

Abstract

As a part of the process of globalization, an increasing number of higher education institutions are adopting English as the medium of instruction for parts of their education. Within most universities in continental Europe, there are English as a lingua franca (ELF) settings where English is spoken by a wide spectrum of first-language users for various purposes, be it for academic activity or social interaction. This is clearly the case for Sweden, where higher education has become increasingly international and thus linguistically diverse, for educational, idealistic and financial reasons.

This study reports the findings of a project that investigated the form and pragmatics of spoken lingua franca English in Swedish higher education. The group in focus is exclusively engineering students and lecturers in content courses. The data underlying the results are authentic from high-stakes spoken communication.

The study comprises two dimensions, namely form and communicativeness. In the form dimension, the material was checked extensively for non-standard morphosyntactic features. In the second dimension, communicativeness was investigated. The emphasis was then put on the discourse level for further examination, and the material was checked intensively for pragmatic strategies. Finally, a survey was carried out to investigate perceived communicativeness and attitudes towards morphosyntactic non-standardness.

The results indicate that communication takes place without much overt disturbance in this lingua franca setting with the exception of non-standard question formulation. Pragmatically, these speakers use a variety of strategies to negotiate and clarify meaning, such as commenting on discourse structure, signaling importance etc. Finally, the results of the survey show some irritation towards non-standardness. From these results, the notion of effectiveness in ELF settings emerges as being determined primarily by pragmatic ability and less by proficiency.

Keywords: *English as a lingua franca (ELF), engineering, higher education, form, pragmatics, attitudes, communicative effectiveness.*

More about my thesis

Press release: <http://www.su.se/english/about/2.291/press-releases/when-english-becomes-the-medium-of-instruction-communicative-effectiveness-is-more-important-1.2392>

Forskning och Framsteg: Bra på engelska räcker inte | Forskning & Framsteg | Populärvetenskapligt magasin

KTH Campi: Campi KTH | Korrekt engelska räcker inte

Qvintensen (Svenska Statistik Främjandet): <http://statistikframjandet.se/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/qvintensen-nr-1-2011-web.pdf>