

Novel metaphors and Learner English Metaphor Festival 2009

I here present some of the preliminary results from my doctoral investigation into the “foreign-soundingness” of Norwegian-produced English. The particular focus of my project involves a comparative study of the production of linguistic metaphors in argumentative essays written by advanced Norwegian learners of English with those written by A-level British pupils. I have employed the newly-developed Metaphor Identification Procedure (Pragglejaz Group 2007) to identify all metaphorical expressions in 40,000 words of text. Half of these words are collected in the Norwegian Corpus of Learner English, whereas the other half are found in the Louvain Corpus of Native English Essays.

My discussion concentrates on the instantiations of novel metaphors found in my data, those linguistic metaphors whose contextual meanings are not lexicalized as entries in standard dictionaries. I present a typology of novel metaphor with examples from my data. Cases range from the occurrence of deliberate metaphor (Steen 2008) to L1 transference (Philip 2005) to problems relating to general lexis, homophones, syntax, attribution, and spelling.

Particular points of discussion concern the following:

- 1) issues of categorization of linguistic metaphors according to degree of conventionality
- 2) the overall frequency of novel metaphor in general
- 3) issues in identifying the potential motivation of novel metaphorical expressions
- 4) the potential advantages of explaining learner language anomalies in terms of metaphor.

Moreover, this study adds a fresh angle to an ongoing debate about the state of English in the Norwegian school system (see e.g. Hellekjær 2007, *Language Education Policy Profile: Norway 2003-2004*, Lehmann 1999, Simensen 2008).

References

- Hellekjær, Glenn Ole (2007): "Fremmedspråk i norsk næringsliv - engelsk er ikke nok!" In *Fokus på Språk*, (September) (3), Retrieved March 24, 2009 from <http://www.hiof.no/neted/upload/attachment/site/group55/Fokusnr3.pdf>.
- Language Education Policy Profile: Norway (2003-2004)*: Ministry of Education and Research and the Council of Europe. Retrieved March 24, 2009 from http://www.coe.int/T/DG4/Linguistic/Source/Profile_Norway_EN.pdf.
- Lehmann, Torunn Moksheim (1999): *Literacy and the tertiary student: why has the communicative approach failed?* PhD thesis, Bergen: University of Bergen.
- Philip, Gill (2005): *From Concept to Wording and Back Again: Features of learners' production of figurative language*. Retrieved May 10, 2007 from <http://www.cs.bham.ac.uk/~amw/figLangWorkshop/Philip.pdf>.
- Pragglejaz Group (2007): "MIP: A Method for Identifying Metaphorically Used Words in Discourse." In *Metaphor and Symbol*, vol. 22 (1), 1-39.
- Simensen, Aud Marit (2008): "Engelsk i verden." In *Fokus på Språk*, (January) (9), Retrieved March 24, 2009 from http://www.hiof.no/neted/upload/attachment/site/group55/Engelsk_i_verden.pdf.
- Steen, Gerard (2008): "The Paradox of Metaphor: Why We Need a Three-Dimensional Model of Metaphor." In *Metaphor & Symbol*, vol. 23 (4), 213-241.