

Coaching in Another Language: The Benefits and Advantages for Clients

Katrina Kanelidou, PCC

In my [previous article](#), I presented the impact that coaching in a foreign language can have on the ICF Core Competencies. But, what about the impact on coaching clients?

Of course, anytime we—the coaches—improve our competencies, it is to the advantage of our clients. Are there any other benefits of which we are not always aware?

Apparently yes, according to the 21 [survey](#) clients, all of which have had the experience of being coached in a non-native language (either theirs, their coach's, or both).

Some of the opportunities they observed were:

A Break from Familiar Thought Processes

They become more open, they let go of perfectionism and they become aware of a different thinking process and approach. They are introduced to new words that reveal new values and different thinking.

Enhanced Communication Skills

They pay more attention to nonverbal communication. Their mind becomes more focused, and they concentrate more on what they hear and say. There is more clarity and new ways to express feelings. They let go of long descriptions and are more to the point.

Increased Cultural Competence

There is the possibility to understand diversity and to increase cultural awareness, by learning from different cultures to get fresh perspectives. Being coached in another language helps them acknowledge and value cultural differences more, while at the same time, see similarities and realize connections.

Increased Awareness

Different cultural norms allow clients to be more aware of possible perspectives. Having to pay more attention to the words they use also creates new awareness. They can get different feedback and insights that are not easy to get when they share the same culture as their coach.

One of the analogies used was: “It’s like swimming under water with goggles rather than swimming in water with the sight above.” Another respondent shared, “The difference in the meaning of foreign words triggers attempts at translation, which enlighten and sensitize words in my native language that I sometimes do not realize the depth and breadth of.”

Higher Engagement

The coaching clients make a more personal effort to get the maximum benefit out of each session, and they have the sense that their coach is more objective. They stay focused on the dialogue, hence remain present. They also feel that their brain is more activate and more alive in everything they express. After all, their brain is thinking in two languages and switching from one idea to another to make themselves understood.

Additionally, the clients reported that coaching in another language allows them to be more authentic, more creative and resourceful, which increases their emotional intelligence and their self-confidence. Above all, the clients appreciated the advantage to get the possibility to work with an experienced coach from another country.

My coaching journey started 10 years ago. From the first moment I started receiving coaching as a client in English, I realized that I enjoyed it more than in my native language. I could see the opportunities and the advantages. This survey allowed me to prove these opportunities. Perhaps in the future there will be opportunities for more in-depth research to explore the magnificent things that happen in our brain (and soul) when we are in this space where cultures and languages merge to form a common alliance between the coach and the client.

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Katerina Kanelidou, PCC, has over 20 years' experience as a coach, trainer, mentor, educator and therapist. Based in Athens, she works with leaders from around the world supporting them to overcome their challenges and thrive even in the most adverse environments. She is founder of SixStepsAhead, global faculty member of the International Coach Academy and steering committee member of the CoachActivism program.