

Antje Hornscheidt (Berlin)

## **Cultural analysis within linguistics - Is linguistics part of cultural studies?**

Editor's Preface to *Linguistik online* 14, 2/03

In this volume of *Linguistik online*, different aspects of linguistics as (a part of) cultural studies are discussed. The leading question in the call for papers for this volume was: "Is linguistics cultural studies"? All articles collected here offered positive answers, from different points of view and modes of argumentation. Theoretical, practical, empirical considerations are uniquely distributed in the articles, giving, in the whole, a multifaceted picture of possible topics and questions to be posed in future research.

The articles appear into two gross subdivisions: "more theoretical" and "more empirical", although this division risks reproducing a differentiation between theory and practice which can no longer be upheld, especially with respect to the way the different articles handle this question.

In summarizing the volume, two different aspects of the articles collected here are worth mentioning in advance:

- Interestingly, all four theoretical articles in the first part of the volume focus on the role that Critical Discourse Analysis may play within linguistics, if it is understood as part of cultural studies.
- The empirical section in the volume, comprising three articles, most heavily discusses topics related to the field of intercultural communication. This field is seriously dealt with in only one of the articles from the first, theoretical section.

Possible explanations will not be discussed here, but I would like to emphasize that the different topics chosen within this volume can be interpreted in one way or another as the momentary "state of the art" within a subfield of linguistics which is concentrated in some kind of cultural analysis. There seems to be a certain gap between more theoretical considerations and more applied or empirical research done so far. The volume shows, however, how well the empirical studies presented here fit a more or less constructivist perspective on cultural studies.

All theoretical articles, however, make it quite clear that theoretical research must fight on a very concrete level to maintain a position within linguistics, both in regard to institutionalisation as well as public and academic status. A comparison between the linguistic traditions and institutionalisations of linguistics in different countries could be an important addition to the present research demonstrated in this volume.

Threadgold shows in her contribution to what degree Critical Discourse Analysis offers a worthy contribution to poststructuralist cultural studies. She focuses on the interplay of culture, language, and politics, taking especially into account the role and constitution of the researching subject.

Benke discusses the role that applied linguistics can play in informing and contributing to cultural studies. Her theoretical considerations are followed by two examples of recent linguistic work situated in an Austrian linguistic research context, demonstrating the necessity of linguistic analysis within cultural studies.

Hornscheidt takes a constructivist perspective as a starting point and discusses the role and relevance of Critical Discourse Analysis and Cognitive Linguistics within this frame for cultural studies. To exemplify the consequences that a transdisciplinary approach could have, she focuses on the way intercultural communication has been conceptualized within linguistics so far.

Hess-Lüttich gives an overview of different aspects of intercultural media studies and cultural conflict. He shows the role that Critical Discourse Analysis has played so far in constituting this field of research for linguistics.

Asmuß discusses the interactive negotiation of membership categories in intercultural communication. In her analysis, she shows that intercultural competence could be seen as a methodological construction and less significant to the outcome of actual communicative settings than a broader kind of interactive competence, including a sensitivity towards "culture" as an identity category.

Siegfried's analysis demonstrates to what extent interculturality is something produced in actual communications and not something to be found in advance of actual encounters. Her article gives concrete examples on how cultural identity is interactively constructed in business communication between Swedes and Germans.

Fetzer shows in her analysis that natural language communication has to be investigated with respect to both linguistic code and social and sociocultural practice. The role that communicative strategies of different speech communities may play in communication is highlighted here. Fetzer thus argues for a socio-semiotic approach to natural-language communication.