HERMES 48 – ABSTRACTS

Glenn Ole Hellekjær
A Survey of English Use and Needs in Norwegian Export Firms

The present needs analysis study uses data from a quantitative survey of language use and needs in 302 export firms to identify for which tasks and in which communicative situations English is used, and to what extent language difficulties are encountered. The survey data are then triangulated with those of two studies of job advertisements. The findings indicate that while a large number of staff in Norwegian export firms use English fairly well, many still experience difficulties involving language proficiency as well as communication skills. An important implication is that Norwegian institutions of higher education need to meet their students' need for advanced proficiency in General English, English for Specific Purposes as well as the communication skills needed in occupational contexts. The findings also indicate that the prevailing focus on communication skills in recent studies of Business English as a Lingua Franca is inadequate, and that such skills must be complemented with advanced English proficiency.

Natascia Leonardi
'Ontology' and Terminological Frameworks: an Overview of Issues and Term(s)

This paper addresses the question of the protean nature of 'ontology', with special attention paid to its use within the domain of terminology theories and applications. This term is widely used nowadays within various disciplines for designating different types of organising relational frameworks. Yet, its designations remain unvaried and, in this way, it causes ambiguity. The multifaceted nature of the so-called 'ontology' hinders the possibility of providing an unambiguous definition. This is mainly due to the multi- and interdisciplinary dimension of this notion, which is outlined here through an overview of its application within philosophy, information science, and linguistic disciplines.

   The reference model of ontology that is applied nowadays in various disciplines corresponds to an object, or more precisely, to various types of objects which are all based on a relational framework, and are used for organising different types of knowledge units. This view differs from the original value of ontology that was shaped within philosophy as a purely theoretical model, a global and universally-valid abstract classification of reality. Therefore, it seems appropriate that this term should acquire greater precision especially when it is used within the domain of terminology.

Almut Meyer
Intercultural Competence in Legal German Teaching: A Didactical Implementation

On the basis of a qualitative needs analysis conducted among Finnish jurists, cultural competence was found to be one of the most important skills required in legal occupations. This finding raises the question of how to teach 'cultural competence' to law students. In this study, culture is principally conceived of as a way of life and how we construct meanings from the world surrounding us.

Intercultural competence is, in the context of this study, constituted through cultural knowledge, which in turn enables us to understand other cultures. This article discusses the didactical implementation of cultural competence in legal German courses at the law faculty of the University of Turku. The didactical approach presented sees culture in relation to legal texts, as juridical work is always text-based and because texts contain cultural phenomena, which are relevant to understanding legal contents. In this study, legal texts are dealt with from a hermeneutic-constructive perspective to interpret systematically their cultural content. Correspondingly, an ethnological-hermeneutic interpretation model forms the core of the theory-conducted interpretations of cultural phenomena. Hence, intercultural competence is acquired through those interpretations.

After a few introductory remarks, the article briefly presents a needs analysis, and then proceeds to the theoretical framework of the interpretation model, followed by a case study and its didactic realisation.

Ismael Arinas
How Vague Can Your Patent Be? Vagueness Strategies in U.S. Patents

Patent claims define the protection scope of the intellectual property sought by the patent applicant or patentee. Broad claims are valuable as they can describe more expansive rights to the invention. Therefore, if these claims are too broad a potential infringer will more easily argue against them. But if the claims are too narrow the scope of protection of the intellectual property is greatly reduced. Patent claims have to be, on the one hand, determinate and precise enough and, on the other hand, as inclusive as possible. Therefore patent applicants must find a balance in the broadness of the scope defined by their claims. This balance can be achieved by the choice of words with a convenient degree of semantic indeterminacy, by the choice of modifiers or other strategies. In fact, vagueness in patent claims is a desirable characteristic for such documents. A quantitative and qualitative analysis of a corpus of 350 U.S. patents provides a promising starting point to understand the linguistic instruments used to achieve the balance between property claim scope and precision of property description. To conclude, some issues relating vagueness and pragmatics are suggested as a line of further research.

Thomas Hestbæk Andersen & Morten Boeriis
Relationship/Participant Focus in Multimodal Market Communication

In this article, we present an integrated multimodal method of analysing marketers' discursive strategies. Using a social semiotic, multimodal framework, we propose 'the relationship/participant focus analysis' (RPF analysis). This method is socially significant in that it helps us identify the strategies marketers use to influence the consumer.

RPF analysis reveals how marketing communication – exemplified with the register of packaging – relies on two fundamental factors, namely (i) communication perspective and (ii) personalisation. The communication perspective resides within the interpersonal realm of semiosis, focusing on the enactment of relationships, while personalisation resides within the ideational realm of semiosis, focusing on the construal of represented participants.

RPF analysis suggests a way of tackling the multimodal complexity of marketing texts when these are seen as consisting of social semiotic acts of meaning, combining different semiotic resources. In the article, our focus is on the instantiated verbal and visual resources used on food packaging.

Sven Tarp

New Experiences in Pedagogical Lexicography: Two Cuban School Dictionaries

The Santiago-based *Centro de Lingüística Aplicada* has produced two school dictionaries, the *Diccionario Escolar Ilustrado* and the *Diccionario Básico Escolar*, which together cover the 12 grades from Primary School over Secondary Basic School to High School. In various ways they are innovative in terms of the solid preparatory work, the design and content of the articles, the cheap production methods, and the work that has been carried out with a view to effectively reaching the target user group with an output of until now more than 100 000 printed copies as well as their accessibility on CD, the Internet and the Cuban national Intranet (soon). The article analyses the two dictionaries in terms of their methodology, functions, content, structure, and layout and presents some suggestions for future editions as well as for pedagogical lexicography in general.