Introduction. Higher Education Bilingual Programmes: A Research Project

With the expansion of bilingual programmes in Higher Education, institutions, researchers and administrators need to design and implement programmes both in order to ensure continuity and to strive for the best academic results. This monograph, which addresses different issues related to policies, implementation issues, classroom practice and potential quality indicators for bilingual programmes also serves to outline the AGCEPESA research project, which is being carried out in universities in southern Spain with a view to designing a protocol which university administrators can use to launch bilingual programmes and to monitor and measure programme quality, impacts, outcomes etc. The monograph is organized in two parts, the first is concerned with policies and analysis of the situation, and the second explores implementation issues.

1. AGCEPESA

AGCEPESA (*Análisis y Garantía de Calidad de la Educación Plurilingüe en la Educación Superior de Andalucía*) is a project funded by the government of Andalusia (Junta de Andalucía, Ref. SEJ-1588) which seeks to improve plurilingual education by promoting high quality research by a team of 26 researchers from universities in all of the Andalusian provinces (University of Huelva, University of Cádiz, University of Córdoba, University of Málaga, University of Almería, University of Jaén, University of Granada, and University Pablo de Olavide, Seville). AGCEPESA is promoting collaborative work in Andalusia, so that plurilingual programmes in Higher Education are designed and carried out in a constructive and non-competitive way among universities, by first analysing the situation to ascertain the state of the art and to pinpoint needs; and second, by designing a protocol that administrators can use to ensure quality of procedures and successful results.

This special issue has been organised to showcase some of the work being conducted by researchers within and around the project. It opens with a trio of papers which represent the fruit of the initial fact-finding and scene-setting phase of the project, before proceeding with a selection of articles reporting on research into diverse facets of university bilingual teaching and learning praxis from a more practical, empirical perspective.

Before presenting the contents of this special issue, we need to clarify a terminology question. Every time the members of AGCEPESA came together, we would find ourselves debating the terminology employed to characterize tertiary bilingual approaches. With so many members and coming from diverse fields of research and praxis (psychologists, applied and educational linguists, teacher educators and practising teachers, at all levels from primary through to tertiary) it is hardly surprising that we failed to reach a consensus. Around half of the cohort prefer the term CLIL, on the grounds that it is a widely-used denotation for integrated content/language approaches; yet the other half prefer to reserve the term CLIL for primary/secondary classrooms and employ ICLHE (Integrating Content and Language in Higher Education) for tertiary scenarios. The argument in favour of ICLHE would be that the

context at university is different enough to warrant a separate term, for example in primary/secondary CLIL learners are also receiving separate foreign language (FL) instruction yet this is not necessarily the case at university. Rather than impose a term on the authors of the articles here presented, the decision was taken to allow writers to choose and readers of this volume will observe differentiation. Note, however, that the term EMI (English-Medium Instruction) was not so controversial since we tend to agree that, in theory at least, it implies L2 monolingual, rather than bilingual, praxis.

2. STATE OF THE ART: PROGRAMMES AND POLICIES

The first step for AGCEPESA was to establish a general overview of the development of bilingual programmes in Europe, Spain and Andalusia, and to describe institutional, organizational, methodological, developmental and professional aspects of existing programmes with a view to pinpointing potential quality indicators. A sub-team was formed to gather information and discuss the state of the art, and we present their findings in the first three articles.

The first paper, by Julián-de-Vega and Ávila, provides an analysis of European and Spanish language policies. They revisit all the steps and actions implemented by the Council of Europe since 1992, from the Maastricht Treaty to the recent Erasmus Plus programme (2014-2020). In a nutshell, European language policies encourage the development of communicative competence in foreign languages so that there are more opportunities for language equality and respect towards different cultures and social diversity in the Member States. Moreover, the feeling is that language development will improve competitiveness in the labour market.

All these actions led to the creation of programmes and institutions, such as the European Centre for Modern Languages in Graz, to cater for the development of language policies and methodologies. In parallel, bilingual programmes began to emerge in all Spanish communities at all educational levels. In Andalusia, 1998 saw the introduction of experimental Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) programmes in French and German at secondary level. In 2005, as a result of the Regional Government's Plurilingual Plan (*Plan de Fomento de Plurilinguismo*), the project witnessed significant expansion. English was introduced as a CLIL language and primary education was brought into the fold. Interestingly, things did not really take off in the tertiary sector until 2010. Since then, the emergence of bilingual programmes has continued in Spain, but as the authors note, the development in tertiary education has been slower than in the other levels.

Another milestone was the publication of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages in 2001 (updated in 2018 with the Companion Volume)[1] and the subsequent strides towards homogeneity in the Member States. Higher Education language policies were influenced and most of Spain saw the introduction of foreign language accreditation (at B1 and/or B2) as prerequisites for graduation (regardless of the degree). This in turn led to the creation of ACLES (*Asociación de Centros de Lenguas en la Enseñanza Superior*) to regulate the process of certifying linguistic competence.

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1 Please, see https://rm.coe.int/cefr-companion-volume-with-new-descriptors-2018/1680787989 (retrieved April 12th 2018).

Having established a general overview of European bilingual education, in the second article Ramos García and Pavón Vázquez explore the presence of language policies and existing bilingual programmes in Spanish universities. Language policy is the first step and arguably the most important. It would appear that Andalusia and Catalonia are the leading communities in Spain regarding visibility of language policies, yet that only 18 out of 76 Spanish public and private universities have thus far (at the time of writing) published any sort of accessible document serving as language policy (the key word here is accessible since, as the authors note, their research was restricted to publicly available documents). Ramos García and Pavón Vázquez reach the conclusion that university administrations still do not understand "the potentiality of these initiatives as a powerful driver to increase the international qualities of the university". In general, they find that Administration and Engineering degrees are more 'bilingually' developed than other degrees. Irrespective of how universities develop bilingual programmes, the authors argue that the process should combine top-down decisions together with bottom-up activities. As a matter of fact, one of the key factors for success is intrinsic motivation on the part of lecturers towards language and teaching.

In the next paper, by Méndez García and Casal Madinabeitia, the focus turns to the question of provisos for the successful implementation of plurilingualism at the university by analysing issues such as conditions, programme structure, lecturer and student skills, and methodological considerations. The authors first posit a series of conditions that have to be met in order to launch a bilingual programme: first, socio-political support with the proper policies set by politicians; second, institutional support with the proper educational policies drawn up by the educational board that allow the functioning of different units (international office, teachers, etc.); third, the inclusion of funding for diverse actions (teaching load reductions for lecturers, staff development, assistants, etc.); and fourth, organizational guidelines that clarify how the programme is going to be run and who is responsible.

Subsequently, the focus should be directed to the programme structure, referred by the authors as the administration's policy towards the degree and/or the type of recognition for students. Bilingual programmes should be *verified* by the administration, and the type of programme model chosen, i.e., target language(s), number of credits taught in the foreign language, etc. should be explicit.

Focusing on programmes which explicitly promote both content and language development, (i.e. not EMI) Méndez García and Casal Madinabeitia also highlight the competences that lecturers and learners should have in order to participate in a bilingual programme. A minimum level of language competence should be specified for students, and actions to help them improve the language should be incorporated (for example, with 'buddy' or counselling programmes). Lecturers should also have sufficient knowledge of the language to be able to conduct their lessons appropriately. In addition, the development of linguistic competences should go hand-in-hand with didactic competences for both lecturers and students, so that the former receive training in integrated content/language pedagogy and learners are aware of expectations. Multicultural competences are also included, so that there is a wider perspective for understanding of and respect towards other cultures. Finally, Méndez García and Casal Madinabeitia include a dimension relating to methodological aspects. In short, they pinpoint diverse strategies and techniques that can be used in the classroom for delivering lessons, contemplating classroom language, discourse accommodations, classroom dynamics, etc. The article ends with a useful table correlating all the provisos.

3. Implementation Issues

The second part of the monograph addresses aspects related to factors that impact on the successful implementation of bilingual programmes. Here the articles revolve around the primary protagonists of tertiary bilingual education, namely students and lecturers/teachers. The first two articles delve into learner motivation and reading competence, and the last three focus on teacher attitudes, behaviour and needs, including methodological and linguistic preparation.

Salaberri-Ramiro and Sánchez-Pérez present a qualitative study which investigates the motivations of higher education students to enrol in bilingual courses. 310 university students completed an open-ended format questionnaire with answers categorized into six thematic aspects: Lecturer and student proficiency in English; Future professional opportunities and integration in communities of practice; Teaching and learning strategies; Assessment and qualification; Building students' self-confidence and self-efficacy to avoid frustration; Critical views on the use of English as dominant language.

They found that students presented signs of both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, since results suggested that student motivation progressed from the present self to a future ideal-L2 self. This operates in tandem with concern related to assessment and study recognition. Salaberri-Ramiro and Sánchez-Pérez also found that bilingual students tended to attribute responsibility for success or failure to others, which suggests that positive self-confidence and self-efficacy should be promoted to avoid stress, anxiety and frustration (a point which some of their respondents made explicitly).

In the following article, Foncubierta, Machancoses and Fonseca-Mora argue for attention to and the development of reading competences in order to guarantee successful academic results for bilingual university students, and present a study in which they examine the role of silent reading fluency (SRF) as an indicator to measure the progress and development of reading competence, and as evidence to identify student difficulties in each phase of the reading process. After exploring the theoretical bases of reading acquisition in both L1 and L2, the authors describe their study, composed of a sample of 47 university students who completed two data-gathering instruments: a reading comprehension diagnostic test (Dialang) and a silent reading fluency test (in English and Spanish, their L2 and L1, respectively).

Foncubierta, Machancoses and Fonseca-Mora found that there is a significant correlation between L1 and L2 silent reading abilities, suggesting that L1 reading abilities are transferred into L2. However, results also showed that students altered the logical reading process followed in L1 (phonological decoding and then orthographic and semantic recognition). Other results inferred the need to implement bilingual methodologies with special emphasis on reading strategies.

The next three articles are devoted to analysing different aspects of the teacher/lecturer endeavour, needs and development. Rubio-Cuenca and Moore, focus on teacher attitudes to language regarding bilingual programmes in Engineering and Science-related degrees. Adopting an action-based research approach, they gathered qualitative data from the teachers in the PEP (Plurilingual Education Programme) at the Escuela Superior de Ingeniería of Cadiz University regarding their experiences in and expectations of bilingual classrooms and identified clear indicators of Internationalization at Home. For the most part, students enrolling in bilingual programmes in Cadiz do not have high levels of L2 competence, thus

EMI is not suitable and, consequently, ICLHE approaches are necessary. Rubio-Cuenca and Moore found that while the teachers are open to explicit bilingualism (i.e. planned L1 use in the classroom), they are still unclear as to how to implement such practice. This signals a future direction for their research.

Both lecturers and students are addressed in the next article, by Sánchez-García. The author analyses the type of interaction and cognitive engagement that results from lecturers questioning patterns in a contrastive study that compares L1 (Spanish) and the foreign language (EMI) classrooms – where the same teachers are teaching their subjects in separate courses in each language. The author first queries the extent to which the use of questions by teachers promotes interaction between classroom participants in each setting. Sánchez-García found no direct correlation between questions and interaction. She also explores the extent to which the use of questions by teachers engages students cognitively, finding that although in theory certain question types are typically regarded as more or less cognitively demanding, in practice the differences between the answers they prompt is not so striking. She concludes by suggesting that students should be exposed to a wider range of cognitively demanding situations (increasing in complexity as student competences increase).

Finally, Contero, Zayas and Arco-Tirado explore the question of teacher needs and specific methodological training. A total of 138 Andalusian university teachers completed an online questionnaire assessing teacher satisfaction and other beliefs about their bilingual teaching. Interestingly, the researchers found that the longer university teachers had been involved in bilingual teaching the more convinced they were that they had to elaborate bespoke materials, rather than just translating from the L1 syllabi. The teachers in their study expressed concerns regarding the provision of linguistic scaffolding for students, signalling a need for attention to this question in teacher development. They also found that lectures were concerned about finding strategies to motivate their students. As a correlation, they suggest that those responsible for training CLIL university teachers should cover the following methodological areas: interaction, cooperation, student autonomy, linguistic awareness and scaffolding, all within a bilingual environment.

The primary purpose of this monograph is to disseminate the various lines of research undertaken by AGCEPESA members during the project but in doing so we also hope to contribute to debate around the question of university internationalization through bilingual teaching initiatives. This represents a growing field of interest among academics. As noted repeatedly through the monograph, universities in Andalusia (and, indeed in Spain) are being urged to internationalize and implementing bilingual programmes is often one of the first steps taken, but care needs to be taken in doing so. We hope that the articles here presented will contribute to the endeavour.

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