architecture students' learning in EMI. There was again an emphasis on identifying the advantages of using ELF in combination with those resources (for a further discussion of this see PINEDA, 2018).

The third section of the module addressed a number of ELF teaching strategies for EMI professors. Based on the methodological problems that were identified in the NA, this part of the course focused on teaching opening/closing strategies; describing processes or sequences; providing examples; summarizing; backchanneling and 'active listening' strategies; structure strategies for teaching (establishing goals, providing cohesion); signposting; making thought-provoking questions; rephrasing and re-elaborating; and providing feedback. First, short videos by NNEs lecturers (Aravena, Sadik-Kahn, Ingels) in Architecture were shown to illustrate a given strategy, then specific expressions or discourse markers were identified, and, eventually, participants were asked to think of examples within their own fields or subjects to put those language items into practice. This strategy thus complements previous research attesting to the positive role of discourse markers in listening comprehension by NNEs in academic settings (FLOWERDEW; TAUROZA, 1995; JUNG, 2003, 2006).

The last section of this module was devoted to classifying different teaching styles and how they affect language (FORTANET; BELLÉS, 2005) and also to a role-play activity in which participants had to teach in English an item from their course syllabus for 10 minutes. This activity was video-recorded and the last session of this part of the course was dedicated to watching the recordings and peer-assessing other professors, providing both positive and error-related feedback.

4 EMI PROFESSORS' ATTITUDES

The last part of the current paper discusses participants' attitudes and perceptions as derived from the interviews, the institutional survey (Spanish) and the group discussion. Overall feedback for this module was highly positive. Participants confided that they spent an average of twice the time they would devote to a similar 'mini-lecture' in Spanish because they had to revise the translation and consult dictionaries and other sources. Prior to delivery, they felt less confident than in L1 because they anticipated having less fluency and less flexibility, this is consistent with similar findings in the field (AIREY, 2011; MORELL, 2015). However, after watching themselves in the video-recordings, most professors (80%= 20/25) acknowledged to be less intimidated by the situation and they could trace an improvement both in their language skills and in their teaching skills. One of the participants asserted: "to know that other professors in other careers (=degrees) around the world are doing this and to know that with this lingua franca (=ELF) we don't have to speak like natives give [sic] me confidence. I saw the video and I am happy, it was difficult and I did it very good" (Professor Pj-1)⁶. This sense of achievement was expressed by six other EMI professors (6/25) and again it is consistent with similar research in the field (AIREY, 2011; MORELL, 2015).

⁶ All participants in this study were anonymized. Identification markers were used to help researchers understand the participants' background (student/ profesor/ interviewee). When no nationality is mentioned it means the participant was Spanish. A number of acronyms were used to provide further information about the participants. For example, Professor Pj-1 was a Spanish professor of Architectural Projects participating in the first training course (2015). Professor-Dw 2 was a Spanish professor of Technical Drawing participating in the second training course (2016).

5 FINAL WORDS

I would like to conclude by indicating that, after the implementation of this teacher training project for EMI professors of Architecture, there is ample evidence that ELF pragmatic strategies, when integrated into EMI teacher training programs have beneficial effects on content teachers' confidence and skills (both linguistically and methodologically). Thus, helping professors discuss content more aptly, "tell their stories" and move beyond the idea of "Form follows Function" to "Form follows Fiction".

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