

## **Symposium: *The Pragmatics of Aspect in Varieties of English***



From April 16 to April 17, 2012, Prof. Gabriella Mazzon (Department of English, University of Innsbruck) held the symposium “The Pragmatics of Aspect in Varieties of English“. The main aim of the symposium was to present the latest research papers on *aspect* in English varieties, but also to intensify cooperation with colleagues from home and abroad.

Two distinguished experts in the field, Prof. Bernd Kortmann (University of Freiburg) and Prof. Raymond Hickey (University of Duisburg/Essen) could be won as plenary speakers for this event. Prof. Kortmann aimed at a clarification of the widely-debated terms *pragmatics* and *aspect* and then illustrated new opportunities for a systematic investigation of varieties on the basis of the WAVE project, a comprehensive online database dedicated to various English varieties at the University of Freiburg. Prof. Hickey gave an overview of the spread of English varieties worldwide, again with a special focus on *aspect*.

Several other presentations provided critical analyses of the theoretical foundations of variety and aspect studies, but also focused on research questions that have some relevance in everyday life. One example is the famous slogan created by an American fast food chain, “I’m loving it.“ The question was whether such a phrase ought to be explained away as advertising language or whether it needs to be interpreted as a paradigm shift within English usage.

Finally, *aspect* was approached from a pedagogical point of view. Foreign learners of English often need to develop an understanding of the concepts *tense* and *aspect*. This creates challenges both for learners and teachers.

The programme of the symposium is available for download at <http://www.uibk.ac.at/anglistik/symposium2012.html>