

## Abstract

Wagner, Ingrid. 2005. *Metalinguistic features in the use of English as a lingua franca for professional education versus casual conversation*. MA thesis, University of Vienna.

In the course of my work for this thesis I investigated authentic conversations in English as a lingua franca for professional education and in casual conversation. When I looked for striking features of this naturally occurring discourse, metalanguage turned out to be particularly interesting. Therefore, I decided to make metalanguage the focus of my analysis and to contrast its use in casual communication with that in communication for professional education.

The introductory part gives an insight into the linguistic theory that provides the basis for my data analysis. Here linguistic terms are clarified, and related to each other, and I contrast two types of metalanguage: the one I term **overt** (where metalanguage is the topic of talk by choice), and the other **covert** (where metalanguage is a means to an end).

The main part is then devoted to the presentation, analysis, and explanation of data extracts illustrating the use of metalanguage. To begin with, the explicit employment of metalanguage in the use of English as a lingua franca is categorised and elaborated on. After that, the implicit application of metalinguistic features as a means to an end' is the centre of investigation. With reference to my data, conventional linguistic assumptions and statements concerning this topic are investigated, and novel hypotheses are formulated and strengthened, if necessary.

The final part concentrates on the comparison of metalinguistic features as they occur in the two types of talk I analysed. The results of my analysis are summarised and applied to situations differing in formality. Moreover, I draw conclusions from this analysis and give a suggestion towards possible further studies and investigations. A detailed transcription of my data – to which the reader can refer at any time when delving into this linguistic analysis – can be found in the appendix.