Spoken Lingua Franca English in an International Church in Sweden

An investigation of communicative effectiveness and attitudes in relation to deviation from Standard English in SOS Church

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Abstract

This study is an investigation of communicative effectiveness and attitudes in relation to deviation from Standard English in an international church in Stockholm. This church is an English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) setting as the congregation consists almost entirely of people who use English as a means of communication with people who do not share their own first language. The study is based on empirical data from both qualitative and quantitative methods. The spoken language was investigated by analyzing one transcribed sermon and through interviewing two speakers of American English. Also a survey was done with 26 members of the church, obtaining quantitative data as well as several comments from the respondents on their view of the usage of English in the sermons and in the church in general. The results from the study showed as expected that there were a number of deviations from Standard English when ELF was used in the sermon. However, these caused little irritation and were judged not to cause much misunderstanding. The deviations that did cause some irritation among the respondents from the church were when the wrong word was used as well as when a word was pronounced incorrectly. The results indicated that there was little disturbance regarding the communicativeness and attitudes in connection to the spoken English in this ELF setting.

Keywords

English as a Lingua franca, attitude, communicative effectiveness, adaptation, irritation and language background.