2nd annual LAGSUS meeting

in Rockenhausen, Oct. 28-31, 2005
After presenting findings from all fields and listening to the comments by the invited guests (C. Glanz, B. Böcker), the last day of the conference was used for reviewing and for redefining the COMMON field of inquiry and commonality of method which, in the light of the comments, was the currently biggest need.

Oct. 32, 3005. By way of concluding

Discussion of three issues:

What for us is the field of inquiry?

> divergences obvious, but there are also differences: what is the connection between the sociology subproject and the rest of the project?

What is the objective of the inquiry?

What are the expectations from the other disciplines?

What is the objective of the inquiry?

1

To document, analyze, describe the communicative processes which favour or impede efficient and sustainable development at all stages of the development process.

To make these insights available in a form accessible and usable by non-specialists.

To introduce a research paradigm methodologically anchored in key disciplines of the humanities to a field dominated by the methodology of natural science.

After that comes the question of common methodology?

2

To develop an understanding for the above relationships – an understanding which allows the development of a tool that can guide external interventions in such a way that they can contribute to sustainable development, including the enhancement of informed local decision-making for sustainable development. This includes the sustainability of institutions as well as the sustainability of patterns of resource use.

3

to, at least on a scientific level, bridge the "broken feedback loop" (Steeves & Melkote) or the "communication gap" (Bearth) and get an inside perspective on local processes of innovation which, from an outside view, can be understood to take place in the context of "development"

to understand, how notions of "development" find expression in local settings as expressed in local languages; how innovation is enacted and made "real" in and through communicative activities of a group, with special reference to the cornerstones "language, gender, sustainability" (keyword: organizations, concepts related to development, 12-questions list)

to understand how local practices draw on external factors which may hinder them or further them, how these factors are used and transformed/adapted in their local use (knowledge, legal context) (keyword: parallel discourses, global discourses in local transformations)

to create awareness among the local group and the international community – the stakeholders of global society – about the broken feedback loop, communication gaps and the reasons why they are relevant not only for the local people, but for global society as well (keyword: action research and reflexivity)

to critically contribute from a sociolinguistic perspective to research on development, thus contributing to make visible existing "blind spots" of current mainstreams of practice and science on development

to create a methodology that allows for a replication of such research which can feed back into the field and its objectives as formulated above

4

to understand how language can be used to reach sustainable development, eg. in the development of women

5

how do development messages come from outside through which channels and how is this development being communicated within the local structures

6

Faire ressortir clairement l'interdisciplinarité du projet et ensuite montrer comment cela constitue un atout pour un projet de développement

Montrer que la langue locale est un élément essentiel dans le traitement d'un texte qui vise un changement (une innovation) quelconque d'origine externe
Faire valoir la durabilité communicationnelle comme une des conditions principales conduisant à la durabilité matérielle d'un projet de développement
Développer une méthodologie d'approche du discours local sur le développement

What for us is the field of inquiry?

1

Language as a key to sustainable development with special reference to minority groups and local language as a key to understand the reasons for success and failure of development.

Local analysis and ownership

"Better use should be made of the recipient countries' analytical capacities, which, in turn, should be rigorously enhanced. This is the only way to discover economic options that correspond to specific situations."

Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul, "a farewell to old doctrines" D+C 2005/1

2

development communication

role of language in development

processes of innovation in multilingual settings

3

The relationship between local notions of development and local experiences with development
With particular reference to:
- How the notions and their relationship are reflected in local discourses
- How they relate to access to and use of resources (natural and human resources, as well as technical and economic resources)
- How they relate to external intervention
- How they relate to local socio-economic structure and its dynamics

-> The relationship between naming and ownership. You do not own consciously what you cannot name.

4

There is a direct link between the field of inquiry and the communicative sustainability indicators: As a proof or means of sustainable development, how language and gender is involved in the process of achieving communicative sustainability

5

Development communication

Expectations from the other disciplines

1

The sociologist says: I would like to get from the linguistics: a better understanding of the local notions of and experiences with development by giving me a background to the context of the use of words referring to key concepts (the socio-linguistic perspective), and the semantic associations of these words (the more narrowly defined linguistic perspective).
And: to see whether and to what extent arguments and reasonings in the international scientific discourse as well as the international development discourse have parallels in local discourses – in stories, proverbs, songs, expressions people use in their everyday and/or institutional interactions.

2

A linguist says: … that a common pool of data – to whose inquiry the participating disciplines can agree upon that these are, in fact, data and worthy of treatment - is recognized as the basis of our (methodologically and theoretically differing) scientific treatment
to allow me as a linguist, to have insight into and profit from their methodological and theoretical approaches and knowledge as they are applied to our common data, field of inquiry, objectives

3

… to find commonalities rather than differences and these commonalities can then be harmonized towards the goal of development communication.

Minutes – Monday, 31 October 2005, Schlosshotel Rockenhause, Lagsus-AM 2005

11.00 beginning of meeting. Present: Voßen, Wickl, Döbel, Bearth, Fremerey, Fan, Musutua, Nothofer, Beck (minutes)

Planning issues

annual meeting 2006

      difficulties in determining Indonesia as the place of the next annual meeting, Ivory Coast is impossible, Uganda would be okay

      datum first half of September

      as first priority is Indonesia, Frank has to clarify the dates and everything

Frank Wickl organizer, place: Palu

need for broad information policy by the organizer

common publication

a) individual publications in peer-reviewed journals

b) common publications envisaged for end of 2006

"modular" setting of publication (i.e. individual persons responsible for a subtheme)

the modules themselves should be integrative, i.e. reflect the overall issues relevant in the various projects

Rockenhausen, 31.10.2005