

## ABSTRACTS

**Hermes 40-2008**

### THEMATIC SECTION

#### **Instructions - Revisited and Reinterpreted**

*Martin Nielsen*

#### **„Wir laden Sie ein!“ – „Jetzt anmelden!“ Zur Spannweite von Instruktionen in Werbebriefen**

Instructive texts are an inclusive term for a wide range of action-initiating texts, i.e. texts where the action is being initiated through the text (e.g. in a sales letter, Nielsen 2003a: 66), and action commanding texts, i.e. texts where an action which the receiver wanted to execute anyway is being instructed (e.g. instructions, Reiß 1983: 17). Since sales letters are action-initiating and thus as a text genre constituting feature contain directive speech acts (Searle 1969, 1976, Wagner 2001, Nielsen 2006), they are per definition face-threatening (Brown/ Levinson 1978, Nielsen 2006). The communication configuration is asymmetric and the power relationship skewed: On the one hand, the sender wants something from the receiver although not entitled to claim that because of the power relations. On the other hand, the action that the receiver is requested to do might very well be in the interest of the receiver. On that background it seems natural that there is a wide range in the realization of instructions in sales letters: from the euphemistic „We invite you!“ to the completely unhidden, almost rude „Register now!“ This article sets out to describe and explore this range on the basis of authentic Danish and German sales letters and to make an attempt at a first tentative classification of politeness strategies that soften the face-threatening speech acts of those instructions.

*Wolfgang Koch*

#### **Iconicity in instructional texts**

Diagrammatic iconicity is usually investigated at the surface syntactic level of texts. In this paper, I try to show that a meaningful concept of iconicity cannot be found on this level in non-trivial instructional texts. Instead, we have to dive deeper into semantic and conceptual structure. I present a model of Conceptual Structure that can cope with the demands that understanding an instructional text puts on the reader, and after analyzing a concrete text (a cooking recipe), I show that the concept of control structure is of essential importance for the description of the mapping between a conceptual model and a text. Control structures can be expressed explicitly through linguistic means or be inherent to the semantics of lexical predicates. In both cases, the presence of a dynamic conceptual model is necessary in order to establish iconicity relations between the text and the underlying mental representation.

*Christina Henk*

#### **Instruktionen als Teil der Serviceleistung ‚Problemlösung‘ oder: Von der Schwierigkeit, Kunden zum Instruieren zu instruieren**

This article deals with instructions as a part of the service ‘problem solving’ and shows the difficulties in instructing customers to instruct.

I define service as an additional contribution to a product provided to achieve customer loyalty. Every service contains a communicative part which differs in size and can either have a direct or a supportive function.

For the analysis of instructions in the service ‘problem solving’, I use the survey for my doctoral thesis about ‘written servicecommunication’. I cooperated with a company producing tools for the textile industry. The survey includes interviews with and work observations of service employees and questionnaires which were sent to clients.

The service ‘problem solving’ shows three kinds of instructions, one of them going from client to service employee, the other two going from service employee to client. Difficulties with the service ‘problem solving’ are mainly founded in failures of these instructions. Several communicative elements turn out to be possible disturbing or success factors for the service; and methods of resolution are parts of communication studies (e.g. politeness).

Thus, this article shows servicecommunication as an an interesting field of research for communication studies and applied linguistics.

*Sonia Vandepitte*

## **Translating instructive texts**

Starting with Werlich (1982), many researchers within text linguistics and document design see instructive texts as a category that is different from persuasive texts. Others do not include either in their main typologies (e.g. Bonnet et al. 2001). This paper will claim, however, that instructions are a particular subtype of persuasive texts: instructing people is also persuading them to do something in a particular way or in a particular situation or in a particular order. Consequently, all features characteristic of persuasion (e.g. Aristotle 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC, Bettinghaus 1968, Dacheux 1994, Whalen 1996) also appear in instructive texts. Drawing from a learner corpus of materials used in the Trans-Atlantic Tech Writing / Translation Project (Maylath et al., 2005, in press), in which Flemish students translate English instructive texts written by American students into Dutch, the paper will discuss the problems involved in the translation of two relevant persuasive characteristics of instructive texts: expertise and positive audience-orientation. For the former, attention will be paid to message form, structure and strategy, while the latter will lead to considerations of both individual interpretation differences and cultural differences.

*Carmen Daniela Maier*

## **Instruction and Argumentation in Kodak's Advertising Practice: A Multilevel Analysis of *The Difference***

This paper presents research findings on the use of a multilevel analytical method for the exploration of a complex text. The paper begins by describing *The Difference*, an advertising and instructive material of the Kodak Company, in which several semiotic modes, media, texts types and genres are functionally integrated in order to persuasively convey specialized knowledge. A presentation of the main concepts that are employed in the multilevel analysis of this complex text is also provided.

Through the application of the multilevel analysis on *The Difference*, it is explained in detail how the instructive and argumentative discourses are actualized at the multimodal and multimedial intersection of different genres and text types. The last part of the analysis is dedicated to the presentations of the interactive connections that can be established through a multilevel analysis. The possible implications for further applications and the improvement of the method are included in the conclusions of the paper.

Although it is dedicated only to the verbal mode, Virtanen's idea of a multilevel analytical model (1992) has been employed as a starting point in the present analysis. Certainly, the model has been thoroughly expanded because, when exploring complex texts like *The Difference*, such a multilevel analytical model is supposed to include multimodal and multimedial dimensions.

*Karen M. Lauridsen*

## **Language Policy: How do organisations ensure that instructive texts are written in a language that is understood by their end users?**

Like any other text, instructive texts function within a given cultural and situational setting and may only be available in one language. However, the end users may not be familiar with that language and therefore unable to read and understand the instructions. This article therefore argues that instructive texts should always be available in a language that is understood by the end users, and that a corporate communication policy which includes a language policy should ensure that this is in fact the case for all instructive texts.

## **OTHER ARTICLES**

*Sven Tarp*

### **The Third Leg of Two-legged Lexicography**

This article argues that the essence of lexicography is its capacity to satisfy the potential users' punctual information needs in contrast to their global information needs. Simultaneously it shows that lexicographic theory, which so far has studied only two basic types of social situations where information needs may occur, the communicative and cognitive ones, should also study a third type of basic situations, which are referred to as operational user situations. On this basis, the article projects lexicography beyond the limits of known dictionaries considered as products of applied linguistics and discusses the relation that should be established between lexicography and other branches of human knowledge. It argues that lexicography, focusing on its core specialities, has a lot to contribute to these branches of knowledge. In this respect, it discusses not only traditional dictionaries but also the benefit that authors of handbooks, manuals, how-to's, user guides, textbooks and other types of texts may have from a renewed lexicographic theory that focuses on quick and easy access to data from which the potential users and readers may retrieve the information needed in specific situations. Finally, it argues that a number of university study programs may benefit from short courses on the core specialities of lexicography.

*Esther Fraile Vicente*

## **The lexicographical treatment of idioms in business dictionaries from the point of view of the translator as user**

Economic language presents a hybrid nature. Unlike other LSPs, this discourse shows a high degree of emotive meaning, abstract processes like metaphor, which bring about the great number of idioms used in business English, and the complexity involved in their translation into Spanish. The analysis of the lexicographical treatment of five business idioms in nineteen dictionaries of economics (monolingual, bilingual, and multilingual) reveals that specialized lexicographical resources should improve their treatment of idioms and other phraseological units if they are to respond to the needs of users like translators. It is suggested that specialized works should include idioms as lemmas, offer more types of syntactic-semantic information and structure it more systematically, for example, by basing their entries on the conceptual structure of economy.

Key words: specialized lexicography, economics, phraseology, idioms, translation.

*Alan Mishler*

## **The Discourse of Voicemail**

This paper attempts to determine to what degree voicemail messages can be considered a discourse genre – that is, to what degree and in what ways they appear to be uniform across speakers. Thirty-seven voice messages were recorded from the cellular phones of three University of Michigan students. The messages were analyzed in terms of their overall structure, the discursive functions that were executed therein, and the specific words, phrases and prosodic strategies that were used to execute certain functions. The messages were found to have highly uniform openings and closings, and the message bodies were found to reduce to a small set of discursive functions. In addition, certain words, phrases and devices appeared frequently and in predictable locations within the messages. It is concluded that voicemail message-leaving is a highly structured act governed by conventions that arise both from face-to-face conversation and from the specific constraints of the medium.

*J. A. G. Ardila*

## **Metapragmatic First-Order Politeness in Peninsular Spanish**

Research on Spanish politeness has developed dramatically in the past decade. One of the most influential theses regarding Spanish politeness was posited by Hickey (1991), who, in comparing Spanish to English, concluded that Peninsular Spanish has a positive politeness model. Subsequently, a number of linguists have further compared politeness in Spain to politeness in Britain. In analysing countless samples of expressive politeness (i.e. requests, apologies, terms of address, etc.), these authors have come to the conclusion that positive politeness predominates in Spain. However, such critical tendencies ignore the latest trends in politeness studies: one year after the publication of Hickey's (1991) essay, Watts *et al.* (1992) vindicated the need to discern first-order politeness from second-order politeness, and put forward the relevance of metapragmatic discussions of politeness. Descriptivist assessments of Spanish politeness prevent linguists from attempting a metapragmatic methodology that help to determine where Spanish speakers stand in the politeness-impoliteness continuum. Nonetheless, current research on general politeness studies clearly envisages that this is a task that Spanish linguistics will need to fulfil in the long run. This paper offers a metapragmatic examination of linguistic politeness in Spain, based on the data obtained from 100 informants in Extremadura, aged 14 to 20. The information drawn from the survey indicates that, whilst the informants are fully aware of the politeness norms they have been taught by their parents and teachers, their linguistic performance seldom abides by such parameters.

*Zakaria Lemmouh*

## **A Critical Linguistic analysis of the representation of Muslims in The New York Times**

The aim of this study is to shed light on recurring lexical and syntactic features that contribute to a stereotyped image of out-groups in newspapers. The focus of the study is on articles relating to Muslims in The New York Times. The analysis is based on the analytic paradigm of Critical Linguistics (CL) and Corpus Semantics (CS). The results show that the linguistic features analysed point to a systematic 'othering' and stereotyping of Muslims as compared to other participants. The study concludes with a discussion on how the grammatical features examined work together to project a stereotyped image of Muslims and how the analytical method of Critical Linguistics (CL) copes with a quantitative analysis of a great deal of randomly chosen data from a corpus consisting of newspapers from the *New York Times*.

*Eva Wiesmann*

## **Zum Wissen des Rechtsübersetzers und zur Wissensaufbereitung in übersetzerischen Hilfsmitteln**

This article deals with the difficulties encountered by the translator with no legal background in consulting resources conveying legal knowledge, ranging from the text of the law to the legal encyclopaedia, designed for lawyers, lawyers and non-lawyers, lawyers and legal translators respectively. Starting from the translation from Italian into German of a text of company law, there is first of all a description of the legal knowledge required by the legal translator to translate the legal text in question and the legal knowledge conveyed by the text for translation itself. After an overview of the resources that the legal translator may draw on to integrate any gaps in his legal knowledge, there is an illustration of the problems linked to the different types of resources, concluding with a demonstration of the advantages of a resource such as JUSLEX, designed and created exclusively for the legal translator.