Motivating English language study among Master's students: The case for summary writing

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Abstract
The internationalisation of university studies has resulted in an increasing use of English, a language which many students assume they master sufficiently well. This can lead to resistance to devoting time to language improvement.

The motivation to work with language skills can be promoted by integrating language classes into discipline specific summary writing. This approach is showing some potential and incorporates reading skills with writing, grammar, peer critique and discussion. Summary writing also facilitates a critical study of different texts and their structure.

1. Introduction

Globalisation and increasing mobility have led to a sharp rise in the number of university courses and programmes given in English, (Airey 2004, 2006; Björkman 2008, Bolton and Kuteeva 2012, Coleman 2006, Haastrup 2008, Mauranen 2006, Milani 2007, Shaw and Dahl 2008, Söderlundh, 2010), not least in Sweden where the majority of courses at Master's level are now taught in English. One of the underlying reasons for this development is the Bologna Declaration (1999) which has facilitated the movement of students between universities within the European Union in order to encourage cultural and academic exchange. One of the most salient outcomes of this exchange is that English has become the lingua franca of the universities.This is in part due to the fact that English has become the overwhelmingly dominant language of business and entertainment, but also to the fact that academic success is measured by the number of citations in international journals where English predominates (Jensen and Thøgersen 2011, Lillis and Curry, 2010). This has given rise to a number of problems of both a practical and a political level (Kuteeva 2011, Roberts 2008, Voss 2012).

Master's students coming to the Scandinavian countries expect tuition in English, and as they have been admitted, assume that their language skills are sufficient for the purpose. While for an undergraduate student, with even a relatively low level of competence in English, a semester in Sweden can be extremely beneficial, contribute to their

cultural understanding and even improve their skills in communicating in English, for a student who plans to follow higher level studies, the situation is quite different.

Among the language demands facing Master's students is the ability to navigate their way through large quantities of literature and from this, to extract the wheat from the chaff (Shih 1992). They must also be able to follow lectures given by people with a wide variety of non-native accents and be able to follow and contribute to discussions in seminars. Although direct contact in such situations allows for some element of repair and immediate clarification, written texts are more problematic and students must be able to write reports and papers which are clear and unambiguous. Master's theses are public documents. This increases their need to be clear and without many basic grammatical errors, as these have a tendency to undermine the reliability and authority of a communication (Bourdieu 1977). Furthermore, student texts should follow the most important conventions of the field and genre in which they are sited. Yet another demand that faces many students is the phenomenon of the "opposition" which requires making a public or semi-public presentation, and critically reviewing and commenting upon the work of a fellow student; this is an aspect of academic life unfamiliar to many students.

These are tough demands, even for a native language speaker, and for a master's student with perhaps a minimum level in an internationally recognized language test, can be almost insurmountable. However, many master's students assume that their language skills are adequate for the purpose and do not anticipate the need to develop them.

This paper is based on the study of a possible method for encouraging and helping students to improve their language skills that was trialed in two short courses given to two different groups of master's students at a Swedish University. The students were all following International Master's programmes at the Faculty of Science and Technology. Moreover, in line with the findings of Lea and Street (2006), one of the aims stipulated by the Faculty was to provide students with instruction in referencing and avoiding plagiarism, an issue which has become increasingly in focus (Barry 2006, Pecorari 2003). In order to achieve these aims, a course was developed which built on students writing summaries of research articles in their field. This learner-centred approach to academic skills would not only give students a chance to

produce texts in English but would also be a means to introduce them to the specific discourse community of their discipline (Gustafsson 2011, Lea 2004). Further, the texts produced could be relevant and useful to their studies. One objective of the trial was to investigate the extent to which summary writing did in fact help students to improve their English writing skills and raise this to a level that was considered more academically acceptable. A second objective was to discover whether students themselves felt that working with summaries was a valuable and interesting exercise.

After the courses had ended, the students were given the opportunity to provide feedback.

The questions that the trials aimed to address are:

1) How can non-native speakers of English be best prepared to meet the demands required by studying for Master's Degree through the medium of English in a non-English environment?
2) How can we motivate students to work towards fulfilling these demands and expectations?

2. The problem of motivation

The question of motivation is highly complex and in the context of language learning, has been addressed by a number of scholars, including Cook 2001, Crookes and Schmidt 1991, Dickinson 1995, Henry 2010, 2012, and Ushioda 1998. According to Zoltán Dörnyei, the only consensus among researchers is that it concerns "the *direction* and *magnitude* of human behaviour" (2001a:8). He has defined motivation as "the dynamically changing cumulative arousal in a person that initiates, directs, coordinates, amplifies, terminates, and evaluates the cognitive and motor processes whereby initial wishes and desires are selected, prioritised, operationalised and (successfully or unsuccessfully) acted out" (ibid:9).

One of the central issues concerning the use of English in higher education is that for most students, English is simply the medium of study, particularly when the national language is not English. This instrumental motivation is a weaker motivating force than integrative motivation (Henry 2010). The importance of attitude to motivation is well known and documented (e.g. Gardner 1972, Guilloteaux and

Dörnyei 2008) and a number of theories try to account for this. The problem is therefore how to motivate master's students to improve their communicative competence and to develop their language skills.

Another important issue is that L2 identity construction often threatens a learner's self-image (Dörnyei 2001b, Dörnyei and Ushioda 2009). It is therefore important that language work should be organised in a way which is not face-threatening and which students can experience as a useful and legitimate element of the studies in which they are directly engaged. Success and a positive sense of self are important for motivation, and therefore it might be assumed that is particularly difficult for learners, whose language skills have not previously been questioned, to not only accept criticism, but also to accept the seeming deterioration in their performance that conscious efforts to improve language skills often appear to entail (Tarone and Yule 1989:147-148). Further, lack of success often leads to "amotivation" or "demotivation" (Sakui and Cowie 2011) and can thus result in a negative spiral of behaviour. As Walter Ong (2002:402) has commented, language is all-encompassing and "seems to touch everything else in you". To find fault with a person's language can be likened with finding fault with that person. Norton & McKinney (2011:78) have pointed out that "[l]anguage is the place where … our sense of selves, our subjectivity, is constructed." This is a stance which for example Dörnyei (2001b:66) endorses.

Following Markus and Nurius' (1986) concept of "possible selves", it is therefore important to promote the idea of an academic L2 self among students in order to endow language study with a more positive label and to support and nurture student motivation. To this end, Swales (1990:75) has posited that activities that are "goal-directed" are most likely to be successful. Students should be shown that they need to belong to the discourse community of their discipline and encouraged to strive towards the goal of learning and conforming to the norms that this community shares (ibid: 23-27). As I have previously suggested, in the case of students following an English medium university education in Sweden, the motivation to work with language is probably instrumental or pragmatic, or using the terminology of Dörnyei and Ottó (1998), is "executive". These issues imply that some sensitivity in the way in which students are encouraged to develop an academic self is required.

To encourage students to devote time and energy to improving their English will best be promoted by a purposeful activity which can be seen

to have a direct connection to their main field of interest. Horowitz (1986:446) has insisted upon the importance of the "demands of the writer's environment" and summary writing can help students to understand and learn to adapt to these demands. In other words, student motivation could be strengthened by using language study as a vehicle for investigating the texts and praxis of their own field of interest and by relating language work to a pragmatic study of their particular academic environment.

3. Summary writing

Summarizing skills are essential in an academic setting (Kirkland and Saunders 1991, Yang and Shi 2003) and writing summaries based on discipline-related articles and texts is a promising candidate for promoting self-regulated motivation (Wolters 1998) for language skills' development. Using texts with which students are expected to be familiar will also reduce the issue of "interference", or changing focus, and reduce the sense of an activity switch which can lead to a motivational switch (Dörnyei and Otto 1998).

The multiplicity of skills involved in summary writing can constitute a very useful occasioner for "languaging[1]". Further, summarizing texts from the relevant field aids vocabulary development, increases genre and language awareness, and also introduces the disciplinary learning and academic literacies required for success (Bondi 2010, Lea 2004, Lea and Street 2006, Gustafsson 2011, Samraj 2008), thereby providing a gateway to the discourse community which the student hopes to join.

3.1 Reading

As Horowitz (1986:446) has pointed out, students must be introduced into the "interpretive community" of their discipline and reading is one way of bringing about this acculturation. The reading techniques required for summarizing include first skimming for gist and then a closer reading to extract the essentials and to ensure comprehension (Chen and Su, 2012). Such a study also provides insight into the way in which the text

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[1] "Languaging" is a term derived from Vygotskyan sociocultural theory and encompasses the notion of communication in a very wide sense.

is built up and can raise the awareness of style and genre, or of what Hyland (2002:117) terms the "communities in which texts will be used and judged".

Reading and understanding academic texts is a complex process (Meijer et al 2006, Negris 2013) and one with which students often require support (Shih 1986). Tarone and Yule (1989:44-45) refer to studies which indicate that it is often the `higher-level´ skills such as evaluating, selecting and synthesizing information that university students lack, and working with summaries is also a means towards redressing this deficiency (Kirkland and Saunders, 1991). Not only does the academic world involve a great deal of reading, but it has been shown that L2 reading is usually slower than L1 (Shaw and McMillion 2008, 2011). Among the reasons that have been suggested to explain this phenomenon are background knowledge, and the depth as well as the size of vocabulary knowledge (Hellekjaer 2009, Jackson 2004, Qian 2002). Extensive reading has been suggested as a remedy, and particularly in the case of L2 reading, can lead to "incidental language learning" (Pecorari et al 2011). Moreover, the lexis typical of the field as well as terms commonly found in academic writing in general can be noted, discussed and acquired in this way.

Thus, studying a text that is relevant to the field of study and that ideally, is prescribed literature, can constitute a meaningful and constructive activity which has a direct connection to the student's immediate, perceived need. It can also be a stepping stone towards improved linguistic competence as well as to higher-level communication skills in general.

3.2 Speaking and listening

Academic discussion is an area that has until recently, has received only limited attention (Björkman 2008, 2011), and is comparatively demanding (Mauranen 2006). The content-based approach (Shih 1986, Snow and Brinton 1988) that summary writing affords encourages activities with a focus on relevant content rather linguistic form, and provides a relatively interesting and unthreatening means for students to develop their speaking and listening skills. Moreover, the relevance and familiarity of the topic should facilitate a genuine exchange of ideas and viewpoints; something which increases the motivation to communicate

(Dörnyei, 2001a, 2001b). In addition, as subject knowledge is seen to be as important as language competence, students who are perhaps weaker linguistically will have the opportunity to contribute to the content of the discussion, thereby strengthening their sense of an academic self while practicing and improving their language skills.

Crawford Camiciottoli (2010) has pointed out that many Erasmus students have little experience of listening to English, which can cause problems for example in lectures, while Airey (2006, 2010) confirms that even Swedish students experience difficulties in this context. Talking about the texts can help students to develop the pragmatic strategies that are necessary for achieving communicative effectiveness (Björkman 2011), encourage fluency and lead to a better understanding and "judgment about the `disciplinary´ of what is said" (Airey 2010:35).

Using texts in this way, students not only act as mutual resources for subject learning (Dörnyei and Malderez 1997, Oxford 1997), but by repeating and imitating the frequently recurring words and patterns in the text, can add them to their own language resources and thereby make them available for further use and modification (Larsen-Freeman 2011:48, Pecorari 2008b). The texts provide a means for peer scaffolding of both language and subject understanding.

3.3 Writing

A summary is a condensed, objective account of the main points of a longer text and has a number of advantages from a learning point of view. One is that it forces students to concentrate on the essentials and to say what is to be said both as concisely and correctly as possible. While the language and content of the student text have the advantage of being drawn from the input material, summarizing requires a reformulation. Thus, summary writing helps students to learn to paraphrase and thereby avoid the plagiarism that often results from a lack of the language skills that are necessary to reformulate often complex ideas in their own words (Barry 2006, Lea and Street 2006, Magyar 2012, Ostler 1980, Pecorari 2003, 2006, 2008a). Moreover, a summary provides an opportunity to work with discipline-specific lexical bundles (Bondi 2010, Pecorari 2008b).

The relative brevity of the student texts can allow teachers to give personalized, individual feedback and for students to re-work their texts.

Ideally, from such feedback, students should be able to identify their own strengths and weaknesses and work to see a steady and positive progress in their writing skills as they move over new competence thresholds. Facilitating and encouraging positive retrospective self-evaluation allows and enables learners to take control of their learning and is conducive to motivation.

Moreover, from the perspective of scaffolding, summaries can profitably be written in small groups or pairs, allowing students to benefit from the strengths of their peers.

3.4 Peer review

As Hyland (2009:30) has pointed out, writing is a form of social interaction and the peer seminar, which is a form and development of group interaction, (Aguilar 2004) can be a very rewarding exercise. However, as the peer seminar is an independent genre (Swales 1990, Weissberg 1993) in order for peer review to be useful and constructive, students need training in peer response and in peer editing (Hyland 2003). Adriana Bolívar (2011) has described this activity as the interface between grammar and pragmatics. By this, she means that it provides a resource for learning appropriate linguistic ways to discuss alternative viewpoints and to politely disagree. Peer review is therefore not only a tool for languaging, but also provides and facilitates practical training in giving and receiving criticism and in using language which is appropriate to what can easily become a face-threatening situation Students do not only need to know what to look for, but also how to give praise as well as constructive negative feedback. As Kasper and Schmidt (1996) have commented: "mere exposure is insufficient for L2 pragmatic development and therefore instruction is necessary to raise learners' consciousness of form-function mappings and pertinent contextual variables…" Therefore teacher guidance and involvement is necessary to show students how to give criticism in a positive and friendly way and ensure that feedback is constructive and fulfills the intended purpose.

Moreover, as peer review requires students to analyse each other's work for content, structure and comprehensibility, it can be constructively used as a tool for improving reader awareness, and subsequently the structure and cohesion of a text. In other words, it provides a basis for collaborative learning, cooperative learning and

interaction to support the development of communication and enhance learning outcomes in the classroom (Oxford 1997). A group can become a resource pool, the sum of which is greater than the individual parts (Dörnyei and Malderez 1997:67).

4. The trials

In the autumn of 2010, we were given the opportunity to test these theoretical benefits of summary writing in two courses, or language modules, ordered by the Faculty of Science and Technology. The students taking part in these trials had all been admitted to International Master's programmes in science and technology. Having fulfilled the formal language requirements for admission, the assumption had been that their English was adequate. However, it had become evident that this was not necessarily so and that many needed remedial help.

Attendance and the completion of assignments were mandatory, but credits could not be directly awarded for the language modules which were integrated into existing compulsory courses. The first year module was added to an introductory course three-credit course which included library skills, while for the second year students, it was incorporated into the master's thesis requirements.

4.1 Method

Two separate language modules were organized, the first for students writing their thesis the following semester and the second for students beginning their master's studies. For the first group, the course was required to have direct relevance to the work of writing and defending a master's thesis while for the latter, it was stipulated that the materials used should have direct relevance to their different programmes. A further requirement was that all students should be given guidance in how to avoid plagiarism and practice in referencing, citing and paraphrasing (Barry 2006, Pecorari 2003, 2006).

4.2 The first trial

The first group trial was allocated 24 hours' tuition spread over the autumn semester. The course comprised two lectures for the whole group

of about 220 students from all the different engineering programmes offered, followed by ten two-hour classes. All the students were international students and the majority came from countries outside Europe.

The course plan included the writing of two or three summaries, the first of which was to be written in pairs, followed by peer reviews in class. Presentation techniques and peer review were integrated into the course plan. The final assignment was a short report from their field which was to be formally presented in class and be opposed by two other students, following the typical format of the master's thesis defense. The assignment should not involve extra unnecessary study, and thus students were encouraged to write about a subject they were considering for their thesis or to present a term-paper. They were not required or expected to have a complete paper, but needed an overview and some sections. Prior to the first summary, students worked with a typical research article in their field and the teacher led discussions to try to pin-point the salient features of the article design, (Swales 1990) and the main points of the actual text.

After each summary assignment, students were asked to review each other's work for content, structure and obvious language errors. They were instructed to begin with positive feedback and then move on to suggesting and discussing aspects that could be improved. Each summary also received teacher feedback and students were encouraged to re-write the summaries after this. Some traditional language teaching, including vocabulary building, cohesion and modality, was incorporated into the classes.

4.3 The second trial

The second group comprised about 90 students, the majority of whom were new to the university, but included a few second year students who had arrived at the university too late to follow the introductory course in their first year, or who had missed part of that course. These students either took both the language modules. Fourteen Swedish L1 speakers also participated. These were all female and followed the same programme, together with one male international student. As Bolton and Kuteeva (2012) have pointed out, Swedes traditionally pride themselves on their language competence and it was decided that these students

would constitute a class of their own to minimize protests. The students following the other programmes were predominantly male and were divided into four classes of between 15 and 20 participants, coming generally from two disciplines.

This module also began with two introductory lectures to the whole group. The stipulations were that each student should write a summary of a research article in their field, and in pairs, a critical reflection built upon that article and two papers that they themselves had found in their library class. The premise was that a subject teacher would participate in the final session and give content feedback on the critical reflection. This time, the students were only allocated one session for summary writing and one for the critical reflection. Lessons took place every second or third week during the semester and included three forty-five minute slots for feedback sessions and peer review discussion. A further feedback session was given for students whose assignments had not reached a level that was deemed good enough. Students were required to repeat the assignments until they were "good enough".

On the completion of this module, students were given the opportunity to answer a questionnaire. The questions addressed the importance of English and how useful they felt that the different assignments had been to developing their language skills. Particular emphasis was given to the potential benefits of summarizing research articles.

4.4 The questionnaire
The questionnaire had five questions, two about English generally, one directly concerned with summary writing and a fourth question asked for free comments about the course. The final question concerned the critical essay and will not be discussed here. Just over one third of the students, 35 individuals, responded.

> Question One:
>   How important do you think that English is for your:
>   a) studies,
>   b) career prospects?

Students were asked to rank the importance from 1 to 5 with 1 as most important. Almost all the students who answered said that English was

very important and awarded both categories 1 or 2. The distribution between studies and career was even. Only one student gave the importance of English a 3 and he did this for both categories.

Question Two:
What aspects of English do you need most help with?

Table 1. Question 2: What aspects of English do you need most help with?

Order of importance	1	2	3	4
Reading academic texts	4	4	12	10
Listening to lectures	2	7	8	14
Speaking (discussions, presentations)	15	8	6	2
Writing	14	11	4	3

The figures in the boxes represent the number of students.

Question Three was specifically related to different aspects of summary writing and read:

How useful have you found summary writing for:
a) general writing practice
b) a guideline to what aspects of English you need to work with,
c) reading academic texts to extract the essentials,
d) understanding how texts are constructed?

Again, respondents were asked to rank the different aspects and were asked to add any information that they found relevant.

Table 2. Question 3: How useful have you found summary writing for:

Ranking in order of importance	1	2	3	4	5
general writing practice	4	7	5	8	5
a guideline to what aspects of English you need to work with	3	4	11	5	6
reading academic texts to extract the essentials	5	2	9	7	7
understanding how texts are constructed	6	2	6	11	5

The figures in the boxes represent the number of students.

The fourth question that will be considered here concerned recommendations for future courses and received few responses. These will be incorporated into the findings of the questionnaire.

4.5 The findings

Although the questionnaires were anonymous, the organization of the classes meant that it was possible to see which had been filled in by Swedish students. Although they endorsed the view that English was important, the general attitude was that they did not need a course. One commented: "I find it abit unnecessary for Swedes to take the course many already are good." Another Swedish respondent wanted a test to precede the course and wrote: "If you fail you have to take the course, if you pass its vollantarely". This student agreed that English was going to be very important and placed writing and reading at the top of the list of areas that needed help, but then commented on summary writing "Already did it lots of times." This was one of the few comments that specifically addressed summary writing, although another Swedish student claimed that it was "already covered by other courses in the programme" and a third commented "I feel that I already have a good grasp of the points mentioned above."

It was not possible to identify the international students, but a couple agreed with the Swedes that the course should not be mandatory. One commented, "I would like professor with better English during the class of the other courses" and suggested that the course should not be mandatory for students but, "Should instead be compulsory for some international professors because they speak and write a very bad English!" These comments underline the points made by for example by Haastrup (2008) who points out that lecturers are expected not only to be experts in their subject, but also to master all the complexities of English, a finding that is confirmed by Pecorari et al (2011). As Airey (2011), Shaw and Dahl (2008), and Thøgersen and Airey (2011) comment, it is simply assumed that lecturers are to be able to teach in English and that they are happy to do so. However, a number of students felt that it was unfair that they should follow a course to improve their level of English while in their view, not all of their lecturers had a good command of the language.

In general, the international students were much more positive to the English module and to summary writing than their Swedish counterparts. Among their comments was as request for "More writing practice! I think with this kind of practice, students can improve their writing which would be helpful in their studies." Two comments of particular interest from the international students were the following: "Maybe it would be

possible to have topics that are not scientific but of common knowledge. This way it would be possible to focus on writing and organizing text and not about intellectual, academic, scientific work" while another student wrote: "We should have more basic reading and writing practice." Yet another respondent said that "It helps you to gain more confidence in writing when someone corrects your mistakes and gives reviews."

The results of the questionnaire show a consensus that English is important for both studies and a future career. Although the questionnaires were not always completed in accordance with the instructions, it was apparent that most students felt that they most needed help to participate in discussions and to write. Surprisingly, about half of the Swedish students claimed that they needed most help with speaking and one student said that the areas in which she needed most help were speaking and listening to lectures. This is line with the findings made by Airey (2009) and Hellekjaer (2010), for example.

The generally negative attitude of the Swedish students might confirm Airey's suggestion (2004) that Swedish students tend to overestimate their abilities, a view Hellekjaer (2009), supports for the Norwegian context.

5. Discussion

Students following a master's programme through the medium of English must be able to follow lectures (Airey 2009, Crawford Camiciottoli 2010, Heelkjaer 2010), read and analyse complicated texts (Hellekjaer 2009, Jackson 2004, Meijer et al 2006, Shaw and McMillion 2008, 2011) synthesize their ideas in writing (Lea 2004, Lea and Street 1998) discuss their findings and motivate their opinions (Björkman 2008, 2010, 2011, Bolívar 2011).There is no simple solution and no magic wand. The challenges facing each student are unique. Italian students, for example, are unused to writing (Crawford Camiciottoli 2010).

The purpose of this investigation was to ascertain whether summary writing was a potential candidate for enhancing students' language skills. However, a number of factors need to be taken into consideration when interpreting the results of the questionnaire. The first is that the students had not elected to follow the course and that they had not anticipated that they would have to study English. This in turn implies that their

motivation was low and that the sudden requirement impacted negatively upon their L2 identities and sense of self (Norton and McKinney 2011). Another is that the considerable workload involved did not generate any credits and was seen by many simply as an unexpected burden. Further, no other faculty members joined the final session or commented on the content of the critical essays. The students had put a great deal of effort into this extremely cognitively challenging and time consuming task expecting content feedback, and absence of tutor response may have impacted on the results of the questionnaires which were answered at the end of the last class. Furthermore, timetabling did nothing to suggest that English was important. Other issues that need to be considered when evaluating these results are that one group did not receive the questionnaire due to an administrative error, and that the Swedish students are over-represented as 10 of the 35 questionnaires collected came from this group. These students were generally very negative to the idea of having to study English.

Thus, taking into account the far from optimal circumstances under which the classes reported in the trials were conducted, the results of the questionnaire and the reports and observations from the different classes in both the language modules are carefully optimistic, and indicate that students could appreciate and benefit from language instruction organized around summary writing and peer review. Dudley-Evans and St John (1998:40) have discussed the impact of delayed needs and immediate needs upon motivation. The needs of the first year students are delayed, while for those in the second year, they are much more immediate. Unfortunately, it proved unrealistic to ask these students to answer a questionnaire, and so the results of the summary writing practice and of the course in general could only be deduced through observation and discussion.

Although there is no written documentation to support this view, these students in general seemed to respond rather more positively to the introduction of an English language module. Those students who were able to attend class regularly did show an improved ability to select the main points of the text and were beginning to learn to paraphrase. They were also more aware of the importance of structure and basic grammatical accuracy and were working towards improving this. Two even reported that one of the research articles that they had been given to

work with was so interesting that they planned to use it as a starting point for their master's thesis.

In both cases, the time allocated for language work was too little to allow for reasonable process and could only promote awareness of the needs. Language development requires an investment in time as well as in effort.

Dörnyei (2001b:27) has asked whose responsibility it is to motivate students and to help them maintain their interest, and while it is perhaps reasonable to assume that each individual student is personally responsible to work and strive towards better competence, it is also the job of a teacher to stimulate interest and to provide students with the means to achieve these ends. In the case of English, many students assume that their skills are satisfactory and find it difficult to accept that the competence that they have to interact, both in person and through the different social media, is not sufficient or acceptable for academic studies. It is therefore not surprising that they should display some resistance to devoting time and energy to improving the language skills which they had assumed were adequate. It is also a challenge to convince Swedish students who, in many cases consider themselves to be bi-lingual (Airey 2004) that they need to develop and improve their English.

6. Conclusion

6.1 Some advantages of summary writing

Because of the immediate relevance of the texts that are summarized to a student's field of academic interest, this practice can provide and help to sustain the motivation that is necessary for a language "knower" to cross competence thresholds. It is also an excellent source of feedback and can confirm that a student has understood a text correctly. Moreover, a selection of well-written summaries of articles in the field provides the writer with excellent material for both revision and research.

As Horowitz (1986: 456) has insisted, students must be able to encode selected data into appropriate academic English. Summary writing is potentially an excellent candidate to help them to accomplish this. Although I am by no means suggesting that the writing of discipline-related summaries is a panacea, I do propose that it is a potential stepping stone towards the goal of motivating students to take

charge of their own linguistic and academic development and to help them to become viable members of their chosen discourse community.

6.2 A question of attitude

However, although summary writing can be a useful tool in the work of increasing English language competence among students and in promoting motivation, there are a number of practical problems that need to be addressed (Voss, 2012).

The first of these is the Cinderella Syndrome with which English language classes are often afflicted (Dudley-Evans and St John, 1998:38). It is not only the students themselves who do not always understand the necessity of working with their language, but more importantly, even the university authorities who should be promoting and encouraging this development do not always seem to be fully aware of the complexity of the issue and of how time consuming language progress is. Student unwillingness to devote time to language is often shared by the unwillingness of faculty to allocate time to this end. When the importance of English language study seems to be rather a matter of lip service than of conviction, busy students give it low priority. When faculty is not seen to promote the importance of language, this has a negative effect on students' motivation (Dörnyei, 2001a:180).

Although integrating language classes with the discipline can alleviate the problem of motivation, it requires the complete cooperation and support of the faculty. Language must be given more status. The subject teacher and the language teacher must be seen to be working together towards the same goal and to be partners in the enterprise. The language specialist should not appear to be an appendage but an integral part of the whole. Ideally, the subject teacher should also appear in the language class if only for a few minutes, and join in group discussions (Gustafsson, 2011: 115). This not only demonstrates that English is important, but can also help to ensure that texts have been correctly understood and interpreted. In other words, collaboration between the language teacher and the subject specialist are central to boosting student motivation to improve linguistic competence.

Ong (2002:396) has raised another central issue, pointing out that "[u]nfortunately, even in the best colleges and universities, good writing is not demanded by everyone on the faculty". This is a serious problem

and one which it is extremely difficult to address. Lecturers cannot be assumed to have either the dual competence or the time required to address the language problems of student papers.

We are expected to encourage our students to "learn for life". It is the duty of teachers to empower students and to help them not only to have something to say, but, following Bourdieu (1977) say it in such a way that they will be believed and respected. Summary writing is potentially a means to motivate this struggle for empowerment and is worth further investigation.

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