

# **CALPIU Start-Up Seminar**

## **November 22-23, 2007**

### **Seminar Abstracts**



Maarten van Valckenborch (1534-1612): The Tower of Babel  
Dresden, Gemäldegalerie

## **Sørup Manor**

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# Teaching in a foreign language: Linguistic performance and academic authority in the international university

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The internationalization of universities puts pressure on all educational programs to use English as the language of instruction, as today the bulk of all scientific, technological and academic knowledge in the world is (only or also) available in English. Therefore *research* on the internationalization of universities in EFL countries<sup>1</sup> should obviously include a strong (though far from exclusive) focus on the impact of English. This paper is an example of this, focusing specifically on *teacher discourse* in an English-language context at a Danish university. It is part of the preparation for a project investigating the relationship between linguistic performance and academic authority for university teachers teaching courses in both English and Danish, based on recent sociolinguistic theories and concepts such as “persona,” “stylization” and “authentication” (Bell, Eckert, Coupland, Bucholtz). The purpose is diagnostic with a view to the professionalization of university teachers who, without being native speakers of English, are to communicate their expertise in the multicultural learning environment. The main research question is:

*How does it affect the professional identity of university teachers in Denmark – as manifested in their discourses, and as perceived by themselves and the students – that they now have to teach in English, after always teaching in their mother tongue in the past?*

This paper introduces some of the issues in a presentation of three “teacher voices of the international university” in Denmark – pointing out, in particular, some of the theoretical and methodological *difficulties* in investigating such issues.

Obviously, Danish university teachers are not alone in facing the challenge of having to teach in English, and the project is therefore relevant to university teachers in all EFL countries.

## International universities in bilingual communities (Catalonia, Basque Country and Wales): a research project.

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This presentation is intended to describe the basic elements of the design of a three-year research project (2008-2010). The project aims to answer the following question: How is multilingualism managed within the context of internationalisation policies in universities in the bilingual communities of Catalonia, Basque Country and Wales? In order to answer this question the research will focus on two main aspects of the internationalisation policies of European universities: (a) Erasmus students and (b) the use of English as vehicular language. The design of the project is informed by work carried out in four specific areas of sociolinguistic research: intercultural communication (Gumperz, 1982; Scollon & Scollon, 2001; Bremer et al., 1996; Roberts *et al.*, 2005), social interaction and power (Bourdieu, 1977;

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<sup>1</sup> Countries where English is a Foreign Language

Goffman, 1981; Fairclough, 1992; Pennycook, 2001; Blommaert, 2005), English as *lingua franca* (Kachru, 1983; Phillipson, 1999; Brutt-Griffler, 2002; Seidlhofer, 2001; Jenkins, 2007), and language attitudes and ideologies (Baker, 1992; Schieffelin, Woolard & Kroskrity, 1998; Ammon, 2001; Lasagabaster, 2003).

The project will be based on the following types of data: (i) institutional documents related to language policy (web sites, international student's guides, official policy documents, etc.); (ii) social/interactional encounters in which multilingualism becomes a relevant issue (International students services, seminars, language courses, research interviews, etc.) (iii) survey results on language use and attitudes. The analysis of the data will adopt the qualitative perspective of critical discourse analysis for the study of institutional documents, and conversation analysis and social interactionism, for the analysis of social encounters. The surveys administered to different sectors of the academic community (academic and secretarial staff, international students, and national students) will be designed and analysed from a quantitative perspective by applying statistical methods.

The results of the project are expected to contribute to a better understanding of the issues that need to be taken into account in the management of multilingualism at university in different bilingual communities. The analysis of specific university language policy actions combined with a detailed account of the multilingual practices and beliefs of the members of the community should shed some further light on both macro-level issues such as the promotion of language diversity or the internationalisation of universities, and on micro-level issues like the development of intercultural communicative competence or language choice and use as a source of interactional power.

## How to communicate project work requirements?

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## Working in an international workplace – expectations and norms

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The question of when and where to use English is one that the international university shares with other international workplaces. The question of whether or not to implement a language policy is another shared concern: should the institution have a language policy and what happens if it does not have one? In the large Danish company where I have carried out my fieldwork, English is a corporate language, but no language policy is in place to define this further.

My results show how this lack of a language policy leads to very different expectations about language use among the employees, but also that norms about language use and language choice in the workplace emerge anyway.

# Language practices in Swedish higher education – findings from a pilot study

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English is today frequently used as language of instruction in European higher education. In Sweden, the development is generally seen as positive and students are considered highly proficient in English. However, concerns have also been voiced; e.g. with respect to the status of the national language in the field. Still, we do not know in detail what the linguistic environment looks like: Is English the only medium of interaction or is the national language used in parallel? What functions do the two languages have and what govern the use of Swedish and English in the milieu?

In my talk I will present the project outline of my ongoing PhD project about language practices in Swedish higher education. The project aims to describe and understand the linguistic milieu that arises in a number of nominally English medium courses and to examine the use of Swedish in these settings. In addition, I will present findings from a pilot study conducted in spring 2006 in two courses at a faculty of social science and a faculty of science and technology respectively. The methodology used was ethnography of communication with complementary interviews. One finding is that Swedish is used in an array of contexts: it is employed irrespectively of the presence or absence of non-Swedish speaking students and irrespectively of the fact that the courses are announced as English only. The analysis indicates that interlocutor and situation are of particular importance for the use of Swedish.

## Two surveys of multilingual competence in international programs at Roskilde University

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This paper is a report of two surveys about multilingual competence of students in two international study programs at Roskilde University, International Basic Studies in the Humanities and Cultural Encounters, both conducted in the Autumn of 2005. In these programs, English is used almost exclusively, or to a large extent, respectively, in courses, group work and exams. At the same time, both programs encourage the use of other languages. The aim of the surveys was to investigate the extent to which the students can use other languages than English or Danish in their studies.

# English as an Academic Lingua Franca at study group meetings – presentation of a PhD project

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English is rapidly gaining ground as an academic lingua franca at universities and other institutions of higher education in Denmark; however, so far we know very little about what characterizes this particular use of English. In my PhD project, I address this issue by investigating how English is used as a lingua franca in undergraduate student–student interactions within the humanities at Roskilde University, with a special emphasis on the use of modal verbs and epistemic and evidential adverbs. The data for my project consist of a number of video recorded study group meetings. Apart from ELF interactions recorded at RU, the data comprise meetings where Danish and English are used as first languages to allow for comparative analyses. In this presentation, I will present the main ideas behind the project and relate the purpose of my investigation to the CALPIU framework.

## Preparing for life in a global community: the socio-cultural experience of the international student

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International students are transient visitors to our academic communities yet they form an integral part of the social context of Higher Education. Although individually these students remain in universities for a limited period of time, as a group they are always present on campuses and in classrooms and are therefore a significant element of the social and cultural landscape of Higher Education. This diverse range of students in contemporary Higher Education brings with them a diversity of backgrounds, expectations and lives from beyond the university thus personalising the experience of study (Brennan and Osbourne 2005). Some research has focused upon how international students benefit and improve the quality of academic and social exchange within the classroom and on campus (Volet and Ang 1998). However, there has been only limited research that has considered international students' friendship groups (Bochner 1977, Black et al 1991) and qualitative studies that relate to social networks of international students and learning are rare.

Based on an extensive piece of recent research, this paper considers the role of socio-cultural context in the academic and personal experience of a group of international students, examining how these students' social networks contribute to the development of their personal and learning experience. The research sought to explore the factors that were involved in the international students' development of social networks both in their academic activity and the activities that surround their learning experience. The study was approached using a qualitative framework, employing semi-structured interviews and an extensive observation scheme.

As the study progressed it became apparent that the international students in the study were part of a strong and supportive network that resembled a 'community of practice' (Lave and Wenger 1991). It appeared that this purposeful and highly motivated international community was developed as a means of replacing social capital that was lost in transition from their home context. Through their contact with the international network (UK students appeared to be peripheral to this network) the students seemed to develop a view of themselves as part of a global community. It is the suggestion of this study that international students' participation in a network that is made up of a majority of international, non-UK members should not be seen as a deficit. The students in this study viewed their international community as an important part of their learning experience. However, it may be that universities need to strengthen their emphasis on the social context of learning in order that all students and staff may benefit from the perspective that contact with an international community can bring.

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# Ethnomethodological and Conversation-analytic analyses of project meetings

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In this presentation we report on our ongoing Ethnomethodological and Conversation Analytic investigation of 'project group meetings'. At present we are concerned with two practical matters for the informants in our data: how to do disagreement, and how to create and follow an agenda. We will briefly illustrate the interactional features of informants' work in this regard, provide a preliminary list of what might also be interesting to analyze in the data, as well as offer an overall characterization of the meetings as such. And all in about 20 minutes, so hold on to your hats.

# Language choice, participation and recipient design in a trilingual examination

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The paper is a first attempt to analyze data collected from an HIB examination at Roskilde University. In the recording, a group of three students talk to one examiner and one external examiner (censor). German and English work as the official languages, while Danish is used by students as a resource in situations where certain words are not available. We have transcribed fragments from the 75 minute examination in which language choice is made relevant or accounted for, for example when it is either changed or not changed. The paper will give an overview of the issues we have by now have identified as interesting for our topic, before we focus on segments of talk where issues of language choice are particularly relevant for participation and recipient design.

## When we build our corpus

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This paper will attempt to provide an overview of the corpus construction project that will be one of the products of the data collection process envisaged for our future research centre examining cultural and linguistic practices in the International University. While unexpected surprises can always provide hindrances to such projects, because of their complexity, it can only benefit our planning and budgeting process to openly discuss our expectations and knowledge gaps right at the beginning of the planning process.

The paper will open up the discussion of such issues as software, hardware and personnel needs, as well as aims and ambitions for the corpus project, among others.