A NEW APPROACH TO INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE IN SECOND LANGUAGE CLASSROOMS
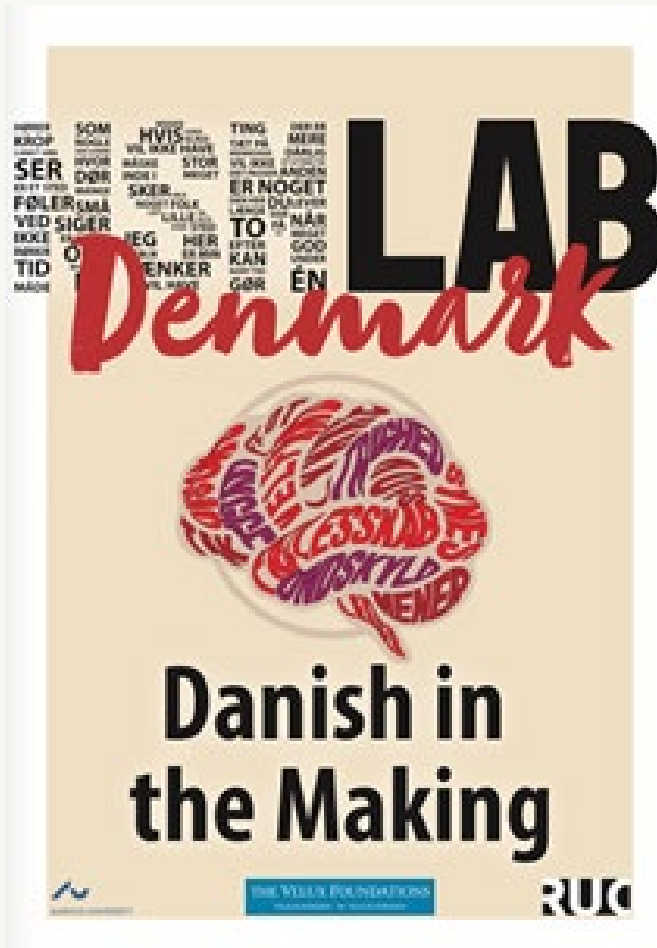
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Danish in the Making: Intercultural Pragmatics for learners and teachers of Danish as a second language

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NSM – NATURAL SEMANTIC METALANGUAGE

> Anna Wierzbicka & Cliff Goddard

I	
you	
someone	
something~thing	
people	
body	

want	do
don't want	happen
know	move
think	
say	live
feel	die
see	
hear	

be (somewhere)
there is
be (someone/something)
(is) mine
kinds   words
have parts

when~time	for some time
now	moment
before	
after	
a long time	
a short time	

this
the same
other~else

where~place	side
here	inside
above	touch
below	
far	
near	

one	all
two	much~many
some	little~few
more	

good	big
bad	small
very	
true	

Semantic primes

not	like
maybe	
can	
because	
if	

MINIMAL LANGUAGES (APPROACH)

An extremely limited vocabulary for explaining concepts, based around (but building on) the 65 universal semantic primes from NSM research

A vocabulary of 300 or so words which have (near) equivalents in most languages

Universal

hands
legs
head
eyes
ears
mouth
nose
skin
fingers
teeth
bone
blood
breasts
face
voice

sun
sky
the earth
during the day
at night

fire
water
air
light

stand
sit
lie
sleep
breathe
hold
play
laugh
sing
kill

we

name
be called
know someone

at the top
at the bottom
in the middle
around
in front
be on (something)

children
men
women
be born
mother
father
husband
wife

long
round
flat
hard
sharp
heavy

wood
stone

creature
grow (in a place)
the ground

Approximate

eat
drink
make
build

grass
seeds

bird
fish
tree

river
sea
mountain/hill
forest

house
village/town
family
king/chief

soul
ill
sweet

Culture-specific

horse
cow
+

wheat
rice
+

gold
iron
glass

number
money
God
law

read
write
book

brother
sister

doctor
teacher
soldier
priest
scientist

city
country

wheel
wire

English | Design by Lauren Sadow, 2020

NSM AND MINIMAL LANGUAGES IN SECOND/FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING

1. Teaching vocabulary and meaning

    (mener vs. tror / happy vs. lykkelig)

2. Teaching culture and values

    (e.g. cultural keywords)
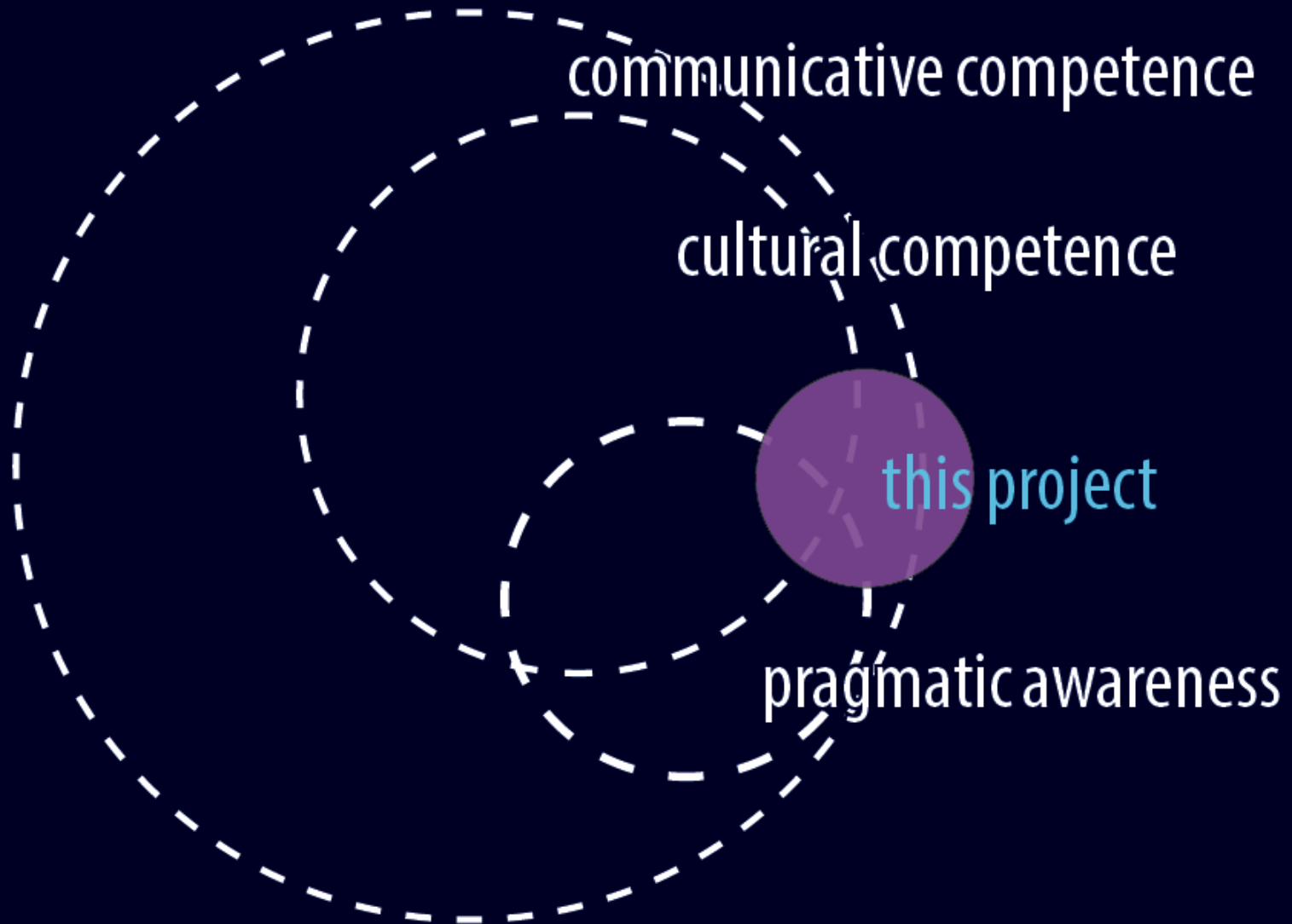
3. Teaching interaction and behavioral norms

    (cultural scripts)

What aspects of Danish communicative culture do learners and teachers of L2 Danish need, and how can they be described and introduced in the L2 Danish classroom to promote ICC through a minimal languages approach?

communicative competence

cultural competence

this project

pragmatic awareness

Subproject A
Danish communicative culture

Subproject B
L2 Danish teachers and learners

1. To identify and describe the essential vocabulary needed for a metalanguage to talk about culture, "Minimal Danish"

2. To describe key elements of Danish communicative culture through the use of minimal language

3. To develop a "Cultural Dictionary of Danish" for the L2 Danish classroom

4. To understand the needs of L2 Danish teachers and learners regarding ICC in order to design apt pedagogical materials

5. To develop and test classroom practice with focus on ICC through the use of minimal language and the cultural dictionary
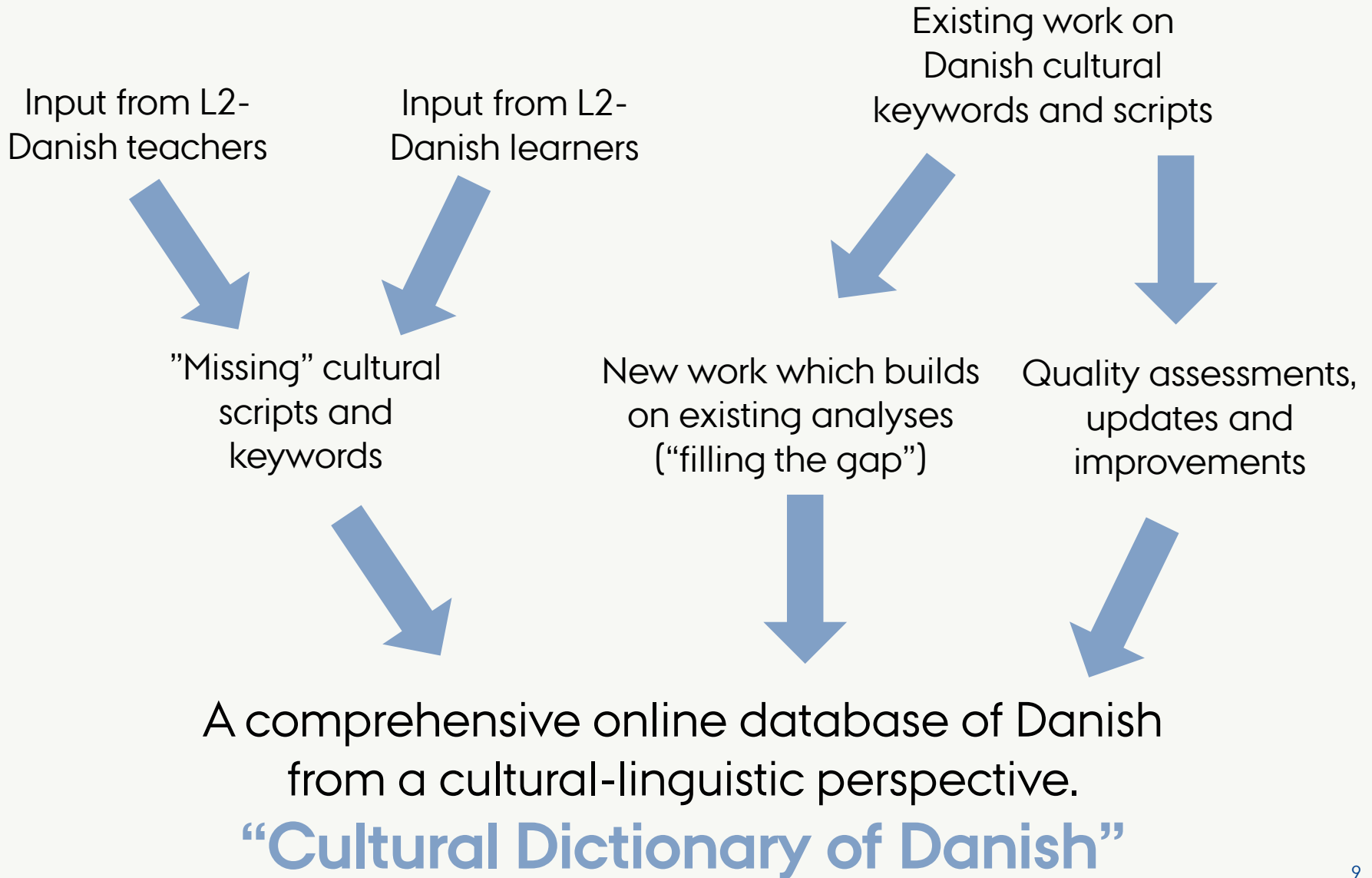
Input from L2-Danish teachers

Input from L2-Danish learners

Existing work on Danish cultural keywords and scripts

"Missing" cultural scripts and keywords

New work which builds on existing analyses ("filling the gap")

Quality assessments, updates and improvements

A comprehensive online database of Danish from a cultural-linguistic perspective.
"Cultural Dictionary of Danish"

WHAT CONTENT?

→ NOT a dictionary of slang

- Cultural values

  "ytringsfrihed"

- Interactional norms

  "expressing opinions with

  'synes'"

- Cultural keywords

  "fællesskab"

- Phrases *"tak for i går"*

Topics

Community

Conversational Rules   Cultural keywords

Education   Emotions

Environment

Expressing opinions   Gender roles   Humour

Insults   Politeness   Key values and attitudes

Personal relations   Requests and Directives

Healthcare   Social issues

Swearing   Work

DESIGN – IDEAS AND CONSIDERATIONS

Multiple language support

Multiple search pathways:
- By topics
- By "parts of speech"
- Alphabetical list
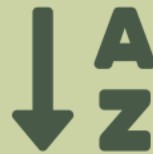- Search
- Cross-referencing

Multimedia files

Pedagogical exercises

MY CULTURAL KEYWORD
LESSON PLAN

Lesson objectives:
Students can recognise how language reflects the way they think.
Students can explain elements of concepts important to their identity.
Students can evaluate differences between words with similar meanings in two languages.

Introduction:
Words that we use every day can show us something about the way that we think about the world. Some words show us how we think about people, some how we think about places, and some how we think about things. Every language has words like this, and every language's words are different. In this lesson, you will find out more about words that are important to you, and compare them to words that are important to speakers of Australian English.

Activity sequence:
1. My cultural keyword worksheet
Get students to complete the worksheet 'My Cultural Keyword' individually. Try to get students who speak the same language to focus on different cultural keywords.

2. Discussion
Ask students to say something about their cultural keyword and how it is different from the translation into English. Why is that word important for them?
Choose two entries from Module 2 of the AusDICT for discussion.
How do these words translate into the languages of the class?
How are these words important in Australian English?
How do these words show how people think about the world?

AusDICT references:
All of Module 2: Cultural Keywords
mate
tall poppy

MY CULTURAL KEYWORD

Illustrate a situation where it is used:

My word: _____

Three sentences where it is used:
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Write it out:
_____
_____
_____
_____

What it means:
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

What I think when I say it:
_____
_____
_____

How I feel when I say it:
_____
_____
_____

I FEEL
☐ good
☐ bad

What I think someone else feels when I say it:
_____
_____
_____

THEY FEEL
☐ good
☐ bad

a workshop for L2 Danish teachers, which shares and demonstrates the use of these teaching materials and the Minimal Danish approach.

a development framework for teaching materials using minimal languages, so that further paraphrases in minimal language can also be developed into teaching materials.

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THANK YOU

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