

**The Third Scandinavian Ph.D.  
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**Abstract for Paper**

Title: Popular Language Works and Utilitarian Language Learning in 19<sup>th</sup>-Century Scandinavia

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the realm of language learning saw an addition to its already established institutions of schools and private language tutors – a phenomenon called utilitarian language learning. This new method of acquiring foreign languages was in particular aided by an increase in the publication of self-study manuals, phrasebooks and simplified grammars – a genre referred to as popular language works in this paper. The teaching of foreign languages in Scandinavia had traditionally been confined to the Latin schools and universities and had benefited only the upper classes. As a result, there had not previously been a need for language teaching manuals adapted to suit the limited skills of the lower classes who did not attend these institutions. Yet, with industrialisation causing dramatic changes in society in general, there was a sudden need for basic works which could be understood and studied independently by the general population.

This paper analyses how popular language works accommodated the language learning needs of two groups in particular: 1) the bourgeois middle class which, through its connection with industry and foreign trade, had a need for foreign language proficiency on a practical level; 2) the emigrants who went to America and knew that one of the key requirements for their future success was to learn English. The genre of popular language works has an extensive range and output, as evidenced in the *Hannås Collection of Practical Linguistic Literature* at the British Library, on which this research is broadly based. By drawing on examples from this Collection the genre as a whole will be examined in relation to: 1) its adaptation of existing language teaching methods; 2) its approach to teaching non-specialists; and 3) its overall effectiveness in teaching foreign languages.

Finally, the position of utilitarian language learning within the overall history of applied linguistics is considered and the reasons why this under-researched topic deserves more attention are discussed.