

## **EDITORIAL:**

Although it does not imply a rejection of the more traditional linguistic approaches (such as terminology, grammar and textual linguistics), recent LSP research has, to an increasing extent, sought to fit LSP areas within the framework of communication theory. As we have said earlier, in this very space, the interest of LSP theoreticians in communication stretches far back in time. New forms of communication, particularly of the intercultural variety, do, however, give rise to new problems. Many of these will probably prove themselves amenable to analysis and description in an advantageous fashion by means of new theories whereas others will only be solved by purely political decisions. This latter category comprises language problems of non-English speaking European countries, in light of the fact that English is well on its way to becoming a "global language", which poses problems of crucial importance to all who work in the field of LSP.

In Denmark, discussion on the necessity of a language policy has, for a long time, been focussed on "general" language and culture. The result is that our efforts tend to deal with the problems of LSP in trade and industry, in teaching and science.

After the publication in June of our white paper entitled "Trade and Industry, Language Policy and Competitivity."<sup>1</sup>, we took the opportunity provided by this year's "European Language Day", 26 September, when Europe is supposed to be celebrating the "diversity of languages", to organize a "Language Fair" which ended up attracting over 3000 visitors. Politicians, language specialists as well as representatives of various enterprises had been invited to speak on the four following subjects: "Language Diversity.", "Language and Communication.", "Language and Culture." and "Language Policies.". The Education Minister came and opened the Fair.

The speeches and presentations proved to be of great interest and relevance and it is our fervent hope that they will influence political decisions. Unfortunately, the "diversity of languages" was not overly apparent as most of the speakers seemed to think that the language problem in Denmark boiled down to a choice between the exclusive use of English or the use of both English and Danish.

Although the minister did not fail to sing the praises of linguistic diversity at the beginning of her speech where she pointed out the necessity to learn other languages in order to understand other peoples and their cultures; the remainder of the speech, however, only mentioned Danish and English and consisted of little more than an extended promise to strengthen teaching of the national language and start the teaching of English at an earlier stage of primary education than hitherto.

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<sup>1</sup> "Hvidbog om Erhvervsliv, Sprogpolitik og Konkurrenceevne.", DSFF, 2003 ([www.dsff-lsp.dk](http://www.dsff-lsp.dk)).

A single speaker, Professor Iversen of the Pedagogical University of Denmark, had the courage to point out that if no significant changes were made to the way language policy was applied in Denmark today, all foreign language teaching, barring that of English, would disappear altogether within ten years, leaving Danes to fend for themselves with their inadequate English vis-à-vis other European nationals for whom English also was not a first language. English, when used as a mere tool of communication between non-native speakers out of its cultural context, would thus become acultural and “sexless”.

There may just be a glimmer of light in the overall gloom in that one of the prizes handed out by the minister on behalf of the European Commission, the “European Label”, went to a school project that sought to provide a thorough grounding in the French language. The other prize went to a project that comprised English, German and French.

In the near future, the Danish government will have to respond to a recently published report, “Language at Stake”<sup>2</sup> produced by a parliamentary commission appointed in March. The apparently reasonable and balanced report mentions many problems and produces as many recommendations. It will be interesting to see whether the government will see fit to act on them or not.

We suppose that the situation in Denmark in this field might be of interest to other countries encountering similar problems and we will endeavour when it is feasible to keep our readers in touch with unfolding events.

The Editorial Board

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### **DEADLINES**

Any contribution to be published in the International Journal “LSP and Professional Communication” should reach us within the following deadlines:

Vol.4, No.1, April 2004: **December 1<sup>st</sup> 2003**

Vol.4, No.2, October 2004: **June 1<sup>st</sup> 2004**

Vol.5., No.1, April 2005: **December 1<sup>st</sup> 2004**

*For more details, please consult our web-site: <http://www.dsff-lsp.dk>*

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<sup>2</sup> “Sprog på Spil”, Ministry of Culture, 2003 ([www.kum.dk](http://www.kum.dk)).