Utbildning på engelska: Vad säger studenter och lärare?

John Airey

Department of Physics and Astronomy
Uppsala University, Sweden

School of Languages and Literature
Linnaeus University, Sweden
Teaching and learning in English: The experiences of students and teachers

John Airey

Department of Physics and Astronomy
Uppsala University, Sweden

School of Languages and Literature
Linnæus University, Sweden
Changing to English

Question:

What happens when teaching and learning is carried out in English in Swedish higher education?
Overview

Learning in English
Teaching in English
Disciplinary Literacy
Learning in English

PhD work:
– Parallel courses in English and Swedish
– Videoed lectures in Swedish and English
– Selected video clips used to stimulate recall
Results

– Students reported no difference in their learning when taught in Swedish or English

– However, during stimulated recall students did report a number of important differences
Results

When taught in English

– Students ask and answer fewer questions
Results

When taught in English

– Students *who took notes* had difficulty following the lecture

– The success of these students appeared to depend on doing *extra work outside class*
Results

Students adapted their study habits…

– Only asked questions after the lecture

– Stopped taking notes in class

– Read sections of work before class

– Simply used the lecture for mechanical note-taking

Airey and Linder (2006; 2007)
Recommendations

The following are seven recommendations for lecturers:

1. Discuss the fact that there are differences when lectures are in a second language.

2. Create more opportunities for students to ask and answer questions in lectures.

3. Allow time after the lecture for students to ask questions.

John Airey, KTH 5 March 2014
Recommendations

4. Ask students to read material before the lecture.

5. Give out lecture notes in advance or follow the book

6. Consider other teaching forms than lectures

Online lecture followed by discussion?

John Airey, KTH 5 March 2014
Thøgersen & Airey (2011)

- Built on earlier work with students that suggested people speak more slowly in a second language (Hincks 2010; Airey 2010)

Danish lecturer taught same lecture five times
Teaching in English

Articulation rate [normalised]

Adapted from Thøgersen & Airey (2011)
Teaching in English

In English:

– Same material took longer (22%)

– Lecturer used a more formal, ’textbook’ style
Teaching in English

Questions:

– Is this true for all lecturers?

– Is this true for all languages?

– Is this true for all subject areas?
Lecturer profiles

- 18 lecturers at two Swedish universities
- Range of disciplines
Data collection

Video

1. Ten-minute mini-lecture in Swedish on a subject they usually teach
2. Ten-minute mini-lecture in English on the same subject
Differences between lectures

Lecturers spoke more slowly had more pauses and shorter runs in English
Articulation rate in syllables per second [normalised]

John Airey, KTH 5 March 2014
Three types of lecturer

1. Structured no change in English
   Two options:
   - lecture is longer
   - the end of the lecture is cut off

2. Structured works differently in English
   Two options:
   - Choose to miss out some content
   - Cover all content but in less depth

3. Free structure
   - presents different information (but probably would in L1)
   - Lecture tends to be shorter—less to say

John Airey, KTH 5 March 2014
Tentative conclusions

1. Lecturers probably need more time to do the same job in English

2. Highly-structured (teacher-centred) lecturers may have fewer problems changing to English.

3. May be pragmatic for lecturers to change style to a more structured approach.

John Airey, KTH 5 March 2014
A parallel language university?

Criticized the term parallel language use as an unoperationalized political slogan


More interesting to think about what we want students to do in what language(s)
Disciplinary Literacy Triangle

See Airey (2011b, 2011c, 2013)
Each of these sites places different demands on language.
My personal conclusion

Need **programme-specific decisions** about what we want students to be able to do in which language(s)

These skills should be included in the syllabus as learning outcomes
References


