

Symposium ‘The role of English at a multilingual university’

Department of English, Stockholm University

Dates: 9 – 10 January 2019

Place: Aula Magna, conference room Kungstenen

Abstracts

Opening keynote

The shaping effects of EMI in action: emergent STEM lecturer identities

David Block

ICREA & Universitat de Lleida

In recent years, there has been a marked increase in the number of European universities offering English medium instruction (EMI) as a key element in their internationalisation policies, designed to deal with an increasingly international student population. In Catalonia, EMI has been introduced with an additional purpose in mind: not only as part of universities’ internationalization policies, but also as a means through which home students can improve their English language skills. This means a confluence of EMI as internationalising and EMI as facilitating the learning of English (‘CLILised EMI’). At the heart of these developments are university lecturers, who have moved from teaching their speciality subjects in Catalan or Spanish to teaching them in English.

Language and identity research has shown how language use impacts on the ongoing emergence of identity, and this means that EMI cannot but have consequences with regard to how university lecturers position themselves and are positioned by others. Drawing on data collected in ongoing research at a Catalan university, this talk explores the ways in which a small cohort of EMI lecturers working in STEM disciplines position themselves as they go about their teaching activities. This exploration will be based on transcriptions of interviews with the lecturers as well as transcriptions of selected critical incidents occurring during their classes. Among other things, there is a focus on tensions emerging around issues such as the lecturers’ self-portrayals as ‘*not* English instructors’, as pedagogues, as subject specialists and as users of English, Catalan and Spanish. One conclusion drawn is that all is not entirely well in this particular CLIL-ised EMI space, wherein lecturers’ experiences and expressed views differ somewhat from the idealised (though underdeveloped) version of EMI presented in official policy documents produced by the university.

Panel 1: Academic spoken discourse

Talking about writing – language regulation in student group work

Janus Mortensen

University of Copenhagen

This paper, based on Mortensen (forthcoming), provides a micro-analytical perspective on processes of collaborative writing among university students at an international BA programme in Denmark, investigating the extent to which language regulation takes place as part of the students' joint writing activities and exploring the language ideological underpinnings of such regulatory practices. Four overall analytical observations are made concerning the practices of the group: 1) Writing is a multilingual process; 2) Written products are monolingual; 3) Language regulation rarely concerns form; 4) Getting the message across is key. These findings are discussed in relation to existing findings in the literature and related to the topic of university language policy.

Contextual factors of codeswitching within English as a Lingua Franca (ELF): comparing academic and social contexts

Kaisa S. Pietikäinen

NHH Norwegian School of Economics

English has undeniably become the main lingua franca for academia, even in countries where English does not have an official status, such as in the Nordics. However, in these multilingual environments, it is common that other languages shape and are mixed into interactions that are predominantly carried out in English (Mauranen 2012, 2013). Cogo calls for considering “the whole repertoire of sociolinguistic resources participants may bring to the exchange” including all the languages the speakers have encountered in their past (2017: 363). Since speakers cannot expect that everyone present in a given situation will share the same multilingual repertoire, multilingual elements are introduced “online” as the interaction proceeds (Jenkins 2015, see also Mauranen 2012, 2013, Hynninen et al. 2017). However, multilingual repertoires alone cannot explain sufficiently why speakers will or will not resort to codeswitching in interaction. This paper examines the different factors that govern codeswitching in ELF by comparing findings from diverse settings. I first summarize the findings of an earlier study (Hynninen et al. 2017) that examined codeswitching in the English as a Lingua Franca in Academic Settings (ELFA 2008) corpus. Then I scrutinize doctoral defense discussions (also from the ELFA corpus) and informal family ELF interactions using corpus, discourse, and conversation analytic methods. I argue that there is a complex web of individual, interpersonal, group-related, and discourse environmental factors that affect the emergence of types and extent of codeswitching in spoken discourse. Based on the findings, I offer a model of contextual factors of translanguaging in social interaction as a frame of reference for analysing multilingual interaction.

“This is not familiar to most people”: navigating peer-reviewers’ comments and knowledge construction practices by PhD students in supervision interactions

Beyza Björkman

Stockholm University

This paper focuses on the under-researched genre of PhD supervision meetings (but see Vehviläinen, 2009a and b, and Björkman 2015, 2016 and 2017) and investigates knowledge construction episodes in PhD students' discussions with their supervisors on their co-authored papers. In these meetings, all

supervisors and students use English as their lingua franca (ELF). Such supervision meetings are made up of ‘social negotiation’ and ‘collaborative sense-making’, providing a good base for learning to take place (Vygotsky 1978). It is precisely these negotiation and collaborative sense-making practices that the present paper focuses on, in order to investigate knowledge construction practices. While there is an abundance of research in disciplinary knowledge construction and academic literacy practices from cognitive and behavioral sciences, knowledge about novice scholars’ knowledge construction practices is scant in applied linguistics (but see Li 2006). Even less is known about how PhD students may negotiate knowledge construction and engage in meaning-making practices in interaction with their supervisors.

The material comprises eleven hours of naturally-occurring speech by three supervisors and their students where they discuss the reviewers’ comments they have received from the journal. The predominant method employed here is applied conversation analysis (CA) (Richards & Seedhouse 2016), which includes both local patterns of interaction as well as “the tensions between [these] local practices and any ‘larger structures’ in which these are embedded, such as conventional membership categories, institutional rules, instructions, accounting obligations, etc.” (Have 2007: 199). The analyses here aim to show how the PhD supervisors and students discuss the reviewers’ comments with reference to i) their own disciplinary community of climate science, and ii) the domestic discourse community of the target journals (see also Li 2006).

The preliminary findings of the analyses show a tendency by the PhD students to focus more heavily on the domestic discourse community of the target journals, especially when justifying their methodological choices. The PhD supervisors, on the other hand, base their meaning-making on the conventions of the disciplinary community of climate science, pointing out broader disciplinary community practices. These findings, highlighting a need to focus on novice scholars’ meaning-making efforts, can be used to inform PhD supervision in general.

Metadiscourse and formulaicity in spoken academic ELF

Ying Wang

Stockholm University

Formulaic sequences, i.e. words (e.g. *on the other hand, for example*) that have “an especially strong relationship with each other in creating their meaning”(Wray 2008: 9), play an important role in differentiating socially-situated practices (Biber et al 2004; Hyland 2012). This paper examines formulaic sequences functioning as metadiscourse, i.e. those deployed to organise the spoken discourse, to engage the listener(s), and to express attitudes and commitments (Hyland 2004), in academic ELF communication from a disciplinary perspective. It is a follow-up study of Wang (2017), which uncovers some frequently occurring four-word sequences distinctive of disciplinary communities. However, the inherent limitations of the frequency-based approach employed (e.g. arbitrary operational criteria, difficulty in handling discontinuous units) mean that a great deal may have been overlooked. This is particularly the case with ELF communication, given its complex and volatile nature (Seidlhofer 2009). The present study aims to address this gap by taking a manual approach in the identification of formulaic sequences, continuous or discontinuous, in context. The results provide a more complete picture of formulaicity in spoken academic ELF and have important methodological implications.

Panel 2: The sociolinguistics of student writing

The limits of translanguaging

Christa van der Walt

Stellenbosch University, South Africa

Translanguaging in higher education classrooms is seen as the efficient use of language resources to make sense of academic texts and, perhaps more controversially, to create academic texts. Although the term *translanguaging* is used quite widely, there does not seem to be a unified understanding of the term, with some authors focusing on what individuals do when they use multiple languages (Lewis et al. 2012:643) to others who see it as a “principled set of bilingual instructional strategies” (Creese and Blackledge 2010:103). Palfreyman and Van der Walt (2017:12) attempt to merge these descriptions, by stating that the term translanguaging could include “a variety of strategies ... including (but not limited to) code switching, translation, co-langaging and interpreting, without any attempt to limit communication or the production of text to one language”. This offers a challenge for multilingual higher education to “develop ways of supporting not only multiple languages and literacies, but also interrelated functional complementarity of language practices” (Garcia 2009:157).

Thorne & Ivkovic (2015) point out that the generation of students who enter higher education currently are skilled *reader-writers* who are used to highlighting, commenting, remixing and reworking text for the (often global) online communities in which they participate. Such a “more agentic conception of literacy” (Palfreyman and Van der Walt 2017:5) means that students enter academic institutions that have very particular ideas about the structure and format of texts, influenced to a large extent by conventions of writing that have been formalized in the Anglo-Saxon world. Academic writing, particularly at postgraduate levels, does not seem to allow much agency, which has implications for students’ willingness to use other languages.

This paper will report on two projects with two distinct, postgraduate groups of students:

- A group of students who can be described as *balanced bilinguals*, who are able to write academic texts reasonably well in two languages (a personal project);
- A group of students who write in English, with other languages that may be available to be used as resources (a project of which Dr Verbra Pfeiffer is the main investigator).

In both cases the demands of academic reading and writing seem to exact a high toll on students’ expressive abilities and comprehension of academic texts. In the first project, students use a variety of strategies to either avoid engaging with content or hide their lack of comprehension. In the second project, students’ perceptions of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ academic writing (in English) often preclude drawing on other languages to ensure that they communicate their ideas effectively.

The paper will conclude by considering the limits of translanguaging in multilingual contexts where high- and low-status languages exist alongside English.

Creative writing in English as an additional language: Translingual writers, their lived experience of language and bilingual selves

Maria Kuteeva

Stockholm University

Previous research on writing in English as L2 has focused primarily on academic writing, and creative writing has received much less attention in the literature (e.g. Pavlenko 2014). This paper starts to address this gap by presenting case studies of university students who have chosen English as their language of creativity. Over the last decade, researchers have taken interest in translingual practices, and the notion of the repertoire has shifted from a community (Gumperz 1965) towards the individual:

it is no longer tied to any national space or regime of language (Blommaert 2008) and forms a heteroglossic space of potentialities which individuals draw on (Busch 2015).

Why have the study participants chosen to write their creative texts in English? What discourses and language ideologies can be traced in the narratives of their linguistic biographies? How do these writers draw on their linguistic repertoires in their creative writing? In order to answer these questions, data were collected from Master's students enrolled in a program on creative writing at a Swedish university. The participants reported to be native speakers of Swedish and Cantonese and can be viewed as "translingual" writers (Canagarajah 2013, Pavlenko 2014). The data include their writing samples (poetry and prose) and 3 in-depth interviews with each student over a period of 3 months. The analytical approach draws on Busch's (2015, 2017) model of the linguistic repertoire and relevant concepts from previous research in bilingualism (e.g. Pavlenko 2006).

For the study participants, writing literary texts in English and employing translingual practices are part of a conscious process of identity design, which is made possible by participation in online communities and English-medium education. Their language ideologies also reveal a conflict between the conceptualization of language as a static, essentialized entity versus a fluid assemblage of linguistic and other semiotic resources. This conflict can function as a driving force for the students' creativity.

Students' transnational academic writing practices

Kathrin Kaufhold

Stockholm University

Biliteracy research has shown how multilingual students naturally make use of their writing practices across languages and how they draw on different languages in the writing process (e.g. Cumming, 2013; Van der Walt, 2013). Research on genre knowledge has highlighted the role of both the local situation and transnational movement for the development of academic literacy practices (Rounsaville, 2014). The study combines these two perspectives and extends the notion of linguistic repertoire (interpreted as 'linguistic baggage', Busch, 2017) with knowledge of academic writing practices. It examines how students on EMI programmes in Sweden perceive their writing development across different educational, disciplinary and linguistic contexts. In this context, the role of academic English in their learning is discussed.

The qualitative study with six multilingual Humanities students combines talk-around-text interviews (Lillis, 2001) and further reflections through the students' audio-diary recordings followed by another short interview for clarification purposes. Results indicate the students' clear distinction between language codes according to domains as well as accounts of translanguaging for meaning making. The students' evaluations of English are situational and relate to other languages. English can be a means of access for knowledge making or a barrier, a privileged form of academic writing and identification or merely a required tool. What is striking is the uneven distribution of symbolic capital these multilingual students can 'convert' from their previously acquired knowledge in different languages including English, where the value of some knowledge decreases. The talk concludes by considering implications for a transformational writing pedagogy.

Panel 3: The lived experience of language policy in higher education

Tensions on Finnish Constitutional Bilingualism in neo-nationalist times: English as catalyst in monolingual and bilingual university contexts

Taina Saarinen

University of Jyväskylä

The earlier Finnish language policy debates in higher education revolved around the delicate balance between the national languages, Finnish and Swedish. However, the recent language ideological debates since the 2000s have been triggered by the increased use of English, and thus linked Finland, somewhat belatedly, to the neo-nationalist developments that have emerged in Western countries.

This presentation analyses the role of English as a language policy catalyst in one monolingual Swedish university (Åbo Academy, the only Swedish multidisciplinary university in Finland), and one bilingual university (University of Helsinki), which has in recent years introduced bilingual programmes in order to attract particularly Finnish speaking students to its formerly Swedish speaking programmes (see Saarinen 2018b). The article analyses language policies as material, embodied and experienced entities by analysing interviews (N=15) and observation data from the two universities. Interviews have been conducted in the period from October 2017 to January 2018.

The presentation contributes to an understanding of the position of minority languages in universities in times when use of English has increased on one hand and neo-nationalist tendencies are on the rise on the other. It addresses particularly questions of tensions between national language norms and university level policies, and the materialisation of these policies.

It seems that the bilingual programmes at the University of Helsinki challenge the tradition of separating Finnish and Swedish programmes, and in doing so also change the physical language policy environment. At Åbo Academy, in turn, Finnish higher education policies of profiling universities based on their research and teaching (rather than language policies) seems to be a major cause for language policy tensions.

“I wanted to use English as a passport for any country in Europe”: The case of Catalan minority-ethnic students’ experiences of multilingualism and expectations of studying abroad

Lidia Gallego-Balsà

Universitat de Lleida

The degree of internationalisation of a university is sometimes understood as merely depending on the accumulation of international staff, students and international co-authorships. This fact can be observed in the popular ranking of the most international universities worldwide, which was published by the *Times Higher Education* in 2017 (Bothwell, 2017). However, this way of understanding an institution’s degree of internationalisation is partial and biased. This presentation discusses what ‘international university’ means (see, for instance, Doiz et al, 2014a, Knight, 2015; Johnstone Young, Handford and Schartner, 2016; Schartner and Cho, 2017) based on a comprehensive review of recent research studies that point out that an internationalising institutions must confront their main challenges at home (Teekens, 2004). These challenges include the development of intercultural awareness, engagement and reciprocal sensitivity among home and international students (Ujitani and Volet, 2008; Spiro, 2014, Pitts and Brooks, 2017), internationalisation of the university curriculum (Leask, 2018), an adaptation of the teaching practices of lecturers in internationalised universities (Robson and Tuner, 2007), the faculty members’ stance on internationalisation (Dewey and Duff, 2012) and the language policies and multilingualism in the educational institutions (Doiz, Lasagabaster and Sierra, 2013, 2014a,b) among others. The discussion will be followed by a study of

how a small cohort of minority ethnic students in a higher education institution in Catalonia (Spain) position themselves towards their past and future expectations of travelling and studying abroad as conditioned by their migrant life trajectories. Travelling abroad is both idealised as an opportunity to succeed in other societies, which are constructed as presenting less indexes of racial and religious discrimination, and also, as a destabilising factor which triggers the risk of losing economic stability, further signs of otherness and reliving the trauma of loneliness. The presentation will also address how minority ethnic students position themselves towards the languages of their multilingual repertoires and the role these languages play in their academic achievements. This study brings food for thought for language and internationalisation policy makers as it argues that visibilisation of minority ethnic students and their linguistic repertoires as well as the introduction of widening participation policies is a resource that could be further considered to foster internationalisation at home.

University branding and the internationalization of higher education in the Baltic states: the role of language

Josep Soler

Stockholm University

This presentation explores the multimodal resources mobilized by higher education organizations in the Baltic states (Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania) in their effort to implement language policies in order to promote internationally their universities as attractive study places. The main goal of the analysis is to investigate the tension between the national/local and the global scales in the promotion of Baltic higher education, and to examine how such a tension is semiotically realized, paying special attention to language(s) and their associated discourses and ideologies. More specifically, the analysis positions university branding as a sub-category of nation branding, and following Woolard (2015), it uses Silverstein's (2003) ordered indexicalities so as to explore the metapragmatics of this type of branding. The paper draws on a selection of promotional videos and texts from the state-supported websites "Study in Estonia/Latvia/Lithuania". The analysis proceeds in three levels, inspired by Thurlow and Aiello (2007): (a) a descriptive presentation of the visual and the lexical content of the material; (b) an interpretative account of the communicative resources at play in the analyzed material; and (c) a critical reading attempting to find a connection between the rationale behind the choice of these communicative resources and the political and social contexts in which universities in the Baltic states operate. In a context historically prone to sociolinguistic anxieties, the conflictive relationship between national identity concerns and global market demands can be particularly hard to balance out by higher education systems in the Baltic states. The presentation concludes with a set of remarks on the possible reasons and consequences of the prevailing discourses and ideologies associated to language(s) and multilingualism in the promotion of universities in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.