ABSTRACTS

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Sonja Vandermeeren

German language needs in Danish compani

The first section of my paper provides a definition of the need for foreign languages in the business context and catalogues types and indicators of this need. In the second section the methods that can be employed in needs analysis studies are presented. Section three provides illustrative material from a questionnaire-based pilot survey. Taking the case of German companies, I investigate their expectations with regard to linguistic and cultural adaptation by their Danish business partners. Contrary to expectation, knowledge of German culture is regarded as more useful than German language knowledge. The educational implications of the findings of needs analysis studies are then dealt with in the fourth section.

Karsten Pedersen

The construction of a genre:
The case of service information pamphlets in a Danish county

From 1999 to 2001 I was head of administrative communication in a local council in Denmark. There I was responsible for authoring and publishing service information pamphlets. I never had any complaints from the citizens who were supposed to read the pamphlets. And that made me worried. So worried that I have now spent a year analysing not only the pamphlets, but also their reception in the target population. In this article I shall make a genre analysis of the service information pamphlet and I shall compare the results of the genre analysis with the basic results of the reception analysis.

Hilkka Yli-Jokipii

Promoting books and places:
A study of adjectival modification in persuasion and description

This is a study of adjectival modification, that is the use of adjectives and adjectival participles, in the genres of book information and place description. Book information represents a genre with a subtle, covertly persuasive function, while place description is taken to have little or no persuasive force. The study starts out with a quantitative element, establishing lexical densities of the eight texts in the data. This is followed by qualitative analyses of the functions which adjectives have in the genres examined. Answers are sought to these primary questions: 1) What is the role of modifying adjectives in the lexical density of the texts analysed? 2) What discourse functions do these adjectives fulfil in the two genres? The conclusions of the study include: 1) High occurrence of modifying items does not automatically equal nominal style. 2) High occurrence of modifying items is not an automatic sign of high lexical density. 3) The frequent use of modifiers in non-fiction is not limited to persuasion, since adjectives are also frequent in the genre in which the descriptive function is foregrounded.

Kathleen Vance

Using WebCT to teach grammar selectively

Teachers of business and technical communication are supposed to teach grammar, but only to a limited extent, according to the literature. Technology program faculty at the British Columbia Institute of Technology and employers of graduates want grammar to be taught, along with an ever-expanding list of other employment-related communication skills. In response to these demands, a series of eight mini grammar lessons was developed for students in four technology programs. The software WebCT was used to facilitate the development and delivery of the lessons, which formed a component of the students' business and technical communication course. Exercises, self-tests, and quizzes used sentences from workplace documents from the students' technologies in order to hold the students' attention and to validate the study of language. For students, this online component proved to be an attractive feature of their course.

Paul Gillaerts

A textlinguistic and genological approach to the letters of application.

In this article we analysed a corpus of letters of application that received an evaluation by the recruiters. We investigated whether there existed a correlation between the structural and linguistic characteristics of the letters and the positive or negative evaluation by the recruiting officers. For the rhetorical structure of the letters of application, we adopted the genre approach by Bhatia (1993); for the persuasiveness of the style we used the metadiscursivity classification of Louhiala-Salminen (1999). Both the move structure and the metadiscursivity seem to play an important role in the appreciation of the letters of application by the recruitment officers. There is a significant correlation between the evaluation by the recruitment officers on the one hand and the rhetorical structure and the use of metadiscursive elements on the other hand.

Anette Villemoes

How do southern Spaniards create the conditions necessary to initiate negotiations with strangers?

Based on focus group discussions and interviews with Spanish-speaking business people experienced in negotiations with Spaniards this paper focuses on what they say about their first time business meetings with southern Spaniards. The informants include both non-Spaniards and Spaniards, the last group comprising both Spaniards from the northern and the southern parts of Spain. Thus foreigners and northern Spaniards talk about their experience related to first time business meetings with southern Spaniards, whereas the southern Spaniards reflect on how they see themselves in first time meetings with business people from other parts of Spain and from abroad. Special attention is given to how the informants describe the start-up phase of their business relations. The paper introduces different theoretical approaches to such first time intercultural meetings – including a sociological approach, the approach offered by intercultural communication, and Face theory - and based on the key concepts of these approaches the paper discusses to what extent the businessmen involved draw on concepts related to the theories in their sense-making effort.

Henning Bergenholtz, Jonna Bisgaard, Majken Brunsborg Lauritsen & Kamilla Kvist Wichmann

Sprogpolitik: So ein Ding müssen wir auch haben

To argue that language policies are subject to the vagaries of fashion may be a slight exaggeration. But language policies have indeed attracted growing interest and been increasingly debated over the last three to four years. During this time many companies and organisations have formulated a language policy, or they are currently in the process of doing so. At the national level several politicians have been complaining that no language policy exists for the Danish language. On the other hand, many journalists and several linguists have been criticising the language policy for which the Danish Language Council is responsible as inappropriate. All these statements may appear rather contradictory. The confusion can, however, partly be accounted for by the prevalence of different definitions of what a language policy is and what it involves. In this contribution we will suggest ways of resolving the terminological problems and also discuss some concrete Danish proposals for the part of language policy that we have termed 'specific language policy'.

Henning Bergenholtz & Sven Tarp

Two opposing theories: On H.E. Wiegand's recent discovery of lexicographic functions

In the history of lexicography, a lot has been said about dictionary users and their needs. This paper will focus on two theories that both share the postulate that dictionaries are tools made by human beings in order to solve specific problems. The first theory is developed by the German scholar H.E. Wiegand and it will be argued that his theory about dictionary use should be considered a linguistic reconstruction of information items in existing dictionaries. The other theory is the modern theory of lexicographic functions that takes all the theoretical and practical consequences of the basic postulate that dictionaries are utility products.