

ABSTRACTS

Hermes 43-2009

THEMATIC SECTION

Critical Understandings of Globalizations in Context

ARTICLES

Grahame Thompson

International Quasi-Constitutionalism and Corporate Citizenship: Language, Troubles, Dilemmas

Why are companies increasingly adopting the language of 'citizenship' to describe themselves? This is the issue taken up in this article. It is suggested the claims and forms of address in respect to 'global corporate citizenship' are part of wider governance moves in the international system, associated with a certain constitutional terminology and moves to progressively juridicalize the international arena. The article explores the forms of these moves as regards company activity in particular, and illustrates the difficult consequences of the processes being described from the point of view traditional international law and corporate governance.

Stig Thøgersen

China's Symbiotic Narratives of Opening and Globalization

The construction of the two symbiotic narratives of "opening" and "globalization" makes it possible for China's leaders to present their policies, and in a wider perspective their rule, as an objective necessity. China's economic growth is represented as a result of the post-1978 Opening policy, while globalization is said to demand a strong and unified state that can defend Chinese interests. The paper discusses the different stages in the construction of these narratives.

Iris Rittenhofer & Martin Nielsen

Marketscapes. Market between Culture and Globalization

What happens to market communication theory (MCT) when it embraces a global business world? MCT's applications of the 'global' turn out to serve "as a magnifier" for modernity, when we discuss MCT and its conceptions of the market from the perspective of emergent and dynamic cultural theory. We critically discuss the conception of the market, the relation between communication and market and how globalization is integrated into the field. We then interface selected approaches to MCT with cultural approaches to globalization. Finally, we explore and suggest new ways of bringing together market, culture, communication and the global. In the course of these critical discussions, we develop the elements of an alternative conception of the global market as marketscapes. Furthermore, we point to several consequences of our findings for MCT. MCT has to deal with a global market as a concept, that is a way of perceiving and thinking stakeholder activities in a 'translocal', post-national and multidirectional perspective. We conclude by pointing out areas for future MC research.

Ulrich Ufer

Globalization and Modern Identity Practices – Locals and Cosmopolitans in Seventeenth Century Amsterdam

This paper offers a historical analysis of cultural identification among locals and cosmopolitans in Amsterdam, the centre of the seventeenth century world system. Here, the convergence of global processes and local changes, such as increasing monetization, commodification and anonymization of everyday lives generated conditions that contributed to the formation of modern individual and group identities. Early modern globalization gave rise to a “global animus” in Amsterdam and it prompted the city’s political elites to promote a cosmopolitan civic identity, expressed in allegoric art and architecture. On a theoretical level this paper criticizes objectifying or essentializing approaches to cultural globalization and to cultural identity and highlights instead the contradictions and ambiguities involved in the processes of attributing cultural meaning. A discussion of the poetry of Jacob Cats (1577-1660) reveals how local actors attributed contesting cultural meanings to the objects of global trade and how they acculturated them in different ways into their practices of local or cosmopolitan identification.

OTHER ARTICLES

Martin Aitken

The English Possessive Marker in a Framework of Relevance

English nominals constructed with the morpheme {-s} as a so-called possessive marker may be assigned an indefinitely large number of interpretations depending on the context of utterance. This raises interesting questions concerning the interface between semantics and pragmatics, most obviously concerning the more specific nature of the contextually invariable encoded content of the morpheme as well as the contribution made by that content to the process of comprehension. This article aims briefly to suggest one solution to these problems by proposing an underdetermined procedural semantics feeding into a principled cognitive process of inference as proposed within the framework of relevance theory.

Nina Bonderup Dohn & Christopher Kjær

Language Is not Enough – Knowledge Perspectives on Work-Based Learning in Global Organisations

In many larger organisations, increased globalisation has made more acute the need for a continuing competence development of employees, collaborators and customers. For logistic and financial reasons, companies such as Danfoss A/S and Danske Bank have chosen to deliver many of their competence development courses in a purely virtual setting, utilizing various synchronous and asynchronous ICT-tools. The aim of this article is to present a view of competence as ‘knowledge in practice’ and explore the pedagogical implications of this view for such ICT-based competence development. The ‘knowledge in practice’ of the competent employee, it is argued, is a unity of linguistically expressible and tacit (experiential and practical) aspects. The article discusses how competence development courses can be designed as workbased blended learning in order to at once support practitioners in invoking the tacit dimensions of their knowledge and in innovating the practices from which these tacit dimensions stem. A concrete example of a course design which meets these requirements is presented. The example concerns a case study conducted by C. Kjær at Danfoss in its global educational unit Danfoss Refrigeration & Air Condition Academy (Danfoss RA Web Academy).

Mohammed Jadir

Grammaire fonctionnelle (de discours) : Évaluation et perspectives

This article is, first, concerned with the presentation and evaluation of the most representative contributions of the development of the current, sentence-oriented Functional Grammar (FG) model into a more discourse-oriented one (Connolly et al. 1997, Hannay/Bolkestein 1998, Mackenzie/Gómez-González 2004, etc.). The two particularly emphasized approaches to extend the model are upward layering approach

(e.g. Dik 1997a,b, Hengeveld 1997, Moutaouakil 1998, Jadir 1998) and modular approach (Kroon 1997, Vet 1998, Bolkestein 1998). Then, starting from “structural parallel” proposals (Rijkhoff 1990, 1992; Moutaouakil 1999, 2000), I will argue that the “increasing parallel” hypothesis requires the integration of the ‘expanding’ and the modular approaches. Finally, I will survey the recent researches carried out within FG framework (Mackenzie 2000, 2004; Hengeveld 2004a,b; Hengeveld/Mackenzie 2006) for which a more adequate model of Functional Discourse Grammar should be hierarchical and modular.

Anne Lise Laursen

Plain Language – a Panacea of Linguistic Quality Assurance?

This article questions the use of a set of principles or guidelines, often referred to as language policies or language guides, which proliferate in companies and organisations as a means of harmonizing and modernizing corporate discourse. The language guide recommendations promote certain syntactic and lexical features which seem to have been inspired by the plain language campaigns conducted in various countries with the purpose of setting up a framework for a simplification of the public-sector discourse from administration to citizens. The problem of applying these principles as an overall instrument of assuring the linguistic quality of private companies has been pointed out on various occasions. However, the argumentation has until now been made on an impressionistic or introspective basis. The article demonstrates that the inventory of linguistics in fact offers a range of possibilities to give a theoretical and empirical support to the arguments. Based on a set of language guide recommendations from Danish companies, it is illustrated how variations in discourse elements, i.e. purpose, domain and audience, conventionally call for variations in the linguistic devices used. In other words, from a discursal point of view, the set of plain language-like recommendations for paradigmatic stylistic choices cannot be expected to cover every instance of business communication. Furthermore, it is argued that certain intralingual and interlingual features require empirical research in order to establish a stylistically adequate framework of this instrument of language management in companies.

Kåre Solfeld

Redewiedergabe in verschiedener Form – ein Vergleich Deutsch-Norwegisch

The subject of the present empirical study – based on both fictional texts and newspaper texts – is direct and indirect reported speech in German and Norwegian. The focus of the study is the broader range of structural possibilities for marking reported speech in German, for instance the subjunctive mood, which can be exploited to signal reported speech in syntactically independent sentences, i.e. on discourse top-level, in a way that is not possible in Norwegian. The study shows that the structural differences create different possibilities in German and Norwegian for identifying propositions as having another origin than the actual speaker/writer. Generally, Norwegian readers must rely on pragmatic inferences to a higher degree than German readers in order to identify the source. Furthermore, direct reported speech is more frequent in the Norwegian than in the German newspaper texts.

Lilian Stage

Les constructions siamoises en français et dans cinq autres langues européennes. Étude sur la comparative corrélativ

This article discusses the comparative correlative constructions in French and five other European languages. A comparative correlative construction is a binary structure whose two parts are conjoined as Siamese twins (to use the fine metaphor invented by Savelli, a French linguist). The most striking feature of this construction is the fronting of the comparatives in two clauses which are interdependent and inseparable, though at first glance no clear relation can be seen, neither in French nor in English. It is hoped that this study of six European languages will contribute to an elucidation of the structuring of the two clauses and the relation between the two parts as well as the meaning they convey.