EDITORIAL

Special Issue

*English as a lingua franca in academic and professional settings*

This special issue is devoted to the study of English used as a lingua franca in the globalised academic and professional world from a descriptive, pedagogical and cross-cultural perspective. The papers included in this issue were presented at the Fifth Brno Conference on Linguistics Studies in English *English as the Lingua Franca of the Modern World: New Challenges for the Academia* organised by the Department of English Language and Literature of the Faculty of Education, Masaryk University, which was held on 17-18 September 2012. The issues discussed at the conference comprised the ways in which non-native speakers present their views and interact with their readers using a foreign language and accommodating themselves to different epistemological and literacy conventions, the problematization of status of the educated native speaker as the model of good and fluent language performance and of the Anglo-American tradition as the prevailing discourse convention of academic writing and the resulting centre-periphery tension in the academic world, and the possible emergence of lingua franca academic literacy.

The authors approach English as a lingua franca from a pragmatics, discourse-analytical, cross-cultural and narrative-analysis perspective. The issue opens with Dontcheva-Navratilova’s study which offers a cross-cultural analysis of frequency and functional variation in the use of lexical bundles indicating authorial presence and discusses the level of adaptation of non-native novice writers’ academic discourse to the conventions of Anglo-American academic writing. Similarly taking a cross-cultural perspective, Grundy considers the question whether selective pragmatic schematizations apply to academic writing on the example of parallel English academic texts generated by two native Chinese and a native English student writer, and makes some consequent observations about teaching academic writing. Kramer’s study focuses on the use of ELF by computer gamers coming from different language backgrounds. She reports the results of a survey, including a questionnaire and a self-compiled corpus, which explores how and why gamers utilize politeness strategies to position themselves in conversations. Adopting a pedagogical perspective, Szyrbak focuses on dispreferred speech acts of disagreement as an important aspect of English learners’ pragmatic competence. While commenting on the linguistic resources used by students to express mitigation, she concludes that
asynchronous discussion fora can be useful in developing English learners’ pragmatic strategies. Wąsikiewicz-Firlej’s study draws on narrative analysis of Polish professionals working for international organizations who tell stories on communicating and using English in their workplace. The author correlates variations in individual preferences concerning communication with native or non-native users of English and comfort related to such interactions with the professionals’ level of proficiency in English.

We hope that the collection of papers in this issue brings new insights into the use of English as a lingua franca in different academic and professional settings. Within the context of globalized academic and professional world, the knowledge gathered from such investigations can clearly contribute to a better understanding of the reasons for the existing variation in academic and professional discourse conventions; it also sheds light on the way in which the strategies used by non-native speakers of English to accommodate to different epistemological and literacy conventions shape the existing international academic and professional norms.

The Editors