

Framing the manager: Goal-oriented motivator or empathic communicator?

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Genres are ways for organisations of discursively interacting with the surrounding world, with the aim of achieving specific disciplinary goals (Bhatia 2004). As such, the management job ad has the objective of finding the right candidate for the management job advertised (Norlyk 2006). In this process, framing (Evans & Green 2006; Fillmore 1982; Kövecses 2006; Lakoff 1987, 1996) plays a salient role in conceptualising the profile and qualities of the preferred candidate, drawing on established cultural models of what constitutes the perfect leader. Thus, in a Danish setting we may talk of two predominant conceptual models or frames for leadership, the 'goal-oriented motivator' model and the 'empathic communicator' model, which frame the position and the candidate, from the discursive and metaphorical construction of the ad to the actual hiring of the new employee.

While there may be little new in this realisation, the fact that one of the two models, the 'goal-oriented motivator' model, seems to be monopolising the genre raises a number of issues that need to be addressed: How is this model realised conceptually and linguistically? Why does this model continue to be the Danish business world's preferred model for conceptualising leadership when recent theories on leadership suggest alternative approaches that are more appropriate in post-modern, global society (Dickson et al. 2012; Northouse 2004)? And what are the consequences of this choice for the recruitment of the best candidates to management positions?

In order to answer these questions, the paper will present and discuss the analysis of a corpus of Danish management job ads retrieved from the two largest Danish job portals, Stepstone and Job Index. In this discussion it will be demonstrated how the two leadership models are linguistically constructed, anchored in conceptual and culturally contingent frames, while it will be assessed how this construction affects the recruitment of candidates for management jobs as well as the conceptualisation of the management profession in general.

Keywords: Genre, framing, metaphor, discourse, management

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