

CIP Symposium, 11 November 2010, 12:00 to 17:00

Danish in the practice of parallel language use

The use of Danish in the internationalised University of Copenhagen

The universities in Denmark are undergoing a steadily increasing internationalisation process. Attracting international researchers and students has become a priority. Meanwhile ever greater linguistic demands are being put on the universities' Danish employees. They are expected to be able to teach in English and to publish in international – generally English language – journals. We are now in a situation where English is a *necessity* for employees and students in Danish universities. If, on the other hand, English is *sufficient* is more debatable.

There are two areas where this issue is most pressing: firstly, with regards to international employees' needs for Danish; secondly, with regards to the future of the status of Danish as an academic language and whether it is being threatened with so-called *domain loss*. The debate at the CIP Symposium 2010 will from a number of different viewpoints revolve around these two issues.

The symposium is comprised of four parts.

1. Panel on international academic staff at the University of Copenhagen: Language demands, needs and experiences

The participants on the panel are all international research staff at the University of Copenhagen. Jacobus J. (Koos) Boomsma, Director at the Centre for Social Evolution, Department of Biology, Martin Pessah, Assistant Professor at the Niels Bohr Institute, Natalie Wahl, Professor at the Department of Mathematical Sciences and Peter Leese, Associate Professor at the Department of English, Germanic and Romance Studies. The panel will discuss the motivation for learning and using Danish and their own experiences in this regard. The panel discussion will be mediated by Nina Møller Andersen, Associate Professor at the Department of Scandinavian Studies and Linguistics, University of Copenhagen.

2. Two presentations about international employees in Denmark and language and integration

Ana Mosneaga, PhD student, & Lars Winther, Associate Professor, Department of Geography and Geology, University of Copenhagen: *Emerging talents? International students before and after their career start in Denmark*

Eva Ersbøll, Senior Research Fellow, The Danish Institute for Human Rights:
Can highly skilled labour migrants be subjected to integration requirements?

3. Two presentations about Danish as an academic language and domain loss

Deborah Cameron, Professor of Language and Communication, University of Oxford:

Nostalgia, guilt and panic: some remarks on verbal hygiene in the age of globalization

Anna Kristina Hultgren, Postdoc Fellow, Centre for Internationalisation and Parallel Language Use, University of Copenhagen:

What is language and what have people got to do with it?

4. Panel on the implications on the language policy for the University of Copenhagen

The participants on the panel are all centrally involved in policy making at the University of Copenhagen:

Jørn Lund, Member of the Board of the University of Copenhagen, Mike Young, Editor of the University Post, Per Holten-Andersen, Dean of the Faculty of LIFE, Thomas Bjørnholm, Prorector and Vivian Tos Lindgaard, Senior Executive Consultant, International Staff Mobility.

The central topic of the discussion is how to facilitate internationalisation while at the same time securing the status of Danish as an academic language. The panel will be mediated by Frans Gregersen, Professor, Department of Scandinavian Studies and Linguistics, Member of the Board of CIP.

Abstracts

Emerging talents? International students before and after their career start in Denmark

Ana Mosneaga, PhD student, & Lars Winther, Associate Professor, Department of Geography and Geology, University of Copenhagen

International students are seen as potential skilled migrants in the intensifying competition for talent driven by the globalised knowledge economy. However, little is known about what shapes individual decisions to go and study abroad or to continue their career in the host country. The paper aims to address this research gap by examining international students' perspectives on and international graduates' experiences with the transition from study-to-work life in Denmark. It does so by exploring the complexity of opportunities and factors that come into play at both the contextual and personal levels in this status transition process. The analysis is based on qualitative research with international students enrolled in science and technology degree programmes at Danish universities and recent international graduates who stayed on in the country as foreign workers after completing their studies. Looking at individuals from diverse national backgrounds (EU/EEA and non-EU/EEA), the study considers how different circumstances have impacted on the ways through which individuals perceive and manage the status transition process. Denmark represents an interesting host country context. While the country is increasingly focusing on the attraction and retention of foreign students as skilled workers, it is also known for its restrictive approach to immigration. The discussion provides an insight into the central parameters that influence the positions of skilled migrants and in this way opens up the "black box" surrounding the individual in the existing accounts of the globalised knowledge economy.

Can highly skilled labour migrants be subjected to integration requirements?

Eva Ersbøll, Senior Research Fellow, The Danish Institute for Human Rights

In 2010 the Danish Integration Act and the Aliens Act were amended. Highly skilled labour migrants are now covered by the Integration Act and they and their spouses have access to introduction programs, including free Danish language lessons, etc. However, highly skilled migrants (and their spouses) who want a permanent residence permit and/or Danish citizenship are subjected to obligatory integration requirements, among others a requirement to be able to speak, read and write Danish at a certain level and to pass a test on the knowledge of Danish society (or demonstrate active citizenship in Denmark through at least one year's participation on boards, in organizations, etc.). Little is known about the actual effects of the requirements on the behaviour of highly skilled migrants. There are, however, some results from a recent research project on language and integration tests which will be discussed in the presentation.

Nostalgia, guilt and panic: some remarks on verbal hygiene in the age of globalization

Deborah Cameron, Professor of Language and Communication, University of Oxford

The current debate on the status and development of Danish is examined closely from a sociolinguistic perspective by A-K Hultgren in the other presentation in this slot. The aim of this presentation, by contrast, is to place the Danish debate in a wider context. As well as looking at its relationship to current verbal hygiene concerns, many of which arise in response to social changes engendered by globalization, I will consider how far the concerns which are central to it are either historically novel, or specific to the situation of languages like Danish (i.e. the national languages of small modern nation-states, which are not widely learned and used outside their borders). In the latter connection, I will examine some parallels between the way Danish is figured in public discourse—as threatened by English—and the way English itself is figured as threatened in various ways by popular commentators in majority English-speaking societies. While it is certainly possible that one threat is real while the other is entirely imaginary (i.e., that Danish is threatened whereas English is not), the similarities which exist at the level of representation are not just irrelevant or coincidental. Threats to the integrity or status of languages are a recurring theme in verbal hygiene discourse. Whether or not there is any empirical foundation for the sense of threat, it must be understood as symbolic of other and perhaps deeper anxieties, and addressed in a way which recognizes that the issue is not just a technical linguistic one.

What is language and what have people got to do with it?

Anna Kristina Hultgren, Postdoc Fellow, Centre for Internationalisation and Parallel Language Use, University of Copenhagen

In this talk Hultgren takes a closer look at the debate about the use of English in Danish universities as it has unfolded in Danish print media and other relevant documents over the past decade. She shall scrutinize taken-for-granted assumptions about language as a living organism existing independently of language users, for example as reflected in representations of it as being 'society-bearing' and at risk of 'losing domains'. She shall then contrast such conceptualizations of language with theories which have recently been developed within sociolinguistics to capture the messy and complex linguistic realities of globalization, characterized by an extensive mobility of people and practices. In essence, such theories reverse conventional understandings of language as an idealized and abstract system existing *a priori* of it being used and propose instead to take language use as the starting point and consider the output, whatever form it takes, as language. Hultgren concludes by raising the question of whether such radically different views of language can be reconciled. The overall objective is to seek a middle way which might usefully move forward both the debate about English at Danish universities as well as theoretical developments within sociolinguistics.