

The climax of the LANCHART year

The first LANCHART year had hardly gone to completion before we had the first meeting of the centre's International Council. They had come to discuss and evaluate our work: what was satisfactory, good or even brilliant – and what was downright poor, if anything! The International Council includes researchers from all over the world whom we see as our peers and in more than one case persons we perceive as our teachers and guiding lights.

Copenhagen had put on its best clothes in the end of May, and so had we. A month before the meeting, we had sent the council members a package of papers detailing the year's work. Among the papers I want to single out four to tell four different stories. The space allotted to this narrative does not allow me to discuss the fate of all the IC papers.

Research assistant Nicolai Pharao and PhD student Gert Foget Hansen had done what no one had thought about before them. They had asked how the microphones used to register speech sounds affects the acoustic measures. Many sociolinguists, particularly in the USA, distrust the ear and rely instead solely on acoustic measurements. For them it will be a surprise that there is no easy solution to the problem Gert and Nicolai asked themselves: What microphone should we pick?

The IC reaction to this paper was: *How fascinating!*

Subsequently, Nicolai and Gert have presented their results to Swedish colleagues and to the American sociolinguists gathered for the annual NWAV conference in Ohio.



Janus Møller, Dorte Greisgaard Larsen, Minna Olsen and Frans Gregersen had prepared a comprehensive and ambitious paper on style, i.e. how we may conceptualise the differences between a single individual's performance in various situations. The style problem is as old as sociolinguistics itself and we thought that we had a new take on it.

The IC reaction was: *Think once more; this does not quite work!* Since the arguments were partly those we had mustered in the discussions before the writing of the paper, we accepted the conclusion. We have recently finished a multi-layered analysis of 18 recordings, selected so as to represent the variety of methods used to sample speech in the old and new projects we wish to repeat. We hope that by using this inductive approach we shall be able to find a principled and workable solution to the problem of detecting comparable passages from interviews.

Inge Lise Pedersen and Frans Gregersen presented a paper outlining the History of the Danish Speech Community 1900 to 2000. We concentrated on three historical processes supposed to be of importance for the development of the language(s) spoken here: Urbanization, mobility and internationalisation, including the role of the media, and socialization.

The IC reaction was: *Carry on the good work!* So we did, and we now aim at a more comparative paper looking at similarities and differences between the Nordic speech communities. We want to be able to explain both how the same processes follow different paths and how and why

Denmark represents a specific type of speech community. This will ultimately contribute to a general typology of speech communities.



The paper which was universally seen as the most ripe for publication was Tore Kristiansen and Malene Monka's on Language Ideology. Tore himself wanted however to wait for the new results we would have during the second year. Happily, we have them now when we are looking forward to the second IC meeting.