I. Research articles

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Cultural Linguistics*

Cultural Linguistics is a multidisciplinary area of research that explores the relationship between language, culture, and conceptualisation. Originally, this area grew out of an interest in integrating cognitive linguistics with the three traditions present in linguistic anthropology, namely, Boasian linguistics, ethnosemantics, and the ethnography of speaking. In the last decade, Cultural Linguistics has also found strong common ground with cognitive anthropology, since both explore cultural models, which are associated with the use of language. For Cultural Linguistics, many features of human languages are entrenched in cultural conceptualisations, including cultural models. In recent years, Cultural Linguistics has drawn on several disciplines and sub-disciplines, such as complexity science and distributed cognition, to enrich its theoretical understanding of the notion of *cultural cognition*. Applications of Cultural Linguistics have enabled fruitful investigations of the cultural grounding of language in several applied domains such as world Englishes, intercultural communication, and political discourse analysis. This contribution elaborates on these observations and provides illustrative examples of linguistic research from the perspective of Cultural Linguistics.

Key words: Cultural Linguistics, linguistic anthropology, cultural conceptualisations, cultural models, cultural cognition

1. What is Cultural Linguistics?

As a sub-discipline of linguistics with a multidisciplinary origin, Cultural Linguistics explores the interface between language, culture, and conceptualisation (Palmer 1996; Sharifian 2011, 2017). Cultural Linguistics explores, in explicit terms, *conceptualisations* that have a cultural basis and are encoded in and communicated through features of human languages. The pivotal focus on *meaning as conceptualisation* in Cultural Linguistics owes its centrality to cognitive linguistics, a discipline that Cultural Linguistics drew on at its inception.

The term *Cultural Linguistics* was perhaps first used by one of the founders of the field of cognitive linguistics, Ronald Langacker, in a statement he made emphasising the relationship between cultural knowledge and grammar. He maintained that "the advent of cognitive linguistics can be heralded as a return to *cultural linguistics.* Cognitive linguistic theories recognise cultural knowledge as the foundation not just of lexicon, but central facets of grammar as well" (Langacker 1994: 31, original emphasis). Langacker further maintains that "while meaning is identified as conceptualisation, cognition at all levels is both embodied and culturally embedded" (2014: 33). In practice, however, the role of culture in shaping the conceptual level of language and the influence of culture as a system of conceptualisation on all levels of language was not adequately and explicitly dealt with until the publication of *Toward a Theory of Cultural Linguistics* (1996) by Gary B. Palmer, a linguistic anthropologist from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. In this book, Palmer argued that cognitive linguistics can be directly applied to the study of language and culture.

Central to Palmer's proposal was/is the idea that "language is the play of verbal symbols that are based in *imagery*" (1996: 3, emphasis added), and that this imagery is culturally constructed. Palmer argued that culturally defined imagery governs narrative, figurative language, semantics, grammar, discourse, and even phonology.

Palmer's notion of imagery is not limited to visual imagery. As he puts it, "[i]magery is what we see in our mind's eye, but it is also the taste of mango, the feel of walking in a tropical downpour, the music of *Mississippi Masala*" (1996: 3). He adds, "phonemes are heard as verbal images arranged in complex categories; words acquire meanings that are relative to image-schemas, scenes, and scenarios; clauses are image-based constructions; discourse emerges as a process governed by reflexive imagery of itself; and world view subsumes it all" (p. 4). Since for Palmer the notion of imagery captures conceptual units such as cognitive categories and schemas, my terminological preference is

the term *conceptualisation* rather than imagery. I elaborate on my use of this term later in this paper.

Palmer's proposal called for bringing three traditional approaches found in anthropological linguistic to bear on research carried out in the field of cognitive linguistics, as follows:

> Cognitive linguistics can be tied into three traditional approaches that are central to anthropological linguistics: Boasian linguistics, ethnosemantics (ethno science), and the ethnography of speaking. To the synthesis that results I have given the name *cultural linguistics*. (Palmer 1996: 5, original emphasis)

Palmer's proposal is diagrammatically represented in Figure 1. Boasian linguistics, named after the German-American anthropologist Franz Boas, saw language as reflecting people's mental life and culture. Boas observed that languages classify experiences differently and that these linguistic categories tend to influence the thought patterns of their speakers (Blount 1995[1974], 2011; Lucy 1992).
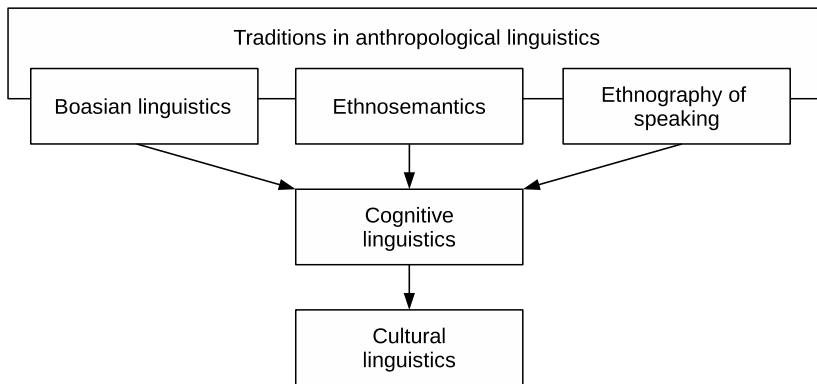

Figure 1. A diagrammatic representation of Palmer's (1996) proposal for Cultural Linguistics

The latter theme formed the basis of later work by scholars such as Edward Sapir and Benjamin Whorf. The views of the relationship between language and culture that have been attributed to this school of thought range from the theoretical position that language and culture shape human thought to one that regards human thought as *influenced* by language and culture. It is worth noting that although the former is often attributed to scholars such as Sapir and Whorf, in recent decades others have presented much more sophisticated and much more nuanced accounts of the views held by these two researchers (see Lee 1996).

A related subfield is that of ethnosemantics, which is "the study of the ways in which different cultures organise and categorise domains of knowledge,

such as those of plants, animals, and kin" (Palmer 1996: 19). For example, several ethnosemanticists have extensively studied kinship classifications in the Aboriginal languages of Australia and noted their complexity relative to the kinship system classifications in varieties of English such as American English or Australian English (Tonkinson 1998). An important field of inquiry, closely related to ethnosemantics, is ethnobiology which is the study of how plants and animals are categorised and used across different cultures (Berlin 1992).

The ethnography of speaking, or the ethnography of communication, largely associated with the work of Dell Hymes (for example, 1974) and John Gumperz (for example, Gumperz and Hymes 1972), explores culturally distinctive means and modes of speaking, and communication in general. Hymes emphasised the role of sociocultural context in the ways in which speakers perform communicatively. He argued that the competence that is required for the conduct of social life includes more than just the type of linguistic competence Chomskian linguists had studied. He proposed that a discussion of these factors be placed under the rubric of *communicative competence,* which includes competence in "appropriate" norms of language use in various sociocultural contexts. Generally, the three linguistic-anthropological traditions discussed so far "share an interest in the native's point of view" (Palmer 1996: 26) as well as an interest in the sociocultural grounding of language, although a number of anthropological linguists have simply focused on documenting, describing, and classifying lesser known languages (see Duranti 2003 for a historical review).

Cognitive linguistics itself utilises several analytical tools drawn from the broad field of cognitive science, notably the notion of *schema.* The concept of schema has been very widely used in several disciplines and under different rubrics, and this has led to different understandings and definitions of the term. For cognitive linguists such as Langacker, schemas are abstract representations. For example, for him, a noun instantiates the schema of [[THING]/[X]], whereas a verb instantiates the schema of [[PROCESS]/[X]]. In classical paradigms of cognitive psychology, however, schemas are considered more broadly as building blocks of cognition used for storing, organizing, and interpreting information (for example, Bartlett 1932; Bobrow and Nonnan 1975; Minsky 1975; Rumelhart 1980). Image schemas, on the other hand, are regarded as recurring cognitive structures which establish patterns of understanding and reasoning, often elaborated by extension from knowledge of our bodies as well as our experience of social interactions (for example, Johnson 1987). An example of this would be to understand the body or parts of the body as "containers". Such an understanding is reflected in expressions

like *with a heart full of happiness.* Another analytical tool used in cognitive linguistics is the *conceptual metaphor*, which is closely associated with the work of Lakoff, and to a lesser extent Johnson (for example, Lakoff and Johnson 1980). Conceptual metaphors are defined as cognitive structures that allow us to conceptualise and understand one conceptual domain in terms of another. For instance, the English metaphorical expressions *heavy-hearted* and *light-hearted* reflect the conceptual metaphor of HEART AS THE SEAT OF EMOTION. In proposing the framework of Cultural Linguistics, Palmer persuasively argued that it is very likely that all these conceptual structures have a cultural basis.[1] His own work is based on the analysis of cases from such diverse languages as Tagalog, Coeur d'Alene, and Shona (for example, Palmer 1996, 2003).

Although Palmer believed that the link with cognitive linguistics could provide Cultural Linguistics with a solid cognitive perspective, his proposal received criticism for *not* having a strong cognitive base, specifically, in the areas of cognitive representations, structure, and processes (for example, Peeters 2001). The criticism, however, appears to be related to the fact that there are different interpretations of the term *cognitive.* What makes studies associated with mainstream cognitive linguistics "cognitive" is their emphasis on *cognitive conceptualisation,* whereas studies of cognitive processing in the subfield of psycholinguistics mostly focus on non-conceptual phenomena, such as response time and strength of response.

In recent years, Cultural Linguistics has drawn on several other disciplines and sub-disciplines in the process of developing a theoretical framework that affords an integrated understanding of the notions of *cognition* and *culture,* as they relate to language. This framework is one that may be best described as *cultural cognition and language* (Sharifian 2008b, 2009b, 2011, 2017) in that it proposes a view of cognition that has life at the level of culture, under the concept of *cultural cognition.*

Cultural cognition draws on a multidisciplinary understanding of the collective cognition that characterises a cultural group. Several cognitive scientists have moved beyond the level of the individual, working on cognition as a collective entity (for example, Clark and Chalmers 1998; Sutton 2005, 2006; Wilson 2005). Other scholars, working in the area of complex science often under the rubric of Complex Adaptive Systems (CAS), have been seeking to explain how relationships between parts, or agents, give rise to the collective

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[1] The reader is also referred to a discussion of the cultural basis of metaphors (see Quinn 1991), where the cognitive anthropological perspective (i.e. metaphors reflect cultural models) challenges the traditional cognitive linguistic perspective (i.e. metaphors constitute cultural models).

behaviours of a system or group (for example, Holland 1995; Waldrop 1992). A number of scholars, notably Hutchins (1994), have explored the notion of *distributed cognition*, including factors external to the human organism, such as technology and the environment, in their definition of cognition (see also Borofsky 1994 and Palmer 2006 for the notion of *distributed knowledge* in relation to language). Drawing on all this work, Sharifian (2008b, 2009b, 2011) offers a model of cultural cognition that establishes criteria for distinguishing between what is cognitive and what is cultural and the relationship between the two in the domain of Cultural Linguistics.

Cultural cognition embraces the cultural knowledge that emerges from the interactions between members of a cultural group across time and space. Apart from the ordinary sense of *emergence* here, cultural cognition is emergent in the technical sense of the term (for example, Goldstein 1999). In other words, cultural cognition is the cognition that results from the interactions between parts of the system (the members of a group) which is more than the sum of its parts (more than the sum of the cognitive systems of the individual members). Like all emergent systems, cultural cognition is *dynamic* in that it is constantly being negotiated and renegotiated within and across the generations of the relevant cultural group, as well as in response to the contact that members of that group have with other languages and cultures.

Language is a central aspect of cultural cognition as it serves, to use the term used by wa Thiong'o (1986), as a "collective memory bank" of the cultural cognition of a group. Many aspects of language are shaped by the cultural cognition that prevailed at earlier stages in the histoty of a speech community. Historical cultural practices leave traces in current linguistic practice, some of which are in fossilised forms that may no longer be analysable. In this sense language can be viewed as storing and communicating cultural cognition. In other words, language acts both as a memory bank and a fluid vehicle for the (re-)transmission of cultural cognition and its component parts or *cultural conceptualisations,* a term elaborated upon later in this chapter.

2. Why Cultural Linguistics?

A question might be asked in relation to the need for the development of Cultural Linguistics. Scholars who have been interested in exploring the interrelationship between language and culture have faced at least two significant challenges in regards to the notion of *culture*: one is its abstractness and the other, the essentialist and reductionists implications

often associated with it. These challenges have led to the avoidance of the term by many scholars. For example, as Atkinson puts it, "[i]n the very field which innovated the concept in fact – anthropology – culture has been 'half-abandoned'" (2015: 424).[2] Many scholars have found the notion of *culture* to be too abstract to be useful in explicating the relationships that link beliefs and behaviour to language use. Although linguists have had rigorous analytical tools at their disposal, what has not been available to them is an analytical framework for breaking down cultures and examining their components, so that features of human languages could be explored in terms of the relationship between language and culture. Cultural Linguistics, and in particular the theoretical framework of cultural cognition and cultural conceptualisations, is an attempt to provide such an analytical framework.

First of all, this framework avoids the abstractness of the notion of *culture* and instead focuses on exploring culturally constructed *conceptualisations*. As this chapter has shown, the framework draws on several disciplines, such as cognitive science and cognitive linguistics, for its analytical tools, such as *cultural schemas*, *cultural categories*, and *cultural metaphors*. These analytical tools allow cultural conceptualisations to be examined systematically and rigorously. Furthermore, they enable the analysis of features of human languages in relation to the cultural conceptualisations in which they are entrenched.

As for the essentialist and reductionist tendencies associated with the notion of *culture*, the theoretical model of cultural cognition and cultural conceptualisations avoids these by, first of all, examining cultural conceptualisations rather than examining speakers and then ascribing cultures to people, or people to cultures. It also views cultural conceptualisations as *heterogeneously distributed* across the members of a group, rather than equally shared by the speakers. Both language and culture demonstrate a similar pattern of distribution across speech communities, and neither of them is homogenously held by speakers. These themes will be further expanded in the remainder of this chapter.

3. Cultural conceptualisations

Among the analytical tools that have proved particularly useful in examining aspects of cultural cognition and its instantiation in language are *cultural schema*, *cultural category* (including *cultural prototype*), and *cultural metaphor*. I refer to these collectively as *cultural conceptualisations* (Sharifian

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[2] Following Mazzarella (2004: 345). [editor's note]

2011, 2017). Consistent with the view of cultural cognition discussed earlier in this chapter, these analytical tools are seen as existing at the collective or macro level of cultural cognition, as well as that of the individual or micro level (Frank and Gontier 2011). Cultural conceptualisations and their entrenchment in language are intrinsic to cultural cognition. This formulation of the model of cultural cognition, cultural conceptualisations, and language are summarised diagrammatically in Figure 2.
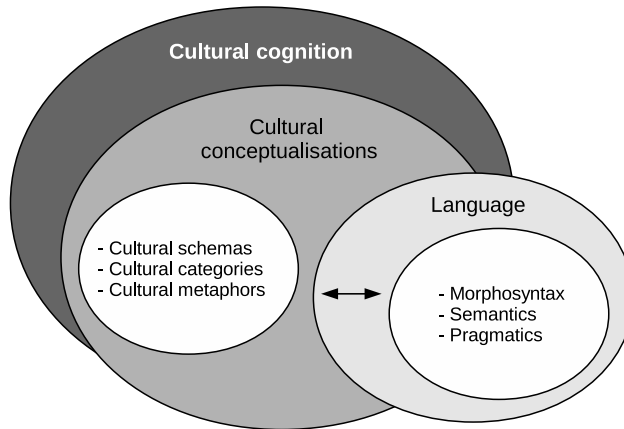

Figure 2. Model of cultural cognition, cultural conceptualisations, and language

The figure captures the close relationship between language, cultural conceptualisations, and cultural cognition. As reflected, various features and levels of language, from morpho-syntactic features to pragmatic and semantic meanings may be embedded in cultural conceptualisations in the form of cultural schemas, cultural categories, and cultural metaphors. The following section elaborates on the interrelationship between language and each of these types of cultural conceptualisations.

3.1. Cultural schemas and language

The notions of schema and conceptual metaphor were discussed earlier in this chapter. The following section elaborates on the notion of *cultural schema* and discusses how it relates to language. Cultural schemas are a culturally constructed sub-class of schemas; that is, they are abstracted from the collective cognitions associated with a cultural group, and therefore to some extent based on shared experiences, common to the group, as opposed to being abstracted from an individual's idiosyncratic experiences. They enable individuals to communicate cultural meanings. In terms of their

development and their representation, at the macro level, cultural schemas emerge from interactions between the members of a cultural group, while they are constantly negotiated and renegotiated across time and space. At the micro level, over time each individual acquires and internalises these macro-level schemas, albeit in a heterogeneously distributed fashion. That is, individuals who belong to the same cultural group may share some, but not all, components of a cultural schema. In other words, each person's internalisation of a macro-level cultural schema is to some extent collective and to some extent idiosyncratic. This pattern is diagrammatically presented in Figure 3.
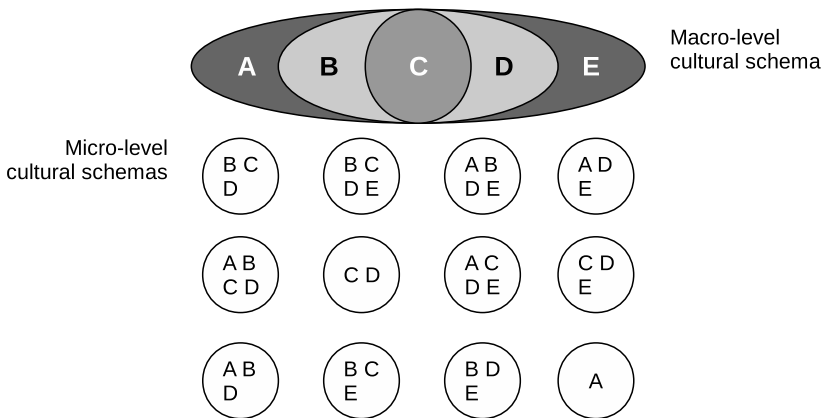

Figure 3. Diagrammatic representation of a cultural schema (adapted from Sharifian 2011)

The figure shows how a cultural schema may be represented in a heterogeneously distributed fashion across the minds of individuals. It schematically represents how members may have internalised some, but not all, components of a macro-level cultural schema. It also shows how individuals may share some, but not all the elements of a cultural schema with each other. It is to be noted that the individuals who internalise aspects of a cultural schema may not only be those who are viewed as the insiders by the cultural group. "Outsiders" who have somehow had contact and interaction with the group can also internalise aspects of their cultural schemas.

Besides its pivotal use in Cultural Linguistics, the notion of *cultural schema* has also been adopted as a key analytical tool in cognitive anthropology (for example, D'Andrade 1995; Shore 1996; Strauss and Quinn 1997). For cognitive anthropologists culture is a cognitive system, and thus the notion of *cultural schema* provides a useful tool to explore cognitive schemas that are culturally constructed and maintained across different societies

and cultural groups. A term that closely overlaps with cultural schema and has again received major attention in cognitive anthropology is that of the *cultural model* (for example, D'Andrade 1995; D'Andrade and Strauss 1992; Holland and Quinn 1987). This term, which was initially intended to displace the term *folk models* (Keesing 1987), has also been employed in the sense of "a cognitive schema that is inter-subjectively shared by a social group" (D'Andrade 1987: 112). D'Andrade constantly refers to the notion of *schema* in his explication of the term *cultural model* (ibid.) and he regards models as complex cognitive schemas. Strauss and Quinn (1997: 49) also maintain that "another term for cultural schemas (especially of the more complex sort) is cultural model". Polzenhagen and Wolf (2007), however, have used the notion of *cultural model* to represent more general, overarching conceptualisations encompassing metaphors and schemas which are minimally complex.

An example of the use of cultural models in cognitive anthropology is the exploration of the cultural model of American marriage. For example, Quinn (1987) observes that the American cultural model of marriage is based on metaphors such as MARRIAGE IS AN ONGOING JOURNEY, reflected in statements such as *this marriage is at a dead end.*

From the outset, the notion of *cultural schema* proved to be pivotal to Cultural Linguistics. In *Toward a Theory of Cultural Linguistics,* Palmer (1996: 63) maintained that "[i]t is likely that all native knowledge of language and culture belongs to cultural schemas and the living of culture and the speaking of language consist of schemas in action". Cultural schemas capture encyclopaedic meaning that is culturally constructed for many lexical items of human languages. Take an example of the word *privacy* in a variety of English such as American English. The pool of knowledge that forms a web of concepts that define *privacy* in relation to various contexts and factors is best described as the cultural schema of "privacy". The cultural construction of this schema is partly reflected in complaints that some speakers make about members of some other cultural groups, such as "they don't understand the meaning of privacy".[3]

Cultural schemas may also provide a basis for pragmatic meanings, in the sense that, knowledge which underlies the enactment and uptake of speech acts and that is assumed to be culturally shared is largely captured in cultural schemas. In some languages, for example, the speech act of "greeting" is closely associated with cultural schemas of "eating" and "food", whereas in some other languages it is associated with cultural schemas that relate to the health of the interlocutors and their family members. The

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[3] http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/privacy

available literature in the area of pragmatics makes very frequent references to "inference" and "shared assumptions" as the basis for the communication of pragmatic meanings. It goes without saying that inferences about the knowledge of listeners are technically based on the general assumption that shared cultural schemas are necessary for making sense of speech acts. In short, cultural schemas capture pools of knowledge that provide a basis for a significant portion of semantic and pragmatic meanings in human languages.

3.2. Cultural categories and language

Another class of cultural conceptualisation is that of the *cultural category.* Categorisation is one of the most fundamental human cognitive activities. It begins, albeit in an idiosyncratic way, early in life. Many studies have investigated how children engage in categorizing objects and events early in life (Mareschal, Powell, and Volein 2003). Children usually begin by setting up their own categories but as they grow up, as part of their cognitive development, they explore and discover how their language and culture categorise events, objects, and experiences. As Glushko *et al.* put it:

> Categorization research focuses on the acquisition and use of categories shared by a culture and associated with language – what we will call "cultural categorization". Cultural categories exist for objects, events, settings, mental states, properties, relations and other components of experience (e.g. birds, weddings, parks, serenity, blue and above). Typically, these categories are acquired through nonnal exposure to caregivers and culture with little explicit instruction. (Glushko *et al.* 2008: 129)

The categorisation of many objects, events and experiences, such as "food", "vegetables", "fruit", and so on, and their prototype instances, are culturally constructed. It is to be noted that the reference to *wedding* as a category in the above quotation is distinct from the use of this word in relation to cultural schemas. The "wedding" as a cultural category refers to the type of event that is opposed to "engagement" or "dining out", for example. "Wedding" as a cultural schema includes all the other aspects of the event, such as the procedures that need to be followed, the sequence of events, the roles played by various participants and expectations associated with those roles.

As for the relationship between cultural categories and language, many lexical items of human languages act as labels for the categories and their instances. As mentioned above, in English the word *food* refers to a category, and a word such as *steak* is an instance of that category. Usually categories form networks and hierarchies, in that instances of a category can themselves serve as categories with their own instances. For example, *pasta* is an instance of the category of "food" with its own instances, such as *penne* or *rigatoni.*

Apart from lexical items, in some languages cultural categories are marked by noun classifiers. For example, Murrinh-patha, an Australian Aboriginal language, uses ten noun classes which are reflective of Murrinh-patha cultural categorisation (Walsh 1993; Street 1987). These categories are identified through noun class markers that appear before the noun. The following list from Walsh (1993: 110) includes the class markers and the definition of each category:

Kardu: Aboriginal people and human spirits
Ku: non-Aboriginal people and all other animates and their products
Kura: potable fluid (i.e., "fresh water") and collective terms for fresh water (i.e., "rain", "river")
mi: flowers and fruits of plants and any vegetable foods; also faeces
thamul: spears
thu: offensive weapons (defensive weapons belong to *nantht*), thunder and lightning, playing cards
thungku: fire and things associated with fire
da: place and season (i.e. dry grass time)
murrinh: speech and language and associated concepts such as song and news
nanthi: a residual category including whatever does not fit into the other nine categories

The above categorisation also allows for multiple membership in the sense that depending on its function, a noun may be categorised into one class at one time and another class at another. For instance, a boomerang may be categorised as *nanthi* when it is used as a back-scratcher and *thu* when it is used as an offensive weapon (Walsh 1993). Also, in the Dreamtime Creation stories, when the Ancestor beings turn into animals while engaged in their journey of creating the natural world this change is signalled by a switch from one noun class into another. This system of noun classification is entrenched in Murrinh-patha cultural categorisation, which in turn is based on the Murrinh-patha world-view. For instance, as Walsh argues, the fact that fresh water, fire, and language are classified separately indicates that each holds a prominent place in the culture of the Murrinh-patha.

Apart from noun classifiers, there are pronouns in many Aboriginal languages that reflect cultural categories, through marking moiety, generation level, and relationship. In Arabana, as an example, the pronoun *amanthara,* which may be glossed into English as 'kinship-we', captures the following complex category:

Amanthara = we, who belong to the same matrilineal moiety, adjacent generation levels, and who are in the basic relationship of mother, or mothers' brother and child. (Hercus 1994: 117)

In Arabana, this cultural categorisation of kin groups is also marked on the second plural kinship pronoun *aranthara* and the third person plural

kinship pronoun *karananthara.* These examples clearly reveal how some cultural categories are encoded in the grammatical system of a language (see also Lakoff 1987).

3.3. Cultural metaphors and language

As mentioned earlier, conceptual metaphor refers to the cognitive conceptualisation of one domain in terms of another (for example, Lakoff and Johnson 1980). Extensive research in cognitive linguistics has shown how even our basic understanding of ourselves and our surroundings is mediated by conceptual metaphors. For example, in clock-and-calendar industrial cultures time is commonly understood in terms of a commodity, money, a limited resource, and so on. This is reflected in expressions such as *buying time*, *saving time*, and the like. More importantly our understanding of ourselves is achieved through conceptual metaphors. For example we can conceptualise our thoughts, feelings, personality traits, and so on in terms of our body parts.

Research in Cultural Linguistics is interested in exploring conceptual metaphors that are culturally constructed (for example, Palmer 1996; Sharifian 2011, 2017), which I refer to as *cultural metaphors.* Several studies have explored cultural schemas and models that give rise to conceptual metaphors, for example through ethnomedical or other cultural traditions (Sharifian *et al.* 2008; Yu 2009a, 2009b). For example, in Indonesian it is *hati* 'the liver' that is associated with love, rather than the heart (Siahaan 2008). Siahaan traces back such conceptualisations to the ritual of animal sacrifice, especially the interpretation of liver organ known as "liver divination", which was practised in ancient Indonesia. In some languages, such as Tok Pisin (Muhlhausler, Dutton and Romaine 2003), the belly is the seat of emotions. Yu (2009b) observes that many linguistic expressions in Chinese reflect the conceptualisation of THE HEART IS THE RULER OF THE BODY. He maintains that the "target-domain concept here is an important one because the heart organ is regarded as the central faculty of cognition and the site of both affective and cognitive activities in ancient Chinese philosophy" (Yu 2007: 27). Studies of such cultural conceptualisations are currently gathering further momentum (for example, Idstrom and Piirainen 2012).

It should be noted here that the cognitive processing of conceptual metaphor is a rather complex issue to explore. While the use of the term *metaphor* here highlights the involvement of two distinct domains of experience (that is: source and target) it does not follow that every use of an expression that is associated with a conceptual metaphor involves the online

cognitive process of mapping from one domain to another. Some cases of conceptual metaphors are simply "fossilised" conceptualisations that represented active insight at some stage in the history of the cultural cognition of a group. Such metaphors do not imply current speakers of the language have any conscious awareness of the cultural roots of the expressions, or are engaged in any conceptual mapping when they use them. In such cases, the conceptual metaphors may serve rather as cultural schemas which guides thinking about and helps with understanding certain domains of experience. In some other cases, the expressions that are associated with such cultural conceptualisations may be considered simply as figures of speech.

As for the relationship between cultural conceptual metaphors and language, it is clear from the above discussion that many aspects of human languages are closely linked with cultural metaphors. In fact, Cultural Linguistics and cognitive linguistics heavily rely on linguistic data for the exploration of conceptual metaphor. As mentioned above, the language of emotion (for example, *you broke my heart)* largely reflects culturally mediated conceptualisations of emotions and feelings in terms of body parts.

In short, Cultural Linguistics explores human languages and language varieties to examine features that draw on cultural conceptualisations such as cultural schemas, cultural categories, and cultural conceptual metaphors, from the perspective of the theoretical framework of cultural cognition.

4. Applied Cultural Linguistics

While the ultimate aim of Cultural Linguistics is to examine the relationship between language, culture, and conceptualisations, thus far a Cultural Linguistics perspective has been used in several areas of applied linguistics. The following sections present brief summaries of how a Cultural Linguistics framework has been applied to world Englishes, intercultural communication, and political discourse analysis.

4.1. Cultural Linguistics and research into varieties of English

Cultural Linguistics has offered a ground breaking approach to the exploration of varieties of English, based on the premise that varieties of English may be distinct from each other when their respective cultural conceptualisations are taken into consideration (Sharifian 2005, 2006). Malcolm and Rochecouste (2000) identified a number of distinctive cultural schemas in the discourse produced by a number of speakers of Australian Aboriginal English. These schemas included: travel, hunting, observing, scary things,

gathering, problem solving, social relationships, and smash (an Aboriginal English word for a fight). The first four schemas were found to occur most frequently in the data.

Other researchers (Polzenhagen and Wolf 2007; Wolf 2008; Wolf and Polzenhagen 2009) have explored conceptualisations of the African cultural model of community in African varieties of English. Wolf (2008: 368) maintains that this "cultural model involves a cosmology and relates to such notions as the continuation of the community, the members of the community, witchcraft, the acquisition of wealth, and corruption, which find expression in African English". For example, by examining a number of expressions in Cameroon English, e.g., *they took bribes from their less fortunate brother*, Wolf observes that the central conceptual metaphors in that variety of English are KINSHIP IS COMMUNITY and COMMUNITY IS KINSHIP (Wolf 2008: 370).

Sharifian (2005, 2008a) examined cultural conceptualisations in the English spoken by a group of Aboriginal students who, because they sounded like speakers of Australian English, were not identified by their teachers as Aboriginal English speakers. Through a study of word association, however, he found that English words such as *family*, *home*, and *shame* evoked cultural conceptualisations in these students that were predominantly those associated with Aboriginal English rather than Australian English. For example, for Aboriginal students the word *family* appeared to be associated with categories in Aboriginal English that extend far beyond the "nuclear" family, which is the central notion in Anglo-Australian culture. Consider Table 1, showing data from Sharifian (2005).

The responses given by Aboriginal participants instantiate the Aboriginal cultural schema of Family as they refer to members of their extended family, such as aunts and uncles. The responses from the Anglo-Australian participants suggest that the word *family* is, in most cases, restricted to the nuclear family, while sometimes house pets are also included.

Responses such as *they're there for you, when you need 'm they look after you* by Aboriginal participants reflect the responsibilities of care that are very alive between the members of an extended Aboriginal family. Uncles and aunties often play a large role in an individual's upbringing. The closeness of an Aboriginal person to a range of people in his or her extended family members is also reflected in the patterns of responses where the primary responses refer to uncles and aunties or nana and pop instead of father and mother. Responses such as *my million sixty-one thousand family* and *I've got lots of people in my family* reflect the extended coverage of the concept of "family" in the Aboriginal conceptualisation. Moreover, for them the word

Table 1. A comparison of Aboriginal and Anglo-Australian meanings for *family*

Aboriginal	Anglo-Australian
Stimulus word: *family*	Stimulus word: *family*
– Love your pop, love your nan, love our mums, love our dads. – Brothers, sisters, aunnie, uncles, nan, pops, father, nephew and nieces. – They're there for you, when you need 'm they look after you, you call 'm aunie and uncle an cousins. – People, mums, dads, brother, group of families, like aunties and uncles nanas and pops. – I've got lots of people in my family, got a big family, got lots of family. – My family, you know how many family I got? One thousand millions, hundred ninety-nine million thousand thousand nine nine sixty-one ... million million, uncle, Joe, Stacy ... cousins, uncles, sisters, brothers, girlfriends and my million sixty-one thousand family. – I like my family, all of my family, my aunties an' uncles and cousins, and I like Dryandra. – Just having family that is Nyungar [an Aboriginal cultural group] and meeting each other.	– You got brothers and sisters in your family and your mum and dad, and you have fun with your family, have dinner with your family, you go out with your family. – Dad, mum, brother, dog. – Mum, and dad, brother and sister. – Fathers, sisters, parents, caring. – People, your mum and dad, and your sister and brother. – All my family, my brothers and sisters, my mum and my dad. – Kids, mums, dads, sisters, brothers. – Mother, sister, brother, life. – Mum, dad, my brother. – I think of all the people in my family. [F: Who are they? I: My mum, my dad, and my sister] – They have a house, they have a car, they have their kitchen, their room, their toilet, their backyard, their carport, they have a dog and a cat.

home appeared to be mainly associated with family relationships rather than "an attitude to a building" used as a dwelling by a nuclear family.

Cultural Linguistics has also been recently used in compiling a dictionary of Hong Kong English. In a very innovative project, Cummings and Wolf (2011) have identified and included underlying cultural conceptualisations for many of the words included in the dictionary. The following is an example of an entry in the dictionary:

Spirit money (also *paper money, hell money, hell bank notes*)
Fixed expressions, n.
Definition. Fake money burned in a ritual offering to the dead
Text example: "An offering of oranges may be peeled and placed on the grave, together with *paper money*. Finally, crackers are let off."
Underlying conceptualisations: A SUPERNATURAL BEING IS A HUMAN BEING, A PAPER MODEL IS A REAL OBJECT IN THE SUPERNATURAL WORLD [TARGET DOMAIN > SUPERNATURAL BEING, PAPER MODEL] [SOURCE DOMAIN > HUMAN BEING OBJECT IN THE SUPERNATURAL WORLD] (ibid.: 163–164)

This is a groundbreaking approach to the way dictionary entries are compiled for it allows readers to become familiar with the cultural conceptualisations underlying certain expressions in the given language or the language variety. But, of course, in many cases the underlying conceptualisations themselves have their roots in older cultural traditions, including religious and spiritual ones.

4.2. Cultural Linguistics and intercultural communication

In the past, intercultural communication has been investigated primarily from the perspective of linguistic anthropology. For instance, some thirty years ago Gumperz (for example, 1982, 1991) introduced the notion of *contextualisation cues* as an analytical tool for exploring intercultural communication/miscommunication. He defined these cues as "verbal and non-verbal metalinguistic signs that serve to retrieve the context-bound presuppositions in terms of which component messages are interpreted" (Gumperz 1996: 379). Central to this notion is the importance of the *indirect inferences* speakers make during intercultural communication as they rely on linguistic and non-linguistic cues.

From the perspective of Cultural Linguistics, making indirect inferences during intercultural communication is largely facilitated by the cultural conceptualisations shared by the interlocutors. Cultural conceptualisations provide a basis for constructing, interpreting, and negotiating intercultural meanings. These conceptualisations may be the ones that are associated with their L1, or they may be others that the individuals have had access to as a result of living in a particular cultural environment, or even new ones that they have developed from interacting with speakers from other cultures.

In recent years several studies have shown that in certain contexts, intercultural communication, and in particular miscommunication, reflect differences in the ways in which various groups of speakers conceptualise their experiences. In doing so they draw on their own cultural schemas, categories, and metaphors. Wolf and Polzenhagen (2009) observe that "cross-cultural variation at the conceptual level calls for a strongly meaning-oriented and interpretive approach to the study of intercultural communication" and that is what Cultural Linguistics has to offer.

As an example of studies of intercultural communication carried out from the perspective of Cultural Linguistics, Sharifian (2010) analysed examples of miscommunication between speakers of Aboriginal English and non-Aboriginal English that mainly arose from non-Aboriginal speakers'

unfamiliarity with Aboriginal cultural conceptualisations relating to the spiritual world. Many lexical items and linguistic expressions in Aboriginal English are associated with spiritual conceptualisations that characterise the Aboriginal world-view. These include words such as *sing* and *smoke*. Take the following example from a conversation between a speaker of Aboriginal English and a non-Aboriginal English speaker:

> A: My sister said, "when you go to that country, you [are] not allowed to let 'em take your photo, they can sing you".

According to the Aboriginal cultural schema of "singing", "to sing someone" is the ritual used to cast a charm on someone with potentially fatal consequences. For example, if a man falls in love with a girl he might try to obtain strands of her hair, her photo, or some such thing in order to "sing" her. This would make the girl turn to him or, in the case of her refusal to do so, the "singing" could result in her falling sick with a serious or even fatal illness (Luealla Eggington, p.c.). It is clear that unfamiliarity with the Aboriginal cultural conceptualisations intimately associated with the use of words such as *singing* could well lead to miscommunication.

Another Aboriginal cultural schema associated with an English word in Aboriginal English is "medicine" in the sense of 'spiritual power' (Arthur 1996: 46). The following is an example of the use of the *medicine* in this sense, from a conversation between the author of this chapter and an Aboriginal English speaker:

> That when ... my mum was real crook and she ... she said, "I woke up an' it was still in my mouth ... the taste of all the medicine cause they come an' give me some medicine last night" an' she always tells us that you can't move ... an' you wanna sing out an' say just ... sorta try an' relax. That happened to me lotta times I was about twelve.

In this narration the speaker is remembering that once her mother was ill and that she mentioned the next morning that "they" went to her and gave her some "medicine" that she could still taste. She also describes her mother's reaction to the medicine as wanting to shout and then forcing oneself to relax. Without having the requisite schema, the audience of the above anecdote would be likely to think that *they* refers to medical professionals who visited the mother after hours and gave her syrup or a tablet. However, further discussion with the speaker revealed that her mother was referring to ancestor beings using their healing power to treat her illness. It is clear from these examples how unfamiliarity with Aboriginal cultural schemas informing Aboriginal English can lead to miscommunication.

Another example of cultural schemas that are functioning cognitively in the background in such instances of intercultural communication comes from Sharifian and Jamarani (2011). The study examined how the cultural schema, called *sharmandegi* 'being ashamed', can lead to miscommunication between Persian and non-Persian speakers. This cultural schema is commonly instantiated in Persian through expressions such as *sharmand-am* (short for *sharmandeh-am* 'ashamed-be.lSG') meaning 'I am ashamed', or *sharmandeh-am mikonin* 'ashamed-1SG do.2SG', meaning 'you make me ashamed'. Such expressions are usually used in association with several speech acts, such as expressions of gratitude, offering goods and services, requesting goods and services, apologizing, accepting offers and making refusals. The following is an example of such usage, from a conversation between a student and a lecturer where the student is expressing gratitude to the lecturer for writing a letter of recommendation for her:

> Speaker A (the lecturer):
> *in ham nâme-yi ke mikhâstin*
> This too letter-ART that requested.2PL[4]
> Here is the letter that you asked for.
>
> Speaker B (the student): *sharmandeh-am, vâghean mamnoon*
> Ashamed-BE.1SG really grateful
> I am ashamed, I am really thankful.

Here the use of *sharmandegi* is intended as an expression of awareness that the other person has spent some time/energy in providing the speaker with goods and services they were under no obligation to supply. The speaker acknowledges this by uttering a "shame" statement, as if guilty because of this awareness. Although the cultural schema of *sharmandegi* is very widespread and commonly drawn upon among speakers of Persian, it can lead to miscommunication during intercultural communication between speakers of Persian and non-Persian speakers. Consider the following example from Sharifian and Jamarani (2011):

Tara's (Iranian) neighbour Lara (Australian) offered to pick up some groceries for her, when she was doing her own shopping. Tara happily accepted the offer and told Lara what she needed. When Lara brought the groceries back, Tara wanted to pay her straight away:
    Lara: It is okay, you can pay me later.
    Tara: No, you have made me enough ashamed already.
    Lara: But why do you say so?! I'd offered to do the shopping myself, and I had to do my own shopping anyway.

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[4] The use of the plural in this example marks politeness/social distance.

It is evident here that Lara is surprised to hear the expression, or accusation, of "shame" on the part of Tara, as she had willingly offered to do the shopping for her. However, from the perspective of the Persian cultural schema of *sharmandegi* Tara's response is entirely appropriate, simply reflecting Tara's gratefulness to Lara. Examples such as this reveal how the process of intercultural communication involves a "meeting place" for cultural conceptualisations, where successful intercultural communication requires a sensitivity to and an awareness of cultural differences and hence the need to recognise and negotiate meaning.

4.3. Cultural Linguistics and political discourse analysis

A number of recent studies in political discourse analysis have adopted the approaches of cognitive linguistics and Cultural Linguistics. In general, these studies are in agreement with the longstanding belief that political discourse relies heavily on conceptual metaphor and that political metaphors are often rooted in certain underlying ideologies and cultural models (Dirven, Frank, and Ilie 2001; Dirven, Frank and Pütz 2003). These conceptual devices are by no means incidental to political discourse but rather serve to establish or legitimise a given perspective (Sharifian and Jamarani 2013).

George W. Bush, for example, repeatedly used either novel or conventional metaphors in his speeches about the Iranian government's nuclear technology. In one of his press conferences, Bush used the metaphorical expression of *house cleaning* in relation to Iran's nuclear programme and stated that *these people need to keep their house clean.* In this metaphor, nuclear technology is conceptualised as dirt, which needs to be removed from the house, the house here being the country. It is difficult to disagree with the statement that *one's house needs to be kept clean* and the use of the *clean house* metaphor appears to present the US president in the legitimate position of exhorting others to perform a socially desirable act. In other words, Bush's statement positions Iran in a very negative light, as associated with *dirt* [dirty house], while positioning himself, or the US government, very positively, as speaking from the moral high ground and putting pressure on the Iranian government to *clean Iran's house.* However, Iran construed its nuclear programme not in the negative sense of *dirt* but as "technology" and "energy", both of which have positive connotations.

From the perspective of Cultural Linguistics, political discourse is not free from cultural influence and is in fact heavily entrenched in cultural conceptualisations (Sharifian 2007, 2009a). For example, when people attempt to translate from one language into another, such as for the purpose of international negotiation (see also Baker 2006; Cohen 1997; Hatim and Mason

1990), they are very likely to need to convey cultural conceptualisation found in one language by means of cultural conceptualisations found in another. In other words, the process of translation or cross-cultural rendering of cultural conceptualisations can be difficult since languages encode the culturally differentiated and hence historically entrenched ways in which speakers have conceptualised their world in the past and continue to do so in the present. As a result, finding sets of words that successfully capture equivalent cultural conceptualisations in another language can become complicated, depending on the degree to which the two cultures have been in contact and, as a result, have similar although perhaps not identical cultural conceptualisations (see Avruch and Wang 2005).

Sharifian (2007) analyses the cases of words such as *concession* and *compromise*, which are pivotal to international political discourse, and argues that the meanings of these words lend themselves to certain culturally constructed conceptualisations. For example, the positive connotations of *compromise,* that is, arriving at a settlement by making concessions, hearken back to the secular foundations of Western democracies and, in turn, link to beliefs promulgated by nineteenth-century classical liberalism, a view that elevated the status of the individual and promoted the notion of contractual relations between "free agents" in commerce, and so on. This conceptualisation is far from a universal one, and some languages do not even have a word for this concept. Also, a historical analysis of the dictionary entries for this concept reveals a tendency towards attributing positive meanings to it rather than negative ones. In general, the approach of Cultural Linguistics can help unpack aspects of political discourse that largely draw on cultural conceptualisations. Given the importance of political discourse, and the possible consequences when misunderstandings arise, the contribution of Cultural Linguistics to this area of inquiry is undoubtedly very valuable.

5. Future directions

Research on Cultural Linguistics and its applications is still in its infancy. Many features of human languages can be examined for their embeddedness in cultural conceptualisations, from morphosyntactic features to semantic and pragmatic meanings and discourse structure. As discussed and exemplified above, many features of human languages can be used to index cultural conceptualisations such as schemas, categories and metaphors. The results of such analyses of language and culture will be of benefit to scholars in several disciplines, including linguistics and anthropology. Cultural Linguistics will

also hopefully generate significant interest among applied linguists whose research also focuses on language and culture. As shown in this chapter, areas of applied linguistics such as world Englishes, intercultural communication, and political discourse analysis can benefit from the approach of Cultural Linguistics in that it provides them with a robust framework and sharply honed analytical tools. Cultural Linguistics has also been applied to the study of second dialect learning, in particular on the part of Aboriginal English speaking children in Australia. Also, application of Cultural Linguistics to the area of Teaching English as an International Language (TEIL) has shown significant promise. Drawing on Cultural Linguistics, Sharifian (2013) offers the notion of *metacultural competence* as a target for learners, in order to succeed in the use of English as a language of international communication. This competence enables interlocutors to communicate and negotiate their cultural conceptualisations during the process of intercultural communication.

As has been demonstrated in this article, Cultural Linguistics has drawn on research that has been carried out in several areas of applied linguistics while, at the same time, it has already proved its ability to provide new insights into the complex relationships holding between language and culture, especially in intercultural settings. In general, it is expected that any area of inquiry that involves the interaction between culture and language will significantly benefit from adopting the framework of Cultural Linguistics.

6. Concluding remarks

One of the most important and at the same time challenging questions facing anthropological linguists has been the relationship between language, culture, and thought. Theoretical stances regarding this theme have ranged from a view that language shapes human thought and world-view to one that considers the three to be separate systems. Cultural Linguistics, with its multidisciplinary origin, engages with this theme by exploring features of human languages that encode culturally constructed conceptualisations of human experience. One of the basic premises in this line of inquiry is that language is a repository of cultural conceptualisations that have coalesced at different stages in the history of the speech community and these can leave traces in current linguistic practice. Similarly, interactions at the macro and micro levels of the speech community continuously can act to reshape pre-existing cultural conceptualisations and bring new ones into being. Also, while placing emphasis on the culturally constructed nature of conceptualisations, Cultural Linguistics shares with cognitive linguistics the

view that meaning is conceptualisation. Overall, due to the multidisciplinary nature of the analytical tools and theoretical frameworks that Cultural Linguistics draws upon, it has significant potential to continue to shed substantial light on the nature of the relationship between language, culture, and conceptualisation.

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From the Editors[*]
(a note on Sharifian's *Cultural Linguisitcs*)

Farzad Sharifian's article published here presents to the Polish reader the key notions and tenets of what functions under the label of Cultural Linguistics (capitalised).

Farzad Sharifian is professor at Monash University, the biggest higher education institution in Australia, as well as the editor-in-chief of *International Journal of Language and Culture* (*IJoLC*),[1] launched in 2014. He has published important works in cultural and applied linguistics, the language of politics, and intercultural communication (Sharifian 2005, 2010, 2014, 2015). He has co-edited, together with Gary B. Palmer, the volume *Applied Cultural Linguistics* (2007), and authored the monograph *Cultural Conceptualisations and Language* (2011).

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[*] This note appeared in Polish as "Od redakcji" in *Etnolingwistyka* 28, pp. 55–57. The present English translation has been financed by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education, project titled "English edition of the journal *Etnolingwistyka. Problemy języka i kultury* in electronic form" (no. 3bH 15 0204 83).

[1] https://benjamins.com/catalog/ijolc

The list of authors publishing in *IJoLC* includes Anna Wierzbicka, Gary B. Palmer, Bert Peeters, or Carsten Levisen. In one of the special issues, guest-edited by Bert Peeters (*Language and Cultural Values. Adventures in Applied Ethnolinguistics*, 2-2, 2015), the authors encroach on the territory of applied ethnolinguistics. The latter term is rather unpopular in Western literature, being associated with minority languages or dialects, as well as, rather negatively, with ethnic violence, unrest, or downright ethnic cleansing. In *IJoLC*, in contrast, the authors use *ethnolinguistics* in a broader, neutral sense that embraces national languages, an approach parallel to that of Lublin ethnolinguistics.

Lublin ethnolinguistics, deriving from the Russian tradition (the works of Vladimir Toporov, Yuri Apresjan, Nikita Tolstoy, or Svetlana Tolstaya), seeks common ground for dialogue also with Western scholarship. This in fact has been going on for some time. The journal *Etnolingwistyka* has welcomed contributions, usually in Polish translation, from such authors as Anna Wierzbicka, George Lakoff, Ronald Langacker, Teun van Dijk, or James Underhill. Volume 27 of the journal contains articles by the Gary B. Palmer from the USA (Palmer 2015) and Bert Peeters from Australia (Peeters 2015), scholars whose work is referenced in Sharifian's article. The former proposes to incorporate into linguistic analysis the findings from extralinguistic inquiries, such as ethnography or paleontology. The latter presents an intriguing attempt to extend Anna Wierzbicka's NSM framework onto the realms of ethnolexicology, ethnorhetoric, ethnophraseology, ethnosyntax, ethnopragmatics, and ethnoaxiology. Sharifian's contribution to the present volume is a modification and extension of Gary B. Palmer's proposal laid out in his book *Toward a Theory of Cultural Linguistics* (1996), where the author draws a framework that combines the achievements of cognitive linguistics and linguistic anthropology.

Sharifian presents the key tenets and descriptive constructs of what he calls Cultural Linguistics. It contains above all the notion of *cultural conceptualisations*, which, in Sharifian's model, has replaced *imagery*, inherited by Palmer from Langacker.[2] Other notions include *cultural schemas*, *cultural categories*, and *cultural metaphors*, as well as *cultural models* and *cultural cognition*. The latter embraces the cultural macro- (i.e. collective, social) and micro- (individual) levels. How do these notions relate to the major constructs of Lublin-based ethnolinguistics, with its linguistic worldview conception, stereotypes or cultural concepts, cognitive definition, or profiling? We would like to engage in a discussion of these issues by investigating to what extent

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[2] Langacker himself has for some time now preferred the term *construal*.

the two parallel, albeit differently named frameworks, designed to basically achieve the same goals, may be mutually inspiring or enriching. The discussion will hopefully be commenced in subsequent volumes of this journal.

translated by Adam Głaz

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