

## **Centre for Medical LSP**

### **at the Aarhus School of Business, Denmark**

#### **Background**

March 2001 saw a report from the Danish Ministry of Trade and Industry proclaiming Denmark to enjoy the potential of becoming one of world's top five centres of biomedical excellence and calling for a concerted effort at all levels of government to nurture and strengthen collaboration between the medico-pharmaceutical industry, university hospitals and medical research centres to realise this potential. The strategic challenges faced by medico-science comprise an increased focus on knowledge and innovation, industrial consolidation and emergence of new networks, technology fusion and development of E-health, new private health services, and the emergence of a new generation of knowledgeable, critical health consumers. Central to most of these challenges is communication.

Medical language and health communication is an established field of linguistic research on a global level and most international fora like the American Translators Association and the European LSP Conference reserve special sessions for issues pertaining to these issues. Even so, scholarly interest in medical LSP remains remarkably scant among Danish linguists although Danish medical societies, university hospitals and the Danish medico-pharmaceutical industry are professing a keen and rapidly growing interest in ongoing medical LSP research in general and its didactical applications in particular.

Responding to this call and seizing the opportunity to positioning itself centrally vis-à-vis the Danish medico-pharmaceutical industry, the Aarhus School of Business established the Centre for Medical LSP ([www.medsprog.dk](http://www.medsprog.dk)) on 21 October 2001.

#### **Purpose**

The main purposes of the Centre are 1) to nurture the professional growth of its network members by providing opportunities for the sharing and exchanging of ideas, concerns and interest with other professionals by providing, in a diversity of ways, opportunities for both formal and informal continuing education; by providing an involvement-based approach to the development and implementation of Centre activities that encourages active participation; 2) to serve as a professional focal point for those interested in or actively engaged in bio-, health-

and medico-technical communication irrespective of educational and professional background; and 3) to develop and run research and development projects in medical LSP and health communication recruiting project partners across disciplines, institutions and private and public employment.

## **Members**

International in scope and diverse in background, Centre network members are broadly engaged in medical communication. Specifically, members include linguists, librarians, learning resource centre specialists, educators, writers, health care practitioners, doctors and specialists in academic, hospital-based environments. Structured groups sharing professional interests form for the exchange of information and ideas via the Centre homepage and new groups form as interests and needs arise.

## **Activities**

The Centre has a comprehensive portfolio of activities that mainly fall within three fields: learning, health communication and terminology. **Learning** activities began with an effort to identify and define analytical and communication competences and skills needed by linguists working professionally with English for medical science and biotechnology. These competences were incorporated into a distance learning course in *English for medical science* for LSP graduates designed in collaboration with the Library at the Aarhus School of Business and drawing on state-of-the art principles for distance teaching developed at the Henley School of Management, UK. Sharing ideas, skills, resources and techniques across disciplines is central to the Centre's activities, and the distance course in English for medical science for LSP graduates in need of further education was therefore extended and further developed into a PhD course in *Academic English* for PhD and doctoral students within medicine and natural sciences in need of writing skills critical to research publication. The PhD course has been taught to more than 100 PhD students at the universities of Aarhus and Copenhagen within the Centre's first year of existence and has now become a permanent part of the PhD programme of the Aarhus University. Efforts to gear the core contents of these courses to industry-specific needs are ongoing and are expected to breed a new experimental learning environment that cuts across traditional corporate and public university demarcation lines.

Engineered in dialogue with local and county government, municipal language centres, hospital managers, medical professional societies and organisations and a private company, the Centre's main **health communication** project entitled *Speak sound Danish* is one that truly reflects the Centre's interdisciplinary ambition. The project aims to give non-indigenous immigrant and refugee doctors the requisite communication skills in Danish to allow them to function in Danish hospitals which have a shortage of doctors. Skills encompass three domains: communicating with the patient, communicating about the patient and communicating about medicine and science.

Centre activities pursued within the area of **terminology** include, among others, the compilation and editing of specialised dictionaries (Danish-English-Danish of Medicine and Orthodontics) and assistance to organisations (e.g. WONCA) and knowledge and research centres (e.g. VIFAB) building their own specialised dictionaries.

## **Contact**

For further information about the Centre, please see the Centre's home page at [www.medsprog.dk](http://www.medsprog.dk) or contact Morten Pilegaard, phone +45 8948 6278, e-mail [mpi@asb.dk](mailto:mpi@asb.dk) or Bente Wissing Brøndum e-mail [bwb@asb.dk](mailto:bwb@asb.dk).

*Morten Pilegaard, Centre for Medical LSP  
Aarhus School of Business, Denmark*

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