

Séance plénière :

L'anglais comme langue de communication en santé publique ?

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Interculturality and transdisciplinarity in scientific and public health communication.

Abstract

Public health is both local and global with respect to its disciplinary scope, perspectives and students' education. On one hand we have to deal with the transfer of public health concepts and principles leading to the advanced interdisciplinarity. And on the other hand multilingual and multicultural societies in which we live challenge us to think creatively about the way we communicate in higher education to meet the demand of the students coming from various cultural contexts and to assure their integration in the European higher education environment, which has become increasingly important in policies on an international and national level.

A response to this new demand requires major changes in the educational approaches to scientific and public health communication. To address the global aspects, universities have increasingly been adopting a global language for their education, by integrating the content with a global language. The goal of the presentation is to show two cases of how such an integration can be achieved. Firstly, the intercultural and nondogmatic English-medium public health program in the framework of Erasmus Mundus studies will be discussed. Secondly, the integration of content and language in Public Health will be presented on the example of European project which reveals how knowledge of a discipline can be covertly constructed through the language it uses.

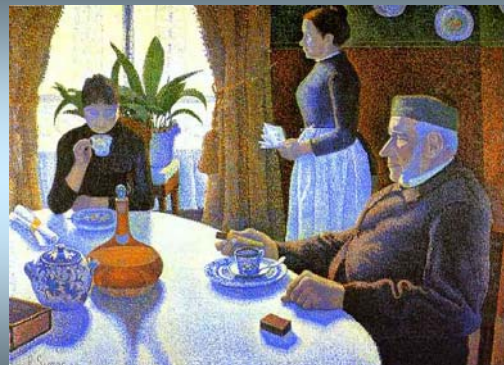
Keywords: public health, interculturality, transdisciplinarity, integration of content and language, communication




Scientific and Public Health Communication in EHE Transdisciplinary, intercultural and integrative approaches


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1. General context - challenges confronting EHEA
2. Public Health -local and global impact dimensions
3. Integrative approaches to communicating in English
4. Examples of good practice
5. Conclusions




General context

- Competition in higher education
- Advanced interdisciplinarity
- Different cultural contexts
- Local and global perspective




Competition in higher education

- Bologna Declaration (Council of Europe) (1999)
- Lisbon Declaration (EU) (2000)
- OECD Quality & Internationalization in HE (1999); Trade in HE (2004), Teaching Quality (2007-2010)
- Bologna process, London communiqué (18 May 2007):
 - “there will be a continuing need to adapt our higher education systems, to ensure the EHEA remains competitive and can respond to the challenges of globalisation”



Therefore:

- Need to educate higher percentage of university population → pressure on universities
- Constraints in markets (declining numbers of potential students in home market, reduced funding) → tension among universities
 - Competition to recruit best students
 - Introduction of English-medium courses/programmes
(Wilkinson, 2007)




Advanced interdisciplinarity/transdisciplinarity

- Blurred borders between disciplines and transfer of concepts and principles
- Integration of the natural, social and health sciences in a humanities context - transcending the boundaries (Soskolne 2000)
- Traditional disciplinary, sectoral approaches are no longer sufficient to resolve complex problems and provide different perspectives (Choi, Pak, 2006)
- A fusion of disciplinary knowledge with the know how of lay-people
- Transdisciplinarity - a way of achieving innovative goals, enriched understanding and synergy of new methods



Different cultural contexts

- Multilingual and multicultural societies
- Mobility of students representing different cultural backgrounds
- Different expectations of channels of communication & information systems
- Integration of students in the European HE context
- Interculturality as added value




- **Local and global perspective**
- From a local perspective, it seems logical to train students in the local language which they will use as local specialists and practitioners.
- From a global perspective, it seems natural to train them through a global language so that they can communicate efficiently across the world.




Public health is local and global

- *Disciplinary content*
- *Students and staff*
- *Program and course design*
- *Medium of communication*




Disciplinary content

- accessible, meaningful, and relevant for diverse learners,
- combining different paradigms
 - › Biomedical & social
 - › Quantitative & qualitative
 - › Positivist & phenomenological
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- competence-based
- giving room for the generation of new insight and knowledge
- up to date, dealing with contemporary Public Health problems and perspectives from local and global perspective




<p>Students</p> <p>Represent: various backgrounds, cultures, values, views and knowledge</p> <p>Speak: different languages</p> <p>Challenged to: adjust their perspectives on learning use global language</p>	<p>Academic Staff</p> <p>Have to be able to: deliver the programmes effectively in English; write instructional materials, devise and assess tests and exams, guide and monitor tutorials and seminars, give effective feedback (on content & language) including on written work, and handle meetings with students and staff.</p> <p>have to understand how: the content is affected by the language</p> <p>Therefore: Their E..language competencies have to be tested, Appraisal system <i>Need for new professional profile</i></p>
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Program and course design


- Broad transnational perspective
- Integrative
- Nondogmatic
- Comparative approaches and less concentration on local issues
- Students as partners in the creation of knowledge



Medium of communication in Public Health


- How to communicate not to lose specific transdisciplinary and intercultural values in higher education context?

English as Medium of Instruction (EMI)
Integrating Content and Language (ICL)




EMI programmes

- do not explicitly aim to develop the students' language competencies. English is purely the medium of instruction
 - Courses 25%+ in English MI (Maiworm & Wächter, 2002)
 - Entire programmes totally in English
 - Mixed programmes: some courses in English, some in L1
 - Bilingual programmes and courses, with code switching
 - Progressive switch:
 - L1 → English (to stimulate internationalization at home)
 - English → L1 (to stimulate brain-gain)
 - EMI in Bachelor's phase or in Master's phase (Wilkinson, 2007)



Integrated content and language (ICL)

- Why?
 - Curriculum constraints
 - Time, resources, logistics
 - Experience of limited transfer from separate skills courses
 - Beliefs and stereotypes
 - Effective content learning is achievable in second language (L2)
 - Content experts are best placed to teach disciplinary discourses



Integrated content and language (ICL) courses

- Explicit goals for disciplinary content and for language development/achievement
- Close collaboration of content and language experts in the development of the course materials
- Students are expected to be sufficiently competent in English at entry - regarding oral skills – academic writing in English receives specific attention.



English as a global language of scientific and public health communication

<p>General: +</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intersubjective communication Unification of the terminology <p>Students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Free mobility Clear expectations, possibility to participate in global educational program <p>Staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exchange and comparison Unified scientific communication <p>Institutions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> More exposed to international environment Programs more easily comparable Better trained staff 	<p>General: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loosing a local and cultural perspective <p>Students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Problems in producing stylistically correct discipline paper Feeling of being let down, lower learning effect (Wilkinson et.al 2007) <p>Staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feeling under pressure, Less effective and efficient-competence problems <p>Institutions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Selection problems Strong competition
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Good practice examples:

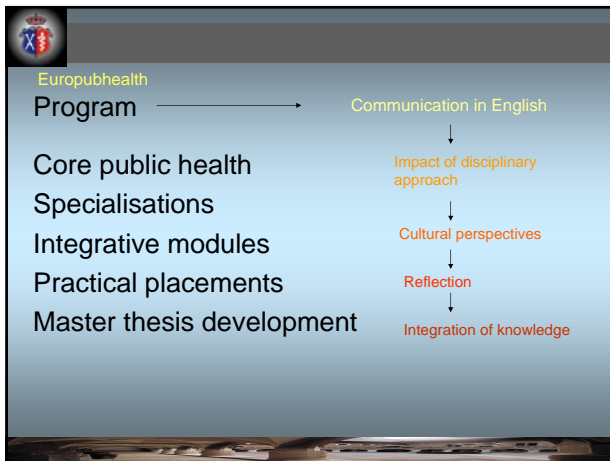
- Europubhealth (European Public Health Master)- Erasmus Mundus Program
- Specialist English for European Public Health – Leonardo da Vinci Program



1. European Public Health Master (Europubhealth)

Solely EMI: tacit development of language abilities

- Students:
 - International - from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, China, Nepal, Nicaragua, France, Peru.... non-English-language backgrounds (NELB)
 - Represent various scientific disciplines (medicine, social sciences, anthropology, psychology, nursing.....)
 - Bring local knowledge related to health and disease problems
- Active Learning approach
 - Problems, projects, based on current International PH issues (policy, action, implementation); small groups, small teams; learning by doing (esp. language); peer collaboration
- Started 2006-08: 32 students; 36 in 2007-09
- English language assistance: none
 - observation of functioning in English
 - Academic writing (comparative lit. review; language of presentations; academic communication)



- Europubhealth
- Transdisciplinary learning process
- Holistic, transcendental, integrative, collaborative (Stocols, 2005)
 - Students work across and beyond several disciplines (Choi, 2006, Whitfield, 2004)
 - Emergence of new perspectives and new knowledge
 - Sharing of goals and skills


2. Specialised English for European Public Health (SEEPH)
- Developing a course which transcends the regular foreign language teaching and learning, makes it vocationally and professionally specific filling the gap between the language proficiency and professional proficiency in a foreign language,
 - meeting the demand of European Public Health education and labour market,
 - Attempting the unification in a specific English language with respect to Public Health in spite of cultural and language differences



Basic Principles


a Student Coursebook
an Instructor's Manual
a Learner's Dictionary
an Online Learning Environment

- Covering Several Domains:
- Epidemiology
 - Environmental Health
 - Health Promotion
 - Health Policy
 - Health Economics
 - Management
 - Health Ethics and Law
 - Research
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Success factors of Language Courses in Specific Purposes

- Collaboration of content and language specialists
- Representative Texts
- Authentic Materials – Real World Tasks
- Selection of Materials and Course Structure
- (intrinsic or external) Student Motivation
- Community building
- Interactivity
- Variation / Attractivity
- Self –assessment
- Tutor contact



Online Learning Environment

- <http://www.pxg.pl/seeph/system>
- <http://www.seeph.pro.mcg.pl/>



Conclusions


English as a communication language and MI:

- has a great impact on EHE and also on community
 - Multinational student & staff impact,
- lets the students and the teachers experience global public health reality,

Therefore


Universities should:

- invest in collaboration between content and language specialists in both materials design and instructional implementation,
- conduct a serious research into effectiveness of EMI


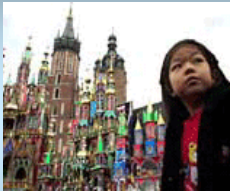


Conclusions

- **Transdisciplinary and intercultural** approaches to scientific and public health communication in English which also **integrate content and language** contribute to creating a *multi-purpose, dynamic, open, flexible, user-friendly and non-dogmatic* learning and working environment



- Using integrative approaches to scientific and public health EL communication merges diverse perspectives into a unique horizon of solidary understanding in which the centre category is **health** with a local and global focus.

Thank you for your attention

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