

CA Research in Danish politics: Pia Kjaersgaard's rhetoric through 5 general elections from 1995 til 2013.

Stages of the projekt:

I have just begun working on my PhD projekt, February 1st 2010, so I'm still in the initial stages of planning my research.

The research question:

The Danish People's Party was formed in 1995 with Pia Kjaersgaard in the leading role as the party chairman. The party has over the years been in a gradual and very significant progress from elections to elections. Today the Danish People's Party has become an important support for the current government, a significant force in Danish politics over all. Many attaches party chairman Kjaersgaard this huge success and now that Denmark is preparing for its fifth general elections in the Danish People's Party's history, it is time to look at Kjaersgaard as a person, rhetorician and as the chairman of Denmark's fastest growing party for many decades. The project's main question is therefore very specific: What is it Kjaersgaard can with her rhetoric and speech, which no other Danish politicians can? The purpose of the PhD project is, from a conversation analytic perspective to explore what's going on in Danish politics?

Theoretical framework:

Conversation Analysis (CA) will provide me with the main methodology orientation for the research, but I'm still considering to link other methodological research directions to the project. Since I have studied political science ass well, I woud like to deal with some kind of political and social theory but I haven't decided yet.

The research will focus on a number of aspects that reflect the various forms of talk which based on the CA-analysis appears to be key features for Pia Kjaersgaard's rhetoric.

Data:

For my project I have chosen only to focus on the televised political debates associated with the last 4 elections already held, and the upcoming election that will be held during 2011 or 2012. Thus, my total data material will consist on 10 programs in total, which is produced by Denmark's two national television channels DR1 and TV2.

Important references:

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Title: On the development of L2 learners' constructions for the expression of motion: A longitudinal investigation

Abstract

Many recent studies have been carried out based on usage-based linguistic (UBL) /cognitive linguistic approach in early child language acquisition as well as the development of adult first language (L1). Studies on second language acquisition (SLA) hold the idea that second language (L2) speakers' process of constructing expressions in a foreign language, however, may to a certain extent be influenced by their already well constructed first language. Second language learners may need to shift their already formed thinking-for-speaking patterns of their native language to a newly acquired language pattern. Moreover, either a similar or a different typological structure of the mother tongue may pose much influence on the acquisition of motion expressions in individual speaker's L2 language. With the possible influence of L1 on L2, there is a need to examine the influence of a specific L1 and other possible factors (e.g., frequency factors, form-meaning mapping) in the acquisition and development of L2 learners' construction of motion expressions.

1. The stage of the project

I am in the initial stage of preparing the research plan for the project –starts on March 1st, 2010

2. The research question

The first objective of this research is to provide a clearer understanding on how adult L2 learners with different linguistic backgrounds construct the expression of motion, and how they develop their motion expressions in different periods. The following research questions are addressed: a) what type of linguistic material is employed with the progress of L2 adult learners in different stages? b) Does the development of construction follow the item-based path?

The second objective is to explore whether L2 learners acquisition and construction of motion expressions in a specific foreign language are influenced by L2 learners' specific L1. Under this objective, the research questions will be as follows:

- a) How L2 learners apply thinking-for-speaking patterns compared with their L1; to what extent does a specific L1 influence L2 learners' expression of motion events; is it a continuing influence or can be minimized with the L2 development?
- b) What is the influence of a specific L1 with typological similarity or difference on the expression of motion in a specific L2 respectively (e.g., path type encoding, choice of verb)?

3. The theoretical framework

The project is based on the framework of the usage-based linguistic (UBL)/ cognitive linguistic perspective. A typological domain of examining L2 constructions for the expression of physical motion is emphasized (e.g., Talmy, 2000) as related to the UBL perspective that language structure emerges from language use (Tomasello, 2003).

Based on Talmy's motion-event typology and Slobin's typological approach, language can be categorized into either a verb-framed language (V-language) or a satellite-framed language

(S-language), or an equipollently-framed language (Slobin, 2004). Previous research on SLA usually take the V-language and S-language as the starting point, while some recent L1 researchers (e.g., Dimitrova-Vulchanova et al.) furthermore advocate that parameters like figure and path shape, etc., need to be considered when talking about motion events.

The differences between language classifications such as V-language or S-language are not solely linguistically isolated, they also represent different thoughts. Slobin proposed that “in acquiring a native language, the child learns particular ways of thinking-for-speaking” (Slobin, 1996). This thinking-for-speaking pattern brings new insights into SLA research on a cross-linguistic level, namely on the exploration of possible influence of L1 speakers’ thinking-for-speaking patterns on their L2 acquisition and expression of motion events as well as a co-constructive pattern of re-thinking for speaking (Robinson and Ellis, 2008).

4. Methods

The data used in this project will be based on longitudinal case studies of L2 learners with various linguistic backgrounds. Besides the existing databases (i.e., Portland data), new data will be collected in the way of video recordings of L2 classroom learning activities (e.g., Danish L1 learners learning Chinese L2) from the very beginning to an intermediate level, or from an intermediate level to an advanced level.

Analysis will be based on the transcription of the collected data, using both qualitative and quantitative methods. The analysis methods applied in this project will be conversation analysis, collostructional analysis, type-token frequencies and other relevant statistic methods.

References

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