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***“FROM RESEARCH TO PRACTICE:
WORKPLACE COMMUNICATIONS AND
L2 DEVELOPMENT”***

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Agenda

- DIE R&D projects Deutsch am Arbeitsplatz (DaA) 1 & 2 and Language for Work Network (LfW)
- DaA-1 project: From research insights...
- ... to practice: DaA-2 Training programme



DaA1 Project

DaA study group of researchers and practitioners:

- Company ethnography
 - 15 companies SMEs + 1 large industrial goods manufacturer
 - Catering, food processing, electrical engineering, metal processing logistics, and elderly care
- Corpus of 70 recorded **oral** interactions at work & about 150 **written** texts (emails, notices, bulletins, nursing care documentation, etc.)
- Language analysis of the corpus according to categories of L2 didactics
 - 56 conversations & 100 emails
- Recommendations

Note: Results are not representative,
but match with other/international research



Company Ethnography

DaA1 Methodology and research questions

Design

- Semi-guided interviews with various company stakeholders:
 - employees “with and without a migration background”
 - supervisors, heads of personnel and human resources, management
 - workers’ council
- Participant observation
- Content-analytical evaluation of interviews

Research questions

- Which are the communicative requirements linked to tasks and roles?
- Which factors impact on communication?
- What are the consequences for practice and research?

Key Finding: Communication central to work, including manufacturing and low-skilled service work, language competences necessary

Trends

Decentralised forms of work organisation	Communicate and explain decisions and solutions to colleagues and management	<i>“ The employee has to make independant decisions at night. He also needs to justify his decisions.” (Operation manager)</i>
Quality assurance	Communicate changes in work processes	<i>“ We have so-called 5 minute talks every morning to discuss quality assurance.” (Operation manager)</i>
	Read and write documentation	<i>“Every handshake [detail] has to be documented” (worker processing ind.)</i>
Automisation, robotisation, new technologies	Read displays Communicate changes/errors	<i>“ You cannot rely on work routines. Sometimes there a minor changes – you have to read it thoroughly every time.” (Skilled worker)</i>
Certification / auditing	Describe and explain own error management	<i>“The auditor... adresses the worker , points out to the defect-catalogue and asks: ‘What do you do in case of such an error?’” (Head of personell)</i>
Health and safety legislation	Read and write short records Understand training (compulsory and legally binding)	<i>“The cleaning and disinfection of the kitchen are also written down by the workers and signed.” (Commis de cuisine)</i>

Discrepancies

Development towards more democratic and “richer” communicative practices	Language as a tool for selection, discrimination/exclusion	<i>“If the foreman does not understand the worker, he does not look twice but chooses somebody else... That is not nice but it is the reality on the shopfloor.”</i> (Operation manager)
Low level of communicative competence required by tasks	Higher level of communicative competence required by the organization of work	<i>“I do not talk to my cleaning rags”</i> (Cleaner) <i>“Production assistants must take part in performance appraisals. That’s an enormous hurdle.”</i> (HRM)
Use of other languages than German in the workplace: + an asset	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prevents from exercising German ▪ Loss of control ▪ (Self-)exclusion ▪ ... 	<i>“Russian is not ‘verboten’ but nor is it allowed”</i> (Worker)
Semiskilled elderly workers: Before: low level of competence required	Now: higher level of competence required	<i>„Why speak [communicate] in the workplace? They are here to work“</i> (Employer)
Company policy: emphasis on communication	Reality: operational pressure	<i>“Nurse always running, never talking.”</i> (Nurse elderly care)

Implications

- Sustainable L2 provision must build on the characteristics of workplace learning
 - Work is a collective activity
 - People ‘learn’ how to do the job every day in many different ways
- “Systemic” perspective: communication is shared responsibility:
 - involvement of all stakeholders
 - Learning arrangements beyond the course: linking formal, informal and non-formal learning
- Improving workplace L2 development involves reorganizing and improving work
- Research and practice can support employers in making their working place into (language) learning spaces
- ...

Language Analysis

Research questions

- Which communicative functions occur?
- What are the skill levels for e.g. grammar (CEFR/Profile deutsch)?
- Are there sector-specific communicative functions and realisations?

Analysis categories

- Communicative functions and CEFR/Profile deutsch levels
- Medium of communication (written/oral) and underlying concepts
- Grammar and vocabulary
- Technical vocabulary
- Prosody/Spoken interaction
- Sector-specific communicative functions

Key findings

- Realisations of communicate functions are not scalable, range across all A- and B-levels of grammatical complexity
- Complexity of spoken interaction: eminent role of prosody
- ‘Transgressive’ examples of oral communication following the written ‘monologue’ model – e.g. health and safety instructions– and of written communication following the oral ‘dialogue’ model – e.g. ‘chat’, birthday invitation to co-workers via e-mail
- Very differentiated role of vocabulary for specific purposes
Minor role in informal workplace oral exchanges, great(er) role in formal communications (reading & writing of documents/manuals, health and safety instructions, etc.)
- Only one example of “sector-specific” communicative function: describing personal care to client while doing it – in elderly care

Recommendations

- No normative interpretation of CEFR-levels (for work-related language provision)
- Development of alternative teaching and learning models/methods (e.g. activity- and task-based scenarios as core elements for language training)
- Give more space to developing listening comprehension
- Give more importance to (the phenomena of) spoken language
- Develop written and oral textual competence, develop strategies to disclose meaning at word, sentence and text level
- Other activities like screening of documents, "communication" training for other actors
- ...

How to communicate these findings to practitioners: providers, teachers, training managers in companies, ...?

An evidence-based training scheme

Modules of DaA-Training Programme

	Module	Findings	Methodology
1	Workplace L2 development: Characteristics of workplace communications and learning	DaA company ethnography International research and praxis (LfW), e. g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Illeris ▪ WALF/Unwin ▪ Arbetsam ▪ ... 	Self-reflection Engaging with DaA1 company profiles and quotes Introducing „Red threads“*
2	Workplace language and needs analysis	As above + <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Braddell ▪ Cartes de compétence (Mourholn-Dallies) ▪ VOX (No) 	Engaging with different instruments to identify <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ tasks requirements ▪ role requirements ▪ workplace culture ▪ expectations of management and learners

*Red threads:

- consequences for own practice
- differences between college-based & workplace L2 development
- terms of agreements with employer/contracting authority (Auftragsklärung)
- marketing
- training-monitoring instruments
- tasks in between modules

Modules of DaA-Training Programme

		Findings	Methodology
3	Language Analysis – how to work with authentic materials	DaA language analysis Existing coursebooks International research (LfW)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Engaging with examples of authentic written and oral workplace communications from DaA corpus ▪ Analysing coursebooks ▪ Criteria for developing materials ▪ Exemplary implementation of discourse analysis
4	From language needs analysis to syllabus development : planning courses and scenarios for workplace provision	As above	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Syllabus development based on DaA and participants' needs analysis ▪ Scenario-Technique ▪ From teaching to learning
5	Measuring performance in workplace provision	As above	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Engaging with different instruments and methods ▪ Criteria for practice-relevant performance measurements

Thank you for your interest

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