



JOURNAL OF PRAGMATIC CONSTRUCTIVISM

Editorial: Journal of Pragmatic Constructivism creates understanding about functioning practices

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1 Continuing the journal with a new name begins a new era with several possibilities

With this editorial, we are very happy to open the very first issue of the *Journal of Pragmatic Constructivism*. The journal continues directly based on the Proceedings of Pragmatic Constructivism, with its tradition of ten (10) volumes and the active, continuously growing international network around it. Indeed, after the establishment of the Proceedings of Pragmatic Constructivism during the past decade, it is rather natural to also modify the name of the outlet to more clearly convey our level of ambition as the high-quality journal outlet of the international network for Actor-Reality Construction (ARC).

At the same time, we as the editorial team feel responsible for continuously developing the journal to meet the ambitions and expectations related to the journal. Thereby, we hope we can support fulfilling the overall agenda of functioning practices. We use this editorial to present expected trends in the scope and content (Section 2), reflect on the relevance of individual papers (Section 3 on the current issue) and outline the renewed editorial policy of the journal (Section 4).

2 Expected trends in the scope and content of pragmatic constructivism

ARC addresses the development of theories, methods and experiences around pragmatic constructivism (PC); the Journal of Pragmatic Constructivism fundamentally serves the community as a publication outlet and discussion forum for putting forward such development. This provides a clear, yet continuously evolving focus for the journal. Indeed, as research on PC emphasises the role of the individual actor – as controller, manager, entrepreneur, or agent etc. – in the construction of organized reality. Reality is considered as the relationship between the (individual and collective) actors and the world in which they operate. These relations are not given by nature, they are constructed; and the construction may function successfully, or it may be hampered by fictive and illusionary elements, due to missing or faulty actor-world relations. As the reality is continuously evolving, co-authored and constructed, also the research on pragmatic constructivism should evolve accordingly, continuously reflecting and placing emphasis on the phenomena that become timely and relevant. At the same time, understanding functioning practices, their antecedents and outcomes, remains

relevant despite the context and its evolutionary nature. This represents a challenge for the Journal of Pragmatic Constructivism as well, to balance between ever-lasting research challenges and emergent research topics.

The editorial team has happily observed that ARC has been actively developing its research agenda, methods and approaches. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that the network has attracted new members and active contributors at different stages of their researcher careers. This is a sound basis for further developing this journal as well. Regarding the timely discussions and recent openings on pragmatic constructivism, we provide here a few examples of potentially relevant topics. These examples do not, however, represent an extensive research agenda, but perhaps they could foster reflections on possible submissions to the Journal of Pragmatic Constructivism within or outside those topics.

First, the journal remains highly interested in the theoretical and methodological roots of PC. Therefore, the research is not merely “applying PC”; developing PC at a theoretical level or in tandem with empirical research is warmly welcome. Indeed, when it comes to learning and digitalization, for instance, applying PC represents a natural starting point for several potential contributions. However, examining learning and digitalization may result in new advancements, clarification and openings regarding the very essence of PC, as they require careful thinking of the actors and their roles in new settings.

Second, to further strengthen and develop PC may be done through examining and explicating the linkages between PC and some other philosophical ideas, theories and methodological approaches. There are already some discussions on reflecting PC and actor-network theory (Jakobsen, 2017), strong structuration theory (Jack, 2017) and the interventionist research approach (see e.g., Lyly-Yrjänäinen et al., 2017; Jakobsen, 2019). Still, some work on this topic could make it easier for research to position PC on the field of organizational and management studies.

Third, language games have been of a common interest within the network already for a while. Also, regarding the language games, there are several contribution potentials. It is very relevant to examine the language games with respect to the current pandemic situation and other current challenges. One example of a contribution potential lies in examining the language games and functioning practices of remote work, including the possibilities and barriers in constructing new knowledge when we cannot meet in person. Regarding this topic, the international network of ARC has been able to cooperate and exchange thoughts, and construct the reality also in the remote work conditions significantly well! Such practices and experiences regarding the remote work seem to remain relevant also in the future.

Although the tri-fold division for research agenda on PC provides only examples of themes for possible submissions for the Journal of Pragmatic Constructivism, the current issue fits in this tri-fold research agenda as well.

3 Outlining the current issue

This issue contains three articles that build nicely on the PC research tradition and recent advancements. At the same time, the articles of the issue provide versatility enabled by the employment of the PC approach. Namely, the articles range from the philosophical foundations of goodness (Lennart Nørreklit’s paper) to methodological considerations relevant for PC (Lars Bo Henriksen’s paper) and case-based analysis on PC in practice (Mette Møller Jeppesen’s paper). First, in his paper: *The Language Game of Goodness*, Lennart Nørreklit addresses a major problem of the performance culture that seems to infiltrate most parts of society. Such a performance culture glorifies the individual who manages to be the best. The rest become marginalised or even excluded from the community. The right to define what is the best is often in the hands of few, and most often these criteria have roots in a form of emotivism. The criteria are thereby weakly defined, and bendable in favour of those who seem to have taken control. In response to the aim of being the best, Lennart Nørreklit develops a conceptual framework for being good, the language game of goodness. A society based on goodness, and the ethics of being good are inclusive because being good is simultaneously possible for a community of people. The paper contributes with a highly critical discussion of the performance society, and it provides an alternative for organising societies.

Second, Lars Bo Henriksen offers a methodological contribution with his paper: *How to Tell the Story? On Story and Narrative in the Research Process – A pragmatic constructive approach*. The paper raises some important aspects of doing research within social sciences. From data collection to being “consumed” by the end reader. Lars Bo Henriksen makes an important argument in his paper, stating that: “we ought to give something back to the actors in the field and by the creation of new concepts and narratives help the actors solve their problems.” With this ambition in mind, social science research is given an ethical obligation to serve the society that in the end funds the researchers. Such lesson seems highly relevant in times where publication list ranking requirements and short-term positions are the norm of academia. From a methodological point of view the statement also points at a solution of the Achilles’ heel of interpretive and qualitative research methods. If practitioners can actually use the research provided, this can be seen as the litmus test of validity and reliability of research.

Third, Mette Møller Jeppesen, in her article *Language in the technology subject at the Danish Higher Technical Examination Programme – Pragmatic constructivism in practice*, examines that it is necessary for professionals that work on a common topic (here the subject of technology education) to have a common language. Without a common language, there is no consensus about what the professionals are actually working on. By drawing on a study of the

Danish Higher Technical Examination Programme (HTX), Jeppesen (2021) shows how PC can be used methodically to help practitioners create functioning practices. This is what has previously been highlighted as an important role for researchers (Henriksen, 2019; Jakobsen, 2019).

The ideas presented in Mette Møller Jeppesen's article are interesting outside the specific context of education as well. Actually, it is hard to think of a context in which the findings weren't applicable. In most places, people's backgrounds differ to some extent. For example, take the healthcare sector: although people might have the "same" healthcare background, there are nurses, physicians, and hospital administrators that have different professional languages. This way, mix-ups or misunderstandings are almost inevitable as people with different backgrounds interact and work together with shared objectives or values but with different professional languages in multidisciplinary contexts.

There is not necessarily much that integrates these people's languages. Many of not all people, with different professional backgrounds, in any environment, need to make compromises (because not any of their languages is the absolutely correct one). Furthermore, each individual actor has their unique background of education and experience, making it virtually impossible that a full agreement of conceptual meanings can ever be reached. However, in order functional practice to emerge, these individual actors need to construct a new common, professional language for making their practices function: a "lingua franca", that is nobody's "mother tongue". How such languages are constructed in real-life environments would be an interesting subject for further studies.

4 Editorial policy of the Journal of Pragmatic Constructivism

As noted above, Journal of Pragmatic Constructivism continues the tradition and policies of the Proceedings of Pragmatics Constructivism. However, the editorial team seeks to further develop the quality of the publication outlet. As a result, the renaming of the journal also means a change in the editorial policy of the journal. From now on we aim for two types of publications:

- **Research papers**, that require direct, explicit contribution to PC or substantial explicit employment of PC to be accepted to the journal.
- **Research notes and essays**, that can be accepted if the topic is considered valuable and relevant to PC, although there is no wide/explicit PC contribution.

All the submissions to the journal will be given a full attention and consideration for publication in the journal. The submissions that pass the initial screening will be peer-reviewed according to scholarly journal standards. These means ensure the development of PC and eventually an increased understanding about functioning practices. Furthermore, the quality of the journal hopefully attracts more and more submissions and readers within the open international network around the journal.

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