CLIL courses in a Life Sciences Master’s programme – novices, experts, communities of practice.

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Why CLIL courses?

• Internationalization of higher education
• Competitiveness amongst institutions
• Student mobility
• Professional insertion – courses relevant to world of work and English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) context.
The Situation in France

• France is a “relatively recent player” in this field (Taillefer 2013)
• “The French ESP sector stands at the crossroads between content and language with a natural role to play as mediator in encouraging interdisciplinary reflection linking theory and effective practice” (Taillefer 2013)
• “Developing an appropriate pedagogy for a specific group of learners has always been the goal of ESP practitioners” (Johns, Paltridge, Belcher 2011)
Plan

• Review of what constitutes good practice
• M1 M2 Bordeaux - needs and objectives of our students
• Pedagogical approach (role of subject specialist and language specialist)
• What are the implications for teachers? learners? and the institution?
Recommendations for quality CLIL courses

• Must not be assumed that language will be picked up through exposure (Marsh and Laitinen 2004)

• The role of the language teacher must not be marginalized (Taillefer 2013)

• Academic’s L2 fluency (Marsh & Laitinen 2004)

• Necessary reflection on teaching methodologies (Räsenen 2011)
Life Sciences Context

- 2006 – English added to M1
- Invited to include CONTENT teachers in the ENGLISH course
- M1 is already an anglophone environment
- High profile recruitments – International labs working in English
- 3 Germans, 2 French MCF/Prof
- All have worked between 5 and 8 years in an anglophone context (ex. Karolinska Institute)
M1 Needs - be able to talk science

- English teachers - Biology researchers
- Classroom practice - lab observation
  - = Oral Communication in Science
- Be able to « explain what they are doing »
« engage in a scientific conversation »
- Be « less inhibited »
- « Just do it! » Whatever their level...
- Develop knowledge of « scientific culture »
Course organisation

• 24H ED 4 sessions start of S1 + 4 spaced through semester
• 6 pairs - EnglishTeacher (24) /Subject teacher (9)
• Researcher gives 2 seminars during course – career + relevant M1 topic
• English teacher - upstream and downstream classwork around these sessions.
• Both run the class project and evaluate the student project - oral presentation on a pre-defined biology topic.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DIDACTICISE MATERIALS RELATED TO THE TOPIC</th>
<th>Anticipate on the general concepts</th>
<th>SEMINAR With the researcher</th>
<th>What’s my motivation?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provided by the researcher – Jigsaw reading, Comprehension grids, Ranking, comparing, roleplay, info gap etc. etc</td>
<td>Introduce key vocabulary and terminology</td>
<td>Questions and answers from the room</td>
<td>Topic is “useful” for M1 subjects.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Use the topic to generate classroom interaction</td>
<td></td>
<td>Topic prepares TP.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Make next step cognitively more manageable</td>
<td></td>
<td>Student will be more at ease with the teacher in TP</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MECHANISM PROCESS</th>
<th>COMPREHENSION SKILLS</th>
<th>SIMULATION of SCIENTIFIC SEMINAR/ A scientific CONVERSATION</th>
<th>EVALUATION of these language skills at end of course</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ARGUMENTATION</td>
<td>ORAL EXPRESSION</td>
<td>EVALUATION of these language skills at end of course</td>
<td>Oral presentation RC exam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HYPOTHESIS</td>
<td>SKILLS</td>
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<td>QUESTIONS</td>
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<td>SLIDESHOW</td>
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<td>PRONUNCIATION</td>
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Needs – M2 R

• Integrate international research community
• Requires knowledge of community’s norms & conventions to move in from periphery (Lave & Wenger 1991)
• NS v NNS or novice v expert (Flowerdew 2008, Salager-Meyer 2008)
• ELF acceptability (Mauranen et al 2010)
M2 – Lessons from learner

• Objective – present M2 research project orally & write an abstract
• Accompany the students in the bibliographical phase of S1 - preparing for internship (Content)
• Identify the key language features of research genres
• Organization – 8x3h (2 sessions of team-teaching with subject specialist + final symposium presentations)
Role of the ESP practitioner

• Collaboration upstream with subject specialist
• Awareness of rhetorical strategies & linguistic conventions
• The structure of a research article
• Introduction sections (J. Swales’ CARS model)
• Describing figures.
• Discussion sections
• Abstracts
Role of the subject specialist

• Specialist informant (articles, genres, target situations)
• A role model - own transition from novice to expert- adopting the “habitus” of the researcher.
• *How to give a good oral presentation.*
• *How to put together a discussion section.*
• Student motivation
• “A guide on the side” (Taillefer 2013)
NOVICES AND EXPERTS

- What have we observed?
  - How does it work?
## Worst/Best scenarios?

<table>
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<tr>
<th>EXPERT LANGUAGE TEACHERS</th>
<th>NOVICE LANGUAGE TEACHERS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CLIL methodology</td>
<td>« live scientist in the room »</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>« mm...a B2 will need some guidance to read that article »</td>
<td>« I’ve got a slideshow and i’m planning to speak for 40 minutes –is that ok? »</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>« 3 minutes of listening..with a task »</td>
<td>« any questions? »</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>« why not anticipate on the picture? »</td>
<td>« If they read all the docs before class what am I going to teach them? »</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>« why not ask them to rank the methods? »</td>
<td>« It’s a waste of time listening to their erroneous ideas...I need to tell them »</td>
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<tr>
<td>« each pair could compare... »</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sigh! Sniff! Where has my nice interactive group gone?</td>
<td>They are so dead, inhibited... Apart from that C1 over there – he’s great!</td>
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**FOCUS on INTERACTION and ACTIVITY?**  **FOCUS on CONTENT not on LEARNING?**

**A process of**  **Acculturation?**
Not quite so pessimistic...

Researchers get used to the language classroom
Powerpoints evolve...practices change...
Realisation that teaching in English is not the same as working in English ...... and this is institutionally significant.

And the learners?
Implications for the institution
(Marsh & Laitinen 2004).

- Language specialists must not be seen as auxiliaries, external service provider
- Necessary collaboration between subject specialist and language specialist – integrated teaching or in parallel – no cost reduction.
- Language centres – language specialists separated from other academic staff- CLIL can lead to greater visibility & recognition

- Where do we go from here?