



# Multilingualism

From languages to speaks, uses, people

*University of Bergen, Institutt for fremmedspråk*

*October 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> 2019*

## Abstracts

**Monday October 14<sup>th</sup>**

**Åsta Haukås, Andre Storto, Irina Tiurikova** (University of Bergen): *UNGSPRÅK: First insights into young learners' multilingual identity.*

Existing research suggests a positive correlation between students' awareness of their own multilingualism and success in language learning (Cenoz 2013; Jessner 2008). Furthermore, studies show that the development of certain personality traits such as tolerance for ambiguity, cognitive empathy and open-mindedness can be positively linked to multilingualism (Dewaele, Li Wei 2012, 2013; Dewaele, Oudenhoven 2009). So far, however, few studies have investigated these variables in combination in a school context. The project UNGSPRÅK is an ongoing two-year longitudinal study conducted in close collaboration with Strand 4 of the MEITS project at the University of Cambridge (Fisher et al. 2018). Its main goals are to investigate students' language practices, the development of multilingual identity and openmindedness in Norwegian secondary schools and the role played by language learning in this process. Norway has a long tradition of multilingualism, even though many Norwegians may not perceive themselves as multilinguals. In recent years, the Norwegian linguistic landscape has been enriched even further by a host of immigrant languages. Consequently, issues related to cultural and linguistic pluralism as learning resources in the classroom have become of central importance. The participating students (school year 8) are all learning Norwegian and English as compulsory subjects; 80% are learning a second foreign language and a large number has another home language than Norwegian. In the first round of data collection during spring 2019, participants responded to a digital questionnaire created on SurveyXact, designed to map out their language knowledge and practices and assess their self-identification as multilingual individuals and their openmindedness. The analysis of the collected data provides answers to our research questions at the beginning of the longitudinal study. We discuss the findings in light of relevant theories and existing research on multilingualism, multiculturalism, and identity.

**Irene Baron & Michael Herslund** (Copenhagen Business School): *The narratives of tourism destinations.*

Nations, regions and cities try to attract visitors by presenting, branding, themselves as positively as possible. As suggested elsewhere (Baron & Herslund 2018), any branding is the staging of an identity, be it national, regional or local. The branding takes the shape of narratives built upon e.g. the history, customs, achievements and values of the place. Our paper takes its point of departure in the comparison of the narratives of two tourism destinations, one in Denmark and one in France, in order to approach the phenomena of differences between people and their speaks and uses (Morgan et al. 2015). As also argued elsewhere (Baron & Herslund 2018, 2019), the narratives of branding are necessarily cast in the linguistic system, the language being the principal purveyor of concepts for our categorization and structuring of the world. Since Danish and French belong to two different linguistic types (Korzen et al. eds. 2014), where Danish concepts in general are more concrete than the corresponding French ones, we shall try to substantiate and explain why the Danish city attempts to attract visitors by accentuating the down to earth ways people are living, whereas the French city presents itself by emphasizing the more abstract tradition of the place.

**Lita Lundquist** (Copenhagen Business School): *Studying the use of humour across languages and cultures. Methods, results and perspectives.*

I shall present an overview of my research on *spontaneous verbal humour in professional cross-lingual and -cultural interaction*. I see spontaneous conversational humour as a dynamic *humour event* which acts as a *social mediator* between the partners. My empirical investigation confirms that people tend to perceive humour from their own country as being a *positive* social mediator, and that from other countries as a *negative* one. The fact that humour differs from country to country will be explained via the concept of *humour socialisation*, which helps me describe how people's use and perception of humour are to a large extent formed by the *society* they grow up in and the *language* they speak as their mother-tongue. Contrasting Danes' preferred forms of humour in the working place - irony and "self-irony" - with that prevailing among French people: play on words, I open up a perspective for further research, including the comparison of use and forms of humour in other Nordic-language countries, e.g., Norway and Sweden, to other Romance-language countries.

**Guowen Shang** (University of Bergen): *Multilingualism in Eastern China's Cityspace: Code Distribution and General Perception.*

Linguistic landscape, referring to the linguistic objects marking the public space, is becoming a new approach to multilingualism and social dynamics in a city (Gorter, 2006; Laundry and Bourhis, 1997; Spolsky, 2009). Taking the linguistic landscape of three cosmopolitans (i.e., Shanghai, Hangzhou and Ningbo) in Eastern China as a perspective, this paper examines the general perception of the spread of multilingualism in China's most open and developed regions due to globalization. In China, Chinese as the officially standard language is the dominant language, and English is the most widely-used foreign language. The government and private signs along one randomly-selected main road in each of the three cities are photographed and coded in order to find out the visibility and salience of various languages/scripts in city space. Our investigation shows that Chinese language dominates on official and private signs, while English, French, Japanese, Korean and other languages are also displayed in urban space. A questionnaire survey has been administered among 630 residents to elicit people's attitudes towards the linguistic diversity in the increasingly internationalized cities. Preliminary analysis shows that multilingual signs are mainly conceived by city dwellers as a key marker of city image, and the use of English and other alphabetic languages on signs are symbolic of modernity, international orientation, sophistication and fashion. Thus, multilingualism in cityscape is welcomed by Chinese readers. However, the competition between Pinyin (Romanization system for Chinese) and English on signs has caused much confusion for local residents. The results may help us have a clearer picture of the penetration of globalization and multilingualism in China, and a better understanding of people's attitudes towards the English imperialism.

**Tuesday October 15<sup>th</sup>**

**Raees Calafato** (University of Bergen): *Charting a roadmap to a more systematized multilingual approach to teaching languages.*

Many countries are implementing multilingual educational initiatives that, if successful, will benefit learners in terms cognition, language learning, mental health, and cultural knowledge. For these initiatives to be successful, however, it is important that teachers possess the relevant experience and knowledge so that they can then pass these onto their students. Teachers, who do not subscribe or aspire to a multilingual identity or are unaware of the benefits of multilingualism, will likely not be able to inspire their learners to develop such an identity. They will also not be able to effectively implement activities that raise their students' language awareness. My study explores Russian and Norwegian language teachers' multilinguality, language awareness, and multilingual practices in a comparative context and seeks to raise their awareness of multilingualism and associated practices. The study uses a questionnaire, semi-structured interviews, and case studies to explore differences in their beliefs (multilingual identity and benefits, language learning, native-speakerism), metalinguistic knowledge and language awareness (verbalization of rules, cross-linguistic knowledge transfer), and how they use these when teaching. The presentation will discuss the study's preliminary findings from the questionnaire, covering teachers' language backgrounds and identity, their beliefs about multilingualism, as well as the extent to which they incorporate multilingual practices into their teaching.

**Maj Schian Nielsen** (University of Agder): *Can crosslinguistic awareness among future language teachers improve grammar teaching in a German L3-context?*

For more than twenty years research has shown that metacognition can have positive effect on the language learning among students (e.g. Wenden, 1998 in Haukås, 2018). Many changes to the curricula have since been made, partly to focus more on metacognition. In addition to this, the impact of previous linguistic knowledge on language acquisition (often called transfer) has been a widely discussed factor for even longer (e.g. early mentioned by Fries, 1945 and Lado, 1957). Nonetheless the promising positive combination of those two areas has only recently become a noticeable research field. By introducing students to the concept of crosslinguistic awareness, a subdomain of metacognition, they seem to benefit from their other (even partly) known languages when learning another language, if instructed in a proper way. Developing learners' crosslinguistic awareness requires, however, as a first step a high level of metalinguistic consciousness and didactical competence by the teacher.

Based on observation as a former language teacher in secondary school and at university level, my impression is the following: the educational system in Denmark and Norway does not accommodate the future teacher's needs to achieve a broader linguistic understanding to enable them to train foreign language students most effectively in developing their crosslinguistic awareness and ultimately their language competences.

By using a contrastive account of the linguistic function 'passive-voice' in Danish, English, German and Norwegian I want to give examples on how awareness of transfer and crosslinguistics can facilitate an improved foundation for competence of this often experienced rather problematic functional category. I will in addition give illustrations on how to include the findings didactically in teacher's educations at university level. The study is based on a systemic functional description of the passive-voice in combination with comparative methods. The analysis will treat Danish and Norwegian (Bokmål) as L1, English as L2 and German as L3, hence aiming at improving German-L3 teaching in a Danish and Norwegian context.

In a forthcoming study these theoretically established suggestions might be compared with the actual teaching of future German teachers in Denmark and Norway.

**Iørn Korzen** (Copenhagen Business School): *Are some languages more complex than others? On text complexity and how to measure it.*

In this paper, I discuss the concept of linguistic complexity, which has been high on the linguistic agenda during the last few decades (Merlini Barbaresi (ed.) 2003, Sampson et al. (eds) 2009, Moretti 2018 and many others). I cite a number of the most important definitions of complexity proposed by different scholars, and I apply and compare particular elements of these definitions to linguistic phenomena found in two specific languages, Italian and Danish. I focus mainly on the number of propositions per sentence and on the degree of their subordination (as conveyed by verb implicitness and nominalisation), two manifestations of complexity that are numerically measurable and comparable. I give both cross-linguistic and intralinguistic examples taken from comparable texts that exhibit differences in these kinds of complexity, and this way I illustrate that linguistic complexity is a phenomenon of vital importance both to language types and to speakers and users.

**Henrik Høeg Müller** (University of Aarhus): *Complementarity and division of labour between endo- and exocentric languages. The case of Danish and Spanish.*

On the basis of contrasting data from Danish and Spanish, this paper argues that systematic variations between the word-formation (Müller 2013) and syntactic patterns dominating the two language types correlate with deep-rooted lexical differences between *endo-* (Germanic) and *exocentric* (Romance) languages.

The paper follows the lexical-typological assumption that endo- and exocentric languages distribute information complementarily on the two major word-classes nouns and verbs (e.g. Baron & Herslund 2005; Baron et al. 2019). While the former concentrate information in the main verb and leave the nominal arguments relatively underspecified, the latter seem to act oppositely, i.e. they tend towards using general verbs (e.g. Herslund 2014; Müller 2014, 2019) and specific nouns.

It is shown that both morphological phenomena, such as languages' preference for either derivational or compositional word-formation strategies, as well as syntactic phenomena, such as argument structure projection, have a relationship with the lexical level.

**Hanne Korzen** (Copenhagen Business School): *Free predicatives: a contagious construction, illustrated by French, English and Danish.*

Free subject predicates attach to the subject with the verb of the primary predication acting as a “mediator”, the result being a secondary predication, “grafted”, so to speak, on the primary predication (cf. Herslund 2000):

- (1) Dupont est rentré *ivre* = Dupont est rentré + Dupont était *ivre*.  
Dupont came home *drunk*.

In my paper, I want to compare free predicates in French and Danish, but I will also have a look at English. Although free predicates exist in the three languages, Danish accept them to a considerably lesser extent than French and English.

In order to explain that difference between the languages, I will use the “deverbalisation scale” proposed by Lørn Korzen (e.g. I Korzen 2007: 23), where he shows that Roman languages appear much more deverbalised than the Germanic ones. English has been influenced by French, and now English is “infecting” Danish.

**Marco Gargiulo** (University of Bergen): *Language conflict, camouflage and glottophagy in the Italian cinematic city.*

In this paper, I will discuss how the Italian cinematic urban space is defined by the sociolinguistic structure created by multilingualism: a complex relationship of languages, often in conflict, and a social network where people’s identities are based on the language varieties they use or are defined by. In particular, I will present some examples based on the analysis of the Italian films from the Second World War to today: from the Neorealism to the so called Neo-neorealism or the recent examples of hyper-realism. In the analysis of these films, I will focus on the following problems: the different representations of the internal relations in language conflict situations; the relationship between diversification and unification; the differences in telling and (re)building a pluralistic cultural identity vs a politically standardized dominant identity; the strategies of language camouflage and glottophagy activated to survive strong language conflicts in the complex Italian system of identities; the interconnection between language identities and urbanity, suburbanity and rurality.