

Introduction

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“As of next term the course will be taught in English.” Statements of this kind are common these days on the web pages of academic institutions in the Nordic countries. What they reflect, of course, is the internationalisation process witnessed within academia in the last couple of decades. That English for a long time has been the lingua franca of research is well recognised and well-documented. Now, however, student mobility across borders has increased dramatically as well, and new demands have been placed on teaching institutions in terms of coping with the need for a common language for instruction and administrative purposes. It is becoming increasingly clear that the situation involves a lot more than just a painless switch to spoken English, a language which at least the younger generation in the Nordic countries is expected to master at a fairly high level. There may in fact be additional costs to be paid, not only by the students who are required to read textbooks and write essays and exam assignments in an L2, but also by content class teachers feeling more or less comfortable in communicating their knowledge in English.

The term English for Academic Purposes (EAP) refers to what is by now a rich and comprehensive field of study. Much EAP research deals with knowledge mediation through written texts. Since the 1980s a number of important single studies, often based on relatively few text samples, as well as larger projects, drawing on electronic text corpora of millions of words, have been devoted to the description and categorisation of written text in terms of structural and functional characteristics. A number of variables are incorporated into these studies. The most common ones are language, discipline and genre. Through contrastive comparisons, differences as well as similarities between languages are discussed; characteristics of how knowledge is communicated in the various fields are brought to light; and important

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genres such as the research article and the pedagogical textbook have been described.

EAP activity has always incorporated both a research focus and a teaching/learning focus. Spurred by the internationalisation movement seen in higher education after the adoption of the Bologna declaration, interest in the teaching/instruction side has gained momentum. As language teachers have experienced the complexity of teaching and learning content in an L2, a number of them have joined the ranks of EAP researchers, thus contributing to a fruitful exchange of perspectives when classroom issues and problems are turned into relevant research questions.

When it comes to the research side of EAP, interests have in recent years broadened to include oral communication. Features identified in written communication have turned out to display different behaviour in the spoken mode, and new features specific to spoken discourse have been added to the research agenda. Much learning takes place through spoken activities, and recent research projects range from the study of conference presentations to first-term lectures and student group discussions.

The current special issue of NJES reflects many of the aspects mentioned above. Both written and spoken communication studies are featured. All but one of the contributions are written by scholars working in the Nordic countries, often dealing with concrete teaching situations experienced in their home institution. Both papers discussing EAP related to expert communication and the pedagogically oriented strand of EAP are represented in the collection.

The first four papers all contribute to the long-standing concern in EAP for the issue of attribution, and the first three even focus on the same genre, the research article. The paper by Diane Pecorari addresses the exciting and relatively recent interest in formulaic language (e.g. Hoey 2005; Wray 2002). Chunks of text may be stored as units in the mental lexicon or they may come from a specific earlier text, typically in the form of a quotation. However, Pecorari points out that in the latter category not all repeated use of multi-word units is attributed to a specific source. She illustrates her discussion with the findings of a study that focuses on a frequently occurring phenomenon in biology article introductions, viz. statements describing the organism under study. She finds that repeated multi-word units, or lexical bundles, do indeed occur

in the biologists' texts, and that some of them are clearly discipline specific. This raises the issue of whether background language is 'borrowable'. Pecorari presents the dilemma of the EAP teacher who must balance the learning potential for novice students by repeating formulaic language against the danger of appearing to sanction plagiarism.

Hans Malmström's paper is concerned with the notion of accountability in knowledge communication. Malmström sets out to investigate the behaviour of what he calls knowledge-stating verbs such as *argue*, *claim* and *suggest*. Does the choice of verb in a knowledge statement depend on the degree of accountability towards the knowledge statement the writer wishes to express? Looking to previous research on the communication of knowledge, Malmström hypothesises that there may be disciplinary differences in the use of these verbs. However, his corpus of research articles from two disciplines, linguistics and literary studies, does not confirm this hypothesis. Only small disciplinary differences are found. What his research does show, however, is that the individual members of the group of verbs called knowledge-stating verbs display clear differences in terms of which accountability contexts they appear in. While *believe* is typically used in statements that the writer is accountable for to a high degree, through being overtly present in the text and taking responsibility for the knowledge statement (as in the example *I believe this marriage symbolizes...*), the verb *argue* is most commonly found in low-accountability contexts, where the statement is attributed to another source (as in *Keen argues that...*).

The third paper, by Akiko Okamura, is also concerned with the writer's expressed attitude to the knowledge reported in a research article. She, too, takes a contrastive approach, this time with a view to investigating whether the language context of the writer influences citation patterns in research articles in English. Okamura provides evidence that writers from non-English speaking (L2) contexts, publishing in international journals, turn out to exploit the available options for citation patterns differently than writers from L1 contexts. The disciplines involved in the study are biology, chemistry and physics. Okamura confirms previous findings in this field that these disciplines typically use so-called non-integral citations. However, there are also instances of integral citation, and in those cases the L2 (context) writers in her corpus do not make use of the various options available (subject

position, part of a passive construction and in a noun phrase such as *according to...*), but rather present the citation in the subject position (*Demura and Fukuda (1994) have presented...*). The L1 (context) writers, on the other hand, typically prefer a non-subject position (*...similar to that reported by Zhang et al (1995)*). As subject position draws more attention to the cited work, the L2 (context) writers give more prominence to the cited work than the L1 (context) writers do. The L1 writers also manage to create more stylistic variation by exploiting all the three integral options.

The next paper, by Annelie Ädel, belongs among the growing number of studies involving oral academic communication. Spoken corpora are typically more difficult and time-consuming to establish and analyse than those based on written sources. However, the MICASE corpus, established at the University of Michigan, and projects closer to home such as the ELFA corpus (see Mauranen and Ranta, this issue) have given new insights into the differences between written and spoken communication in academic contexts as well as new knowledge on features characteristic of the spoken mode. Ädel incorporates a contrastive angle in her investigation, using data from the traditional academic divisions — biological sciences; physical sciences and engineering; social sciences; and humanities and arts. She investigates whether lecturers, like writers of written text, refer to expert sources when they present facts and knowledge. In contrast to previous studies, Ädel finds such attribution to be quite common in the MICASE corpus, and clearly an important feature of the lecture genre. In terms of disciplinary differences, the paper concludes that similarly to written citation practices, speech, too, displays disciplinary differences in terms of this feature, even though the patterns are not identical in the two modes.

EAP studies have naturally been dominated by work on the use of English in teaching and learning in academic environments in what Kachru (1985) calls the Inner Circle (the majority-English countries, the US, Britain, Australia, etc.). As English has started to be used for more functions in more domains in the Expanding Circle (of which Scandinavia and the rest of continental Europe are part), it has become important to examine this usage, with a view, ultimately to offering informed advice on good practice to teachers and useful training to learners (Räsänen and Fortanet 2008). This is academic English as a

lingua franca, potentially divorced from inner-circle norms of code and rhetoric.

One key question, raised by the ELFA project and other related initiatives is what English is like as a code in such environments, and how it varies across genres. Beyza Björkman has assembled a corpus of spoken academic English in lingua-franca situations. This enables her to compare interactions among students (dialogic, informal, and characterized by the incomplete clauses and false starts typical of exploratory interactive language) with lectures in (nonnative) English (mainly monologic, quite formal, and prepared and therefore structured). In these quite different sets of texts she finds a similar set of repeated deviations from native English usage which could be characterized as reducing redundancy and increasing syntactic transparency. In an environment where language is essentially a way of describing rather than constructing results, these deviations do not in general cause disruption. An exception is the misformed question, which seems often to lead to communication failure.

Problems in lingua-franca academic communication do not therefore lie at the code level. It is more a matter of the communication, successful though it is, taking more decoding effort and leaving less 'space' for deeper processing. Alan McMillion and Philip Shaw show this to be the case in a study of the English-language reading proficiency of British and Swedish undergraduate biology students. Students in the smaller European language communities have always had to read textbooks in one or more of the larger languages, but little is known about how problematic this is in today's mass university. Using paper reading comprehension tests and computer-based self-timed reading tasks, MacMillion and Shaw show that Swedish students in general reach the same levels of comprehension, defined by test scores, as British counterparts, but need some 20-30% more time to do so. In their test, subjects worked more slowly through a test paper, but actually scored higher per question than the British counterparts. At least at the level implied by these questions their reading was of good quality but quite slow. This implies that they have to work harder to reach the same level or have less time for reflection and digestion of their reading than readers working in their native language. In practice there is reason to believe that they simply do not read so much and rely on lectures, typically given

in Swedish at this level. One consequence of internationalization could thus be rather more passive students.

John Airey and Cedric Linder have found that this is also a consequence of oral teaching in English. They argue that conceptual learning in the sciences is essentially linguistic (somewhat in contrast to Björkman's impression from observation of problem-solving interaction), and its aim is in part scientific literacy. The medium of instruction for a course is not an extrinsic decision but one to be made in view of course objectives. The type of literacy targeted must be determined by three parameters the extent to which the target is understanding of science itself or of its applications and implications, the language targeted, and the level of literacy. This level ranges from fundamental, as in Macmillan and Shaw's study, or derived, the ability to use knowledge from text for one's own purposes. Examination of syllabuses suggests to them that course designers have in mind a student whose learning is mainly geared towards content rather than applicability, and whose language skills are predominantly receptive ("interpretive") rather than productive ("generative"). They conclude that maintenance of dynamic Swedish-language science teaching at school requires careful thought about the literacies targeted.

In engineering, biology, and physics, language is often seen as a transparent vehicle for content, but in the humanities, and especially of course in modern-languages disciplines, it is central and a direct object of assessment. Zakaria Lemmouh examines the relation of lexical richness in untimed essays to the grade given, and finds relatively little correlation. However, previous research on timed essays has found such a correlation. There may be a link here to McMillan and Shaw's finding that differences in achievement between first and second language users are largely a matter of speed, and to Airey and Linder's observation that quality of comprehension of lectures (where processing is inevitably under time pressure) may be affected by choice of medium. Lemmouh's observation that essay grading is carried out largely on implicit criteria may be a further argument for making course objectives explicit on a deeper theoretical level than has been the custom. His findings also underline the tension in modern-languages departments between language-proficiency and disciplinary criteria for assessment.

Nevertheless, it is clear from all the articles in the volume that language and content issues are intertwined. Language development is

therefore inseparable from development of disciplinary skills. Nancy Lea Eik-Nes argues that non-disciplinary developmental writing helps to develop the functional writing skills required in professional academic genres. She uses the metaphor of front stage writing (Gilbert and Mulkay's 'empiricist repertoire') intended to present a professional persona and back stage writing in which the writer is allowed to speak with a more personal voice and address both personal and wider political concerns. Participants in her postgraduate research writing course did carefully-designed front-stage tasks aimed at acquiring disciplinary forms and means of expression like those identified by Pecorari, Malmström and Okamura, but alongside them kept personal logs of their opinions, reactions, research processes, etc. Generified frontstage writing draws on general language competence, and this was developed by the type of more direct communication found in the back stage logs. One may speculate, in line with Airey and Linder, that backstage writing offers a chance to verbalise and make explicit insights and concepts that are not 'allowed' on the front stage, and thus enriches the material finally presented by the researcher persona.

Finally in this volume we have short notes on a number of projects which are influencing the present and future of EAP studies in the Nordic countries. Anna Mauranen and Elina Ranta (Finland) present their ELFA project designed to produce a corpus of academic lingua-franca English. Trine Dahl (Norway) describes the KIAP project which produced a detailed analysis of rhetorical differences and similarities among academic texts in English, French, and Norwegian. Kirsten Haastrup (Denmark) outlines plans for a co-operative project to look at the issues raised by using English as a medium of instruction in our region. Ann Torday Gulden (Norway) introduces an association for EAP teachers in Norway which has established wide international links. Finally Philip Shaw (Sweden) describes the beginning of a forum for EAP/ESP teachers in Sweden. These notes have in common the themes of co-operation, where possible over national and disciplinary boundaries, and of a wish to bring the insights of linguistic, educational, and sociolinguistic research to bear on the changing language landscape of higher education in our region and the world.

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