

Language Representations. A Classification Based on a Multilingual Empirical Approach.

Petra Daryai-Hansen, assistant professor, Roskilde University, Denmark

Lund/Risager (2001) and Risager (2005, forthcoming) propose a concept of language hierarchy resulting from practices that are either inclusive or exclusive and expressed through language choice and language representations. Furthermore, the articles map out the hierarchy that seems to be hegemonic, i.e. prevailing, in Denmark today. English tops this linguistic stratification, while the immigrant languages are lowest ranked. In between, we find Danish followed by the major foreign languages other than English. Risager emphasises that in-depth research is needed into the area to support the theory empirically.

This paper is based on my PhD thesis, which examined whether Lund/Risager and Risager's language hierarchy can be empirically substantiated. It, furthermore, seeks to determine whether these trends are particular to Denmark or if such a hierarchy is also manifest in other European countries. The focus was on the representation of foreign languages. The analysis was based on discourses developed within the framework of official language and educational policies in Denmark and Germany publicised between 2003 and 2008. The corpus consists of a total of 1,940 Danish language representations and 1,154 German language representations.

The thesis bridges sociolinguistics and Bourdieu's sociology of language and is intended as a contribution to critical linguistics (Pennycook 1997, 2004), drawing on critical discourse analysis in both theory and method. It is primarily based on publications in relation to language ideology, language policies and the 'foreignness' of languages.

To analyse language representations, theoretically and empirically based tools were developed. Lund/Risager and Risager's model of language hierarchy was expanded on the basis of Bourdieu's (1982) concept of hierarchies on the linguistic market and Ammon's (1989) considerations regarding the analysis of language hierarchies, developed within the framework of language planning.

The paper focuses on a possible way of operationalizing language representations based on a multilingual corpus. The field that deals with language representations is wide and stretches from linguistic anthropology in the Chicago tradition, language attitude research and social psychology to ethnodialectology. The paper draws on Hall's constructivistic definition of representations, acknowledging that "things don't mean: we construct meaning, using representational systems" (Hall 1997, 25). For the analysis of the language representation practices in Denmark and Germany, a primarily empirically based differentiated instrumentarium was developed, reflecting six inclusive and exclusive representational forms in addition to four other representational parameters.

Furthermore, the paper will discuss if language policy studies, such as the present, which are based on a concept of language recognition and dehierarchisation have a special responsibility for researching multilingually. My thesis is based on a plurilingual approach to language and it establishes a plurilingual language policy on the textual level: The thesis is written in German, but includes Danish data and Danish, French and English quotations without translation. This language policy, which promotes the receptive plurilingualism outlined by European language policies, was accepted by the PhD Committee and the publishers of the thesis.

Ammon, Ulrich (1989). "Towards a Descriptive Framework for the Status/Function (Social Position) of a Language Within a Country". In: Ulrich Ammon (1989) (ed.). *Status and Function of Languages and Language Varieties*. Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 21-106.

Bourdieu, Pierre (1982). *Ce que parler veut dire: l'économie des échanges linguistiques*. Paris: Fayard.

Hall, Stuart (1997) (ed.). *Representations. Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*. London: Sage.

Lund, Karen / Risager, Karen (2001). "Dansk i midten". In: *Sprogforum* 19 (2001). København: Danmarks Pædagogiske Universitetsforlag, 4-8.

Pennycook, Alastair (1997). "Critical Applied Linguistics and Education". In: R. Wodak/D. Corson (1997) (ed.), *Language policy and political issues in education*. Dordrecht/ Boston/London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 23-31.

Pennycook, Alastair (2004). "Critical applied linguistics". In: A. Davies/C. Elder (2004) (ed.), *Handbook of Applied Linguistics*. Oxford: Blackwell, 784-807.

Risager, Karen (2005). "Sproglige eksklusionshierarkier – de hundrede sprogs betydning". In: *Fra Minoritetsstudiers værksted* nr. 2. København: Københavns Universitet, 1-21.