Strategic communication in English-medium lectures at the University of Zaragoza: pre-empting/remedying break-downs in communication and establishing solidarity among ELF speakers.

XXXVI AESLA International Conference (Cadiz) 19-21 April 2018

Mª Ángeles Velilla-Sánchez
marianvelilla@gmail.com

Project FFI2015-68638-R MINECO/FEDER, EU
Ecologies of genres and ecologies of languages: the dynamics of local, transnational and international scientific communication
Contents

1. Introduction
2. EMI at the University of Zaragoza: a case study
3. The micro-level of EMI in ELF contexts: exploring lecturer’s pragmatic strategies in communication
4. Method
5. Preliminary Results
6. Conclusion
7. References
1. Introduction

- Preliminary findings on the practices of EMI at the University of Zaragoza
- Objectives:
  - To build bridges between ELF and EMI
  - To understand the complexity and versatility of EMI from the pragmatic pov
  - To focus on lecturers’ use of pragmatic strategies in EMI communication
2. EMI at the University of Zaragoza: a case study

- **Increase** in the provision of EMI courses in Spanish Higher Education institutions
- **EMI**: “The use of English language to teach academic subjects in countries or jurisdictions where the first language (L1) of the majority of the population is not English” (Dearden, 2014)
- One of the **main tools for internationalizing** the University of Zaragoza
- **English**: crucial for mobility and employability
- **Case Study**: Post-normative approach: Lecturers are seen as successful communicators within their disciplinary domains or ELF users.
3. The micro-level of EMI in ELF contexts: exploring lecturer’s pragmatic strategies

- **Innate preparedness for potential disturbance** in communication and a strong cooperativeness among speakers (Mauranen, 2006).
- Pragmatic strategies are frequently used to negotiate meaning, to prevent and solve break-downs in communication.
- **Pre-work:** strategies employed by speakers to avoid disturbance in communication (Mauranen, 2006; Swales, 2001)
- **Post-work:** going back to a specific instance of speech in a conversation and doing remedial work (Mauranen, 2006; Swales, 2001)
- **Strategies to establish solidarity among ELF speakers** (Cogo, 2009): used to accept and build on the participants’ contributions, while at the same time creating a sense of comity and in-group belonging.
4. Method: EMI practices in different disciplines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DISCIPLINES (Subjects)</th>
<th>N. of Lectures</th>
<th>N. of Lecturers</th>
<th>Length (hours)</th>
<th>Participant’s L1</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree in Business Administration</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>9:46:26</td>
<td>Spanish, French, Finish, German</td>
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<tr>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13:25:09</td>
<td>9 L1s</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Method

- Recording and transcription of the oral naturally occurring discourse produced mainly by the lecturer → Voice Transcription Conventions (2007)
- Qualitative and quantitative Analysis → Atlast.ti software
- Research questions:
  
  What are the main pragmatic strategies used by EMI lecturers in the established ELF contexts?

  What kind of factors or motivations are involved in their deployment?
5. Results

5.1. Pre-work: Paraphrasing

Excerpt 1:

<L>: point of sell interview (.) but there is one option that is the best (.) it's in group self-administered interviews ok? it's aah at the end of the session we have a spinning class and at the end of the class I hand out the questionnaires for the people to answer the questionnaire, ok? it's a small group and it's self-administered, each one fills in the answers to the questions

✓ Vocabulary is seen as an important aspect both by lecturers and students
✓ High frequency of vocabulary-related episodes in the corpus that generally targets specialized language
✓ Use to make subject content/specialized terms more comprehensible
5. Results

5.2. Post-work: Self-repair + Self-repetition

Excerpt 3:

<L>: You have saw...you have seen already, you have seen already focus groups, you have seen aaa depth interviews, we have bee:n observation, ok?

✓ Overlapping pragmatic strategies
✓ The lecturer repairs what he considers as “erroneous”
✓ Self-repetition: to make sense of what was said and to give the listener the opportunity to re-hear the item.
✓ Lecturers’ belief in the effective role of grammatical correctness in facilitating mutual intelligibility
5. Results

5.3. Establishing solidarity: Literal translation + Paraphrasing

Excerpt 2:

<L>: mm I don't know an expression similar in English to the Spanish one that (. ) what's the relation between the speed and the pork (. ) <Sp> ¿cuál es la relación entre el tocino y la velocidad? </Sp> ok? So we must try to avoid that our relations are like this, because our...we say this expression is because we find that there is no a relationship between the two elements, the two variables so we must try to avoid that we establish a relationship between two variables that have no relation at all.

✓ Idiomatic referents used for conversational fluency (Prodromou, 2008).
✓ Overlapping pragmatic strategies
  • Identifies them as members of the community of practice. (Seidlhofer, 2009)
  • Fosters the cooperative function of ELF communication
6. Conclusion

✓ Pragmatic strategies to achieve successful communication and local accommodation.

✓ *Paraphrasing* among others: **preemptive use** by which speaker made up for possible disfluencies

✓ *Self-repair* and *reformulation* among others: **remedial work** in conversation

✓ *Code-switching* among others: Helps to convey meaning efficiently and provides an **alignment component**

✓ There is no a one-to-one correspondence between strategies and functions
Acknowledgements

The author is grateful for the participation of every lecturer and student belonging to the different disciplines. Thanks are also due for giving permission to be recorded and for their invaluable interest in this research.
7. References

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR ATTENTION!
Acknowledgements

We thank the Spanish Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness and the European Social Fund for their financial support to the project *Ecologies of genres and ecologies of languages: the dynamics of local, transnational and international scientific communication* (FFI2015-68638-R MINECO/FEDER, EU)

genresandlanguages.org   @genres_language