Talking about foreign languages...

There are many kinds and degree of language competence, and all have benefits. Knowing a language well enough to get by in the day to day is very different from knowing a language well enough to read sophisticated texts, write, develop adult relationships, exercise one’s profession, move effectively in a range of contexts, and adapt quickly to new situations. Though everyone knows these differences exist, the current public idea about language has no way of talking about them, just as it has no way of talking about the many kinds of language learning. (Pratt 2003: 7).
What am I talking about?

EnGeRom Languages in other universities:
Programmes closed since 2002

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Aalborg (AAU)</th>
<th>Aarhus (AU)</th>
<th>Roskilde (RUC)</th>
<th>Odense (SDU)</th>
<th>CBS Copenhagen Business School*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>TRAD 2016</td>
<td>HUM 2016</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>BUS 2017 (BA, MA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>TRAD 2016</td>
<td>HUM 2013</td>
<td>BUS 2011 (BA)</td>
<td></td>
<td>TRAD 2007 (MA) BUS 2015 (BA, MA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>(÷)</td>
<td>HUM 2013</td>
<td>(÷)</td>
<td>HUM 2002</td>
<td>BUS 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portuguese</td>
<td>(÷)</td>
<td>(÷)</td>
<td>(÷)</td>
<td>(÷)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>TRAD 2016</td>
<td>(÷)</td>
<td>BUS 2011 (BA)</td>
<td>HUM 2018</td>
<td>TRAD 2007 BUS 2015 (BA, MA)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Public University ruled by the Danish University Act (research obligation, PhD School, delivers doctoral degree)
HUM = Humanities programme / TRAD = Translation and Interpretation Programme
BUS = Covers varieties of business / organisation communication / marketing / intercultural studies
(÷) = No programme
### Remaining Language Programmes (2019)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Aalborg (AAU)</th>
<th>Aarhus (AU)</th>
<th>Roskilde (RUC)</th>
<th>Odense (SDU)</th>
<th>CBS</th>
<th>Copenhagen (UCPH)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>English</strong></td>
<td>HUM BUS</td>
<td>HUM BUS</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>HUM BUS</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>HUM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>French</strong></td>
<td>—</td>
<td>HUM BUS</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>HUM BUS (MA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>German</strong></td>
<td>HUM BUS</td>
<td>HUM BUS</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>HUM BUS</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>HUM BUS (MA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Italian</strong></td>
<td>(÷)</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>(÷)</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>HUM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Portuguese/ Brazilian studies</strong></td>
<td>(÷)</td>
<td>HUM</td>
<td>(÷)</td>
<td>(÷)</td>
<td>(÷)</td>
<td>HUM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spanish</strong></td>
<td>BUS</td>
<td>HUM BUS</td>
<td>(÷)</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>HUM BUS (MA)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

HUM = Humanities programme / TRAD = Translation and Interpretation Programme.
BUS = Covers varieties of business / organisation communication / marketing / intercultural studies.
(÷) = No programme

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### UCPH – students admitted 2015-2019*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No grade point average</th>
<th>Grade point average = 6</th>
<th>Change 2015-19</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>English</strong></td>
<td>194</td>
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<td><strong>French</strong></td>
<td>46</td>
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<td><strong>Italian</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Portuguese</strong></td>
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<td>18</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Spanish</strong></td>
<td>64</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


*These are the official numbers. They sometimes change – but not radically – when the semester starts.
UCPH compared to AU (2019)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>UCPH HUM</th>
<th>AU HUM</th>
<th>AU BUS*</th>
<th>AU Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>240</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>497</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* International Business Communication = English, French, German or Spanish

In 2007 Aarhus Business School was merged into the University of Aarhus (AU).

Source: KOT Hovedtal 2019 / 29. July 2019

A strategy in Aarhus?

Source: https://www.au.dk/ (screenshot 6 nov. 2019)
What happens to foreign language studies in DK?

Global megatrend towards English as the language of...
- Research, culture, travel, coolness... everything!

Political and societal level in DK
- Massive lobbying for promoting STEM disciplines; Reforms to strengthen STEM*-education; development of instrumental view on languages considered as add-ons to "core knowledge" from other disciplines.

University
- Governance based on market logics (numbers, rentability) harmful to less demanded programmes.

Department
- Fewer students and high drop out rate.

Students
- The Danish numerus clausus system shows that students with the highest grade point average often choose other degrees; affects the prestige of language degrees.

*STEM= Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics

Curriculum planning: interacting levels

"The development and implementation of a curriculum cover numerous activities on various levels of the education system. (...) These levels interact, and curriculum planning must allow for all of them" (Beacco et al. 2016, p. 9)

International/comparative: E.g. Bologna process (modules, ECTS) international reference instruments (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, CEFR) \( \rightarrow \) comparative/international dimension.


University: Templates for curriculum, assessment forms and study plans.

Teaching situation: E.g. curriculum, state of the art, teachers’ research field and results, pedagogical development.

Individual: Students perspectives.
What has been done to strengthen ML degrees?

**Government level: more talk than action...**
- Fremtidens sprogflag - vinduer mod en større verden. Fremmedsprog i Danmark - hvorfor og hvordan? (2003);
- Sprog er nøglen til verden (2011);
- En strategi for fremmedsprog i uddannelsessystemet (2017);
- 2018: Centre for Foreign Languages across the educational system (NCFF).

**University**
- Financial support from the Faculty Level 2007-2016. Removed as part of cut-backs in 2016.

**Department level**
- Strengthening relations with the outside world: internships, mutual visits with schools.

UCPH White Book Recommendations (1)

- Identify a disciplinary core for the programmes instead of subdisciplines living their own lives.
- Develop courses giving weight to the relationship between language and cultures in order to enhance interaction between disciplines.
- **2019: Development of new interdisciplinary Introduction Course**
- Strengthen the theoretical and methodological dimensions of the programmes.
  - Common course on Academic Writing and Methodology
- Introduce a common framework for the foreign languages programmes. From 2019.
- Strengthen the dialogue with the society e.g. by establishing an advisory board and furthering projects of collaboration with the educational sector
  - Advisory board
  - Research and development projects with gymnasium. Renewed energy with NCFF
UCPH White Book Recommendations (2)

- Strengthen the possibilities for internships without making purely vocational programmes. Embassies, NGOs, Publishing Houses, etc.

- Introduce specialized MA-profiles aimed at jobs outside the educational sector. Translation Studies, European Identities, Language Teacher + Language/Marketing Degree with Copenhagen Business School.

- Enhance collaboration between FL departments, maybe merge some of them. The ENGEROM department was created in the wake of this White Book.

The "language" and "content" relationship

"[The] dualism between ‘language’ and ‘content’ relies on the assumption that language form and language use are separate entities, and can be studied separately. It entails a structuralist view of language as a system of forms, together with a view of linguistic skills as a weak version of communicative competence. But ‘a language’ is not just a set of linguistic forms; it also comprises registers, genres, discourses, pragmatic and rhetorical strategies, regional, social and historical variations and stylistic devices. This entails that the study of the ‘content’ of texts is inextricably entwined with the study of the language in which they are encoded. Similarly, a ‘language’ class cannot be content-free”.

(Gieve, S. & Cunico, S., 2012).
The Language and Culture Network

**Funding**: Danish Research Council

**Participants**: Scholars from all Danish universities.

**Aim**: "Establishing and encouraging a discussion of the goals, visions and objects of foreign language studies in Denmark. (...) A focal point in the discussions has been to develop a more integrated view of foreign language studies than has traditionally been the case". (Andersen et al. 2006)

**Outputs**: Workshops, seminars, international conferences, publications:


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**Weak or strong classification (Ulriksen 2017)**

- **Language classes**
  - Target Language
  - Knowledge about History and Culture
  - Literature
  - History and Culture
  - Linguistics
  - Listen, Talk, Read, Write

- **Courses in TL**
  - Linguistics, Culture, History...

**Question**: Are depth and complexity sacrificed in the name of linguistic skills?

**Question**: Can depth and complexity in content courses be achieved without linguistic skills at the highest level?
Disciplinary identity from a students' perspective

**STEM students’ first year at UCPH:** How is the transition into higher education and the students’ **construction of a disciplinary identity** affected by the design of the curriculum?

**Findings**

- Indications that weaker classification and framing facilitates the perception of the programme as more coherent and more meaningful.
- Coherence as one of the keys to retention.


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The meso-level

- Why should we have a FL department at the UCPH?
- What can a FL department do, that other departments do not do?

**Warner’s million-dollar question**

“With words like ‘internationalization’, ‘global perspectives’ and ‘intercultural competence’ now embedded in the lexicon of higher education, how is it that departments of foreign languages and cultures are not positioned more prominently in university mission statements, budget designs, and general education requirements? Why is foreign language study currently devalued by many university administrators and by (...) [s]ociety as a whole? (Warner 2011: 1)
Languages in the UCPH Strategy

*Talent and collaboration. Strategy 2023*

"international" = 27 hits
"global" = 22 hits
"language" = 1 hit

[We will]: Promote a work and study environment of parallel language use in order to attract and retain talent


Internationalisation strategies

*Languages across the curriculum*
- Often heard argument: these initiatives increase visibility of FL study and their academic and professional relevance;
- Warner: they promote language *learning* but not the importance of foreign language *studies*.

*Study abroad*
- Often heard argument: stay abroad increases intercultural awareness and language skills.
- Warner: Most programs are in English and knowledge of FL considered a *soft skill*. Students’ contact with peers from other cultures do not necessarily lead to intercultural awareness unless this is perceived and as an important goal.

*Focus on Critical languages (or in DK export market languages)*
- National security argument → financial support.
- In DK: The export rate and economic growth have served as argument for FL studies – (but not for financial support... )
Language myths according to Warner

1. Language is a tool or a skill
2. The Practical is not Intellectual, The Intellectual is not Practical
3. Intercultural Competence is Located in a Mono-Symbolic World

Promoting FL as a worthwhile area of inquiry in and of itself

• “Without understating the central importance of being able to communicate across languages and cultures, we should also use the time that students spend in our classrooms to **complicate their presuppositions about what a language is and what it means to use it**, and to **question the very categories** through which we understand culture and what it means to analyze or participate within them. This requires that we conceptualize curricula that are not only meaning-oriented (Maxim 2009) as all communicative and textually focused curriculum in some sense are, but in which the **processes and histories through which meanings are created** and in some cases sedimented are themselves subject of inquiry” (Warner 2011: 14) → **investigate society and culture**
Why....

• Why should we have a FL department at the UCPH?
• What can a FL department do, that other departments do not do?

“Knowing languages and knowing the world through languages”

(M.-L. Pratt)

How to do this in practice?

• Offer courses that deal explicitly with multilingualism, language and discourse, language and power (p. 14) → sociolinguistics

• Systemically using translation and translations to highlight differences in meaning between the L1 and L2 version of the same text and to consider the extent to which translation is also an act of interpretation. For example, students can consider how a published translation from the 1950’s differs not only from the eighteenth century German original, but also from their 2011 renderings (p. 7) → translation studies
The Forsdick Inspiration – slightly adapted to a Danish context

**Challenges**

- Decline in recruitment
- Weak disciplinary identity
- Tensions between language learning and linguistics and cultural/literary/ studies
- Perception of language studies as a-theoretical, not academic subjects
- Lack of public understanding

**Opportunities**

- Adressing issues of public interest: multilingualism; migration, mobility, multiple identities
- Addressing relationship between the national and the trans-/internat
- Possibility of changing public reductive views on languages

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**References**


Warner, Chantelle (2011). Rethinking the role of language study in internationalizing higher education, L2 Journal, 3(1).