

English in academic and professional contexts Editorial

Maria Kuteeva, Stockholm University

This special issue of *Nordic Journal of English Studies* explores a number of themes related to the spread of English as a global language in academic and professional domains. This spread is closely linked to global trends in technological development, population mobility, transnational business organization, and education, which is increasingly driven by market forces (e.g. Ek, Ideland, Jönsson and Malmberg in press) and neo-liberal ideologies (e.g. Block, Gray and Holborow 2012). As English is being used in international business and other professional contexts, there is also a growing demand for English-medium education which is now being offered in countries outside the English-speaking world (e.g. Mok 2012). This trend can be observed in post-Bologna Europe, where the Netherlands and the Nordic countries provide the largest number of English-medium programmes and courses (Wächter and Maiworm 2008). Such rapid changes in the linguistic landscape place additional strains on students, teachers, and business professionals, who are expected to operate in bilingual or multilingual settings. At the same time, in reaction to globalization, language policies regulating the use of English in high-stakes domains have been implemented on the governmental and local level, including the parallel language use of English and local language(s) in the Nordic states (e.g. Kuteeva 2011). These policies do not always match practices but they inevitably have consequences for teachers and researchers of English working at schools, universities, and other institutions. Thus, further research into the actual uses of English in educational and professional contexts is needed.

The papers published in this special issue reflect the current status of English in academic and professional contexts, above all as a lingua franca of international communication in science, education, and business. The first part deals with English in professional research and business contexts. In the opening paper, Anna Mauranen explores the phenomenon of research blogging focusing on the current perception of science blogs by the research community, their place in research

Kuteeva, Maria. 2013. "English in academic and professional contexts: Editorial." *Nordic Journal of English Studies* 13(1):1-6.

dissemination, and their hybrid genre features in the context of academic writing traditions. The article problematizes the role of science blogging in relation to research publication practices: are blogs a vehicle for public outreach or for the discussion of serious findings? Drawing on a wide range of genre research, including English for Specific Purposes, New Rhetoric, and Systemic Functional Linguistics, Mauranen analyses two science blogs, one in theoretical physics and the other in microbiology. She concludes that science blogging reflects tensions resulting from the dramatic changes in ways to ensure high research standards and fast online communication and public engagement. Science is communicated online to very heterogeneous audiences, who, in their turn, contribute to knowledge construction in various ways. English is often used as a lingua franca in such online contexts, which has an impact on what is considered acceptable in terms of linguistic norms.

Inspired by the work of Bakhtin (1981, 1986), intertextuality has been a central concept both in literary studies and discourse analysis. For example, in the field of English for Specific Purposes, intertextuality in academic writing has been explored with a focus on plagiarism and on what is considered original text (e.g. Pecorari 2008). However, business writing conventions are very different from those in the academy, and to this day they have not been documented to the same extent. Philip Shaw and Diane Pecorari examine a corpus of chairman's statements from annual reports by 36 companies, most of which were listed on the London FTSE 100 in 2012 and therefore represent standard English norms. The authors analyse signalled and unsignalled intertextual relationships in the selected texts and conclude that intertextuality is indeed a pervasive feature in chairman's statements but it differs substantially from academic genres. Thus, chairman's statements refer primarily to earlier utterances of the chairman himself and other texts produced by the company in question. This inward-looking citation practice is in sharp contrast with the expectations imposed by academic writing conventions, which require writers to incorporate multiple voices from a broad range of external sources. The findings of this study suggest that students whose future professional activity may involve this type of corporate writing in English should be prepared to use templates, promotional referencing style, and other features of professional writing which seem to be at odds with academic writing conventions.

The third article in this special issue introduces the theme of English used in combination with the local language. Drawing on genre analysis (e.g. Bhatia 2004) and advertising research, Miguel Garcia Yeste describes how English is used in Swedish print advertising: which rhetorical moves include English words and phrases and what values these English expressions evoke. His findings point towards a relatively low presence of English in the examined sample of ten popular magazines, contrary to the assumption that English is ubiquitous in all popular domains.

The second part of this special issue includes several papers concerned with English-medium education in Scandinavian universities and other issues related to English for Academic Purposes. Christian Jensen, Louise Denver, Inger Mees, and Charlotte Werther present the results of a large-scale survey based on the analysis of 1,700 student responses to 31 non-native English-speaking lecturers at a major Danish business school, focusing on the relationship between perceptions of English language proficiency and perceptions of general lecturing competence. They have found that the former is a significant predictor of the latter: those lecturers whose English language proficiency was perceived by students as low also received low scores in the evaluations of their general lecturing competence. The authors argue however that this finding largely reflects predominant speech stereotypes as demonstrated by previous research on the effect of teacher accent variation on student perceptions of competence and social attractiveness. The article therefore suggests that student evaluations do not always fully reflect the teachers' competence in their subject, and the results of such evaluations should be used with caution in the context of English-medium content courses.

Hedda Söderlund's article examines the use of English as a medium of instruction at a Swedish university, showing how English is being adapted to the local context. Unlike the previous article, Söderlund's study resorts to ethnographic methods and conversation analysis and analyses authentic samples of student interaction. Her data consist of ethnographic observations of six university courses, interviews with students and staff, and video recordings of study situations. Söderlund's analysis focuses on students' expectations of when it is appropriate to use English and how it is adapted to the Swedish university environment. She observes that Swedish is still used in both teaching and learning

situations in English-medium courses, and the local students establish norms for when, how, and with whom it is appropriate to speak English. English is perceived as a language that belongs primarily to the exchange students, while Swedes are associated with both English and Swedish. Thus, language choice is locally constructed, and the use of English can be seen as a transnational strategy.

While Jensen et al. and Söderlundh focus on lecturing and spoken interaction, Špela Mežek's study is concerned with students' reading in English at a Swedish university. More specifically, she discusses the effects of note-taking strategies on learning subject-specific terminology in English. Her study involved an experiment in which students were presented with new terms and could take notes, which was followed up by a multiple-choice test to measure their learning. Mežek found that students who took extensive notes and engaged with the text more also learnt more subject-specific terminology.

The last two papers in this issue focus on other aspects of English for Academic Purposes. Pamela Vang shows how Master's students can be motivated to learn academic English through discipline-specific summary writing. She argues that this approach is effective since it facilitates a critical study of different texts and their rhetorical features and incorporates reading skills with writing, grammar, peer critique and discussion. Finally, Purificación Sánchez's article analyses lexical bundles in three oral corpora collected at British and Spanish universities, with a specific focus on 4-word bundles. Sánchez examines the forms, structures and functions of these bundles, comparing native and non-native language uses. She found significant differences in the types of lexical bundles used by native (British) and non-native (Spanish) speakers and suggests that Spanish students should be exposed to more spoken discourse in English.

The articles published in this special issue draw on a variety of theoretical and methodological approaches to the study of English in academic and professional contexts, including previous research in English for Specific Purposes (ESP), sociolinguistics, corpus linguistics, professional communication, language education, and so forth.

All papers have undergone double-blind peer review, and I would like to express my deepest gratitude to external peer reviewers whose thorough and constructive feedback has been vital in the preparation of this special issue. They are, in alphabetical order:

John Airey, Uppsala University and Linneaus University, Sweden
David Block, ICREA/Lleida University, Spain
Beyza Björkman, Stockholm University and KTH Royal Institute of
Technology, Sweden
Anders Björkvall, Stockholm University, Sweden
Mona Blåsjö, Stockholm University, Sweden
Alicia Creswell, Newcastle University, UK
Alejandro Curado, Extremadura University, Spain
Britt Erman, Stockholm University, Sweden
Piedad Fernandez, Murcia University, Spain
John Flowerdew, City University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong
Carmen Maier, Aarhus University, Denmark
Greg Myers, Lancaster University, UK
Juan Carlos Palmer, Jaume I University, Spain
Carmen Perez-Llantada, University of Zaragoza, Spain

I would also like to thank Špela Mežek for her generous help in the preparation and formatting of the final versions of the manuscripts, and, last but not least, Karin Aijmer, the chief editor of *Nordic Journal of English Studies* for her interest and support during the preparation of this special issue.

References

- Bakhtin, M. 1981. *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. Austin and London: University of Texas Press.
- Bakhtin, Mikhail. 1986. *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Bhatia, Vijay. 2004. *Worlds of Written Discourse*. London: Continuum.
- Block, David, Gray, John, and Holborow, Marnie. 2012. *Neoliberalism and Applied Linguistics*. London: Routledge.
- Ek, Anne-Charlotte, Ideland, Malin, Jönsson, Sandra, and Malmberg, Claes (in press). The tension between marketisation and academisation in higher education. *Studies in Higher Education*. DOI:10.1080/03075079.2011.619656
- Kuteeva, Maria. 2011. "Teaching and Learning in English in Parallel-Language and ELF Settings: Debates, Concerns, and Realities in Higher Education". *Ibérica*, 22, 5–12.

- Mok, Ka Ho. 2012. *Higher Education Policy*. Special issue on “Transnational education and student mobility in Asia”. Vol. 245, issue 2, June 2012.
- Pecorari, Diane. 2008. *Academic Writing and Plagiarism: A Linguistic Analysis*. London: Continuum.
- Wächter, B. & F. Maiworm (2008). *English-Taught Programmes in European Higher Education. The Picture in 2007. ACA Papers on Cooperation in Education*. Bonn: Lemmens.