The Cultural Cognitive Model: A Programmatic Application

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ABSTRACT

In this paper we propose an integration of cognirive linguistic and cognirive anthropology models. The key concept around rhe integration revolves is that of 'culrural cognition', manifesred in rhe inrersubjecrive categories andconceprs rhar make up so-called 'cultural models' in language, thought, affect andacrion, whose main functions include: to represent schematized versions of rhe world and experience; ro help interpret novel symbolic experience; to encode and express intersubjective experience; and ro synchronize, direct and motivate social action.

In rhe first secrions of rhe paper, we describe rhe theoretical underpinnings of rhe cognitive-cultural model; and in rhe lasr section we offer a sample programmatic application of rhe model ro a possible (cross)cultural dictionary entry of 'World' and 'Self'.
KEY WORDS: cognitive linguistics; cognitive anthropology; cultural cognition; cultural model.

RESUMEN

En este trabajo proponemos una integración de modelos lingüísrico-cognirivos y cognitivo-antropológicos. El concepro central sobre el que gira dicha inregración es el de 'cognición cultural', que se manifiesta en las categorías y conceptos intersubjetivas que conforman los llamados 'modelos culturales' en lenguaje, pensamiento, emociones y acción, y cuyas funciones incluyen: repesentar las versiones esquematizadas del mundo y de la experiencia; contribuir a la interpretación de experiencia simbólica nueva; codificar y expresar ; y sincronizar, dirigir y motivar la acción social.

En las primeras secciones del trabajo, se describe el modelo cognitivo-cultural, y en la última sección se ofrece una muestra de aplicación programática a una posible entrada de diccionario cultural sobre 'Mundo v Yo/Persona'.
PALABRAS CLAVE: lingüística cognitiva; antropología cognitiva; cognición cultural; modelo cultural.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Since the rnid-seventies, it has become increasingly clear that, in order to account for word-meaning or word-use, linguists rnust recognize the need for incorporating cornrnon intersubjective assumptions (world- and culture-knowledge) to their theoretical constmcts. From this period dates the move frorn classical, checklist-based theories of meaning to prototype-based and frame semantics-based models of rneaning (see especially the seminal anicle by Fillmore, 1975), which developed the idea of prototypical categories and scenarios, scripts or frarnes relating series of entities or events to properties and attributes thereof in a kind of simplified (ie. schematized) version of the world. Thus, to use Fillmore's well-known exarnple, a 'bachelor' is not just "an unrnarried male", a definition which would encompass not only ordinary males but also male adolescents, celibate priests, the Pope, or even certain men with disabling pathologies, etc. But of course language users know full well that the latter instances do not commonly fall within the referential scope of the word 'bachelor' because its denotational referent range normally (a) includes only male persons who stay unmarried beyond the usual age thought to be normal for marrying (in a given society), while (b) excluding rnale persons who have made special vows of celibacy due to religious reasons, or who, by nature, nurture or accident, become somehow handicapped to get married or lead a "normal" married life.

This culture-bound view of lexical meaning soon incorporated what G. Lakoff has termed "the generalization and cognitive commitrnents" (1990), namely (a) to characterize the general principles governing all aspects of human language (categories, constmctions. inferences, semantic relations, metaphorization, implicatures, discourse. understanding, etc); and (b) to make accounts of human language accord with what we know about the mind and the brain (memory, imagery, conceptualization, perception, ernbodiment, schemas, etc). In this way, Frame Semantics and Cognitive Linguistics have provided a frarnework of concepts and insights that has proven extremely useful in furthering the cause of comprehensive accounts of meaning, beyond purely structural, taxonomic, and objectivist accounts (Johnson, 1993).

In a parallel fashion, many cultural anthropologists expressed early on their dissatisfaction with traditional ethnosemantic approaches of meaning analysis. They argued that componential analysis left out of lexical sets relevant information about what speakers have to know in order to use a word or a terminological system (eg. kinship terms) appropriately. Today most current athropolinguistic accounts of meaning accept the premise that the distinction between word-knowledge and world-knowledge is extremely fuzzy, and that often a simple word encodes an implicit world of culture-bound assumptions. More particularly, they argue that word-knowledge and use presume so-called 'folk cultural models' which capture cornrnon intersujective meanings (D'Andrade, 1989). This cognitive anthropolinguistic view of meaning has rnade it posssible to bring into a closer relationship disciplines and fields that up to now had remained only loosely connected: cognitive science, cognitive linguistics, symbolic anthropology, cultural anthropology and cultural cognition (D'Andrade, 1995; Stiegler et al., 1990; Taylor and MacLaury, 1995). The implications

following from this newfound partnership have, as a corollary, thrown into question a number of classical methodological dichotomic separations: word-knowledge and world-knowledge (or semantic cognition and cultural cognition); dictionary and encyclopedia; structural lexicon and mental lexicon, etc. As a result, language, cognition and culture are studied as closely interwoven systems of knowledge (both declarative and procedural). The implications of this view boil down to a set of integrated assumptions and insights: (1) that culture consists of shared systems of meaning and knowledge (the culture-as-knowledge view); (2) that the study of such meaning systems entails the integration of thought, talk. emotion and action models; and that (3) the notion of 'cultural cognition' may be seen as the encapsulating notion integrating cognitive-cultural meaning systems (Holland and Quinn, 1987).

II. THE STRUCTURE OF CULTURAL MEANING SYSTEMS

The culture-as-knowledge assumption entails a view of symbolic beaviour stressing the constructionist and constitutive nature of the structures and processes of meaning systems (Grace, 1987; Shore, 1990; Searle, 1995). Cultural meaning systems get "packaged" into intersubjective schemas (or: 'cultural models in language and thought'), made up of constitutive rules (ie.: " X counts as Y for Z"), with associated prototypical scripts, scenarios or frames, whose main functions are:
 - to represent the worldlenvironment
 - to help interpret the worldlenvironrnent
 - to direct and orient actions
 - to cause systems of affect and emotion
 - to regulate interpersonal action
 - to help create new meanings

From this standpoint, a culture is a complex web of cultural meaning systems which provide its members with schematized versions of the world, motivational forces, belief-systems, evokrnent potentials, institutional orientations, etc. In the words of D'Andrade (1989):

> The meanings of lexical items or vocabulary presuppose schematically simplified worlds: procedural devices used to make an interpretation of what, under certain conditions, counts as X (eg. a lie, a fit of anger, a marriage, a success) ... A cultural schema is not just a network of propositions or an imagistic thought. It is an interconnected pattem of interpretive elements. It requires a mental object with an addressable memory, priming effects, prototypical effects ... A schema, in turn, may be a trigger for action, volition and affect. It interprets and orients action, belief and emotion: what is desirable, avoidable, normative.

III. TOWARDS AN INTEGRATED CULTURAL-COGNITIVE MODEL

The ideal cultural cognitive model should seek to relate system-based notions of meaning to psychological and phenomenological (subject-centred) accounts, explaining how the historically-opaque arbitrariness of sign-formation can be experienced subjectively as a naturally transparent, motivational significance and agentive force (Martín Morillas, 1993). This account must also incorporate the ontogenesis of meaning consistent with developmental psychology (early- and adult- symbol-formation structures and processes). At the same time that the model grants the historical and local "grounding" of meaning-construction and comprehension (hence its relativity, conventionality and vanability), it should acknowledpe its permeability and commensurability. One dimension that this model seeks to incorporate to the more traditional distinction between conceptual and affective meaning components. is the experiential-sensorial as well as the "existential depth" (explicit, logical, axiological plus unconscious, implicit texture). From a cognitive point of view, the concept of cognition that is explicitly assumed entails a shift from formalist, feature-based theories of cognitive semantics to prototype and categonsation-based models, but extending the laner to incorporate aspects of social cognition, social cognition models and cultural psychology concepts, as well as vygotskyan and neowhorfian models of language thought and culture. Thus, the implication is that an understanding of human cognitive systems cannot limit itself to the specification of structures and processes of knowledge representation following a computationally-based "methodological solipsism" model (Fodor, 1975), but rather should seek to embed the representational schemas in socio-cultural schemes and models including non-computational and non-representational models.

In order to develop a coherent integrated model serving as a general framework for the investigation of cultural-semantic systems, it may be convenient to isolate key areas of research. Below are listed some of the most relevant ones:

a) Cognitive-semantic studies emphasising the types of schemata and conceptualisations which underlie culture-bound practices. Here a number of areas or research can be mentioned:

(i) image-schemata involving sensorial, polysensorial, synesthetic, synergistic concepts and categones;

(ii) metaphoric and metonymic mappings of cognitive, affective, praxis domains;

(iii) mental representation of scripts and frames;

(iv) folk cultural models (culture-bound "philosophies of experience"), ideologies, lifestyle, social myths);

(v) embodiments (rituals, rites of passage, institutional practices).

b) Social cognition and ethnography of speaking studies focussing on notions such as: communicative styles as a result of socialization practices; social categorisation models based on attribution theory and intergroup communication (eg. in-group and out-group identity; ethnic and gender stereotyping, etc. (Clancy, 1986; Gudykunst, 1989).

c) Cultural Psychology studies emphasizing the axiological differences between individualistic and collective orientation systems and their impingement on subjective and intersujective values, anitudes and norms (Triandis, 1990), such as the following:

- Universal vs localized aspects of human behaviour: psychic unity of mankind (in the Eniightenment or Romantic strands) vs relativistic, whorfian differences;
- Subjective culture vs Intersubjective culture;
- Learning style and cognitive styles;
- Affective and orientation style (eg. individualistic, self-seeking vs group harmony concepts; task-centredness vs human heartedness orientations)

d) Cultural Semiotic studies, whose basic notions concern aspects of the production and consumption of cultural symbols; spheres of knowledge as interest (art, science, morality. entertainment) as well as the ideological aspects of high and low culture (Bourdieu, 1990).

Many examples could be given of concepts and domains illustrating the above notions. Here we will mention a few ones for the sake of exemplification: synesthesia in bio-sensorial percepts (smell/odor); image-schemata of experiential-abstract terms (el mar/la mar; der Tod/la muerte/Death); metaphoric and metonymic mappings of functional locus of self (soul/mind/heart- Seele- Dusa); alma/mente/corazón); cultural models of emotion terms (anger as heating of fluid in container; love as a journey); disourse metaphors (war metaphors in business discourse); folk philosophies ("senequismo"; "Schmäh"; "kimochi"); socio-cultural gendered models (caballerosidad/machismo); social ideologies/myths (the American dream of success and achievement); cultural semiotics (body/self-image and mental hygiene in advertisement); heteroglossia and self-construction (metaphors in self-technologies and self-help morality of psychotherapy discourse); axiological concepts and value systems in individualist and collectivist societies and groups ("familism"/philotimo); stereotyping in genderized talk; embodiement of non-verbal hierarchical signalling, etc.

These examples help to illustrate the consideration of linguistic meaning closely connected to the notion of 'cultural cognition', understood as a people's systemic network of schematized intersubjective mental representations embedded in their cultural practices as well as the cultural knowledge grounded in experience and cognition and serving as a guide for action and interpretation of experience (Shore, 1995). This view of meaning, cognition and culture, entails placing culture in the mind and placing mind in the social habitat; that is to say: understanding the nexus linking specific minds to particular cultural symbols underlying cultural practices. Cognitive-cultural schemata thus synthesise how individuals appropriate intersubjectively symbols from experience to consciousness to action. In this manner, culture is seen as a system of cognitive models or schemata which govern social activities and practices (especially language interaction); these models, in turn are derived from those activities and practices to serve as the mental representations encapsulating the subjective and intersubjective schematizations.

To sum up so far, we have been arguing for an integrated cultural-cognitive model of language, thought, affect and action, with a view towards going not oniy beyond the objectivist, logical-structural view of meaning (by incorporating phenomenological and experiential accounts of meaning-construction structures and processes), but also beyond those solipsistic accounts of meaning that tend to gloss over the intersubjective aspects of meaning-construction processes. We have likewise highlighted the functions of such intersubjective meaning systems, namely: to synchronise and coordinate the creative aspects

of cognition and social practice; to supply the possibility of sharing cornrnon orientations in terms of belief-systerns, scenarios, scripts, social dramas, myths; to help subjects and groups re-appropriate in a novel and idiosyncratic fashion shared models (eg advertising, poetry); to re-utilise sensori-motor experience as a means of social symbolisation through metaphoric signification patterns involving rituals, routines, social micropractices (rites of passage, artistic expression, institutional practices). In the next section we sketch the outlines of an application of the model.

IV. A PROGRAMMATIC APPLICATION OF THE CULTURAL COGNITION MODEL

Lack of space forbids a detailed analysis of possible applications of the cognitive-cultural rnodel set out above. Instead, we will just spell out (rather than flesh out) the general outlines of a specific proposal of application, namely a sample of a (cross)cultural dictionary entry. The entry we have in rnind, which is broken down into AIM, HEURISTIC QUESTIONS, and DOMAINS, may be itemised as follows:

A) AIM: To build an 'emic' model of underlying cognitive structures from empirical facts, using a society's own categorial systems in order to describe the cognitive principles by which the society's rnembers apprehend and describe the categories of World and Self.

B) MAIN HEURISTIC QUESTIONS:

a) Which aspects of the world are saliently important for the culture?

b) What labels are given for them?

c) How is subjective, intersubjective experience classified?

d) How do people think about and talk about these experiences?

e) How do talk, thinking, acting, feeling, relate to each other and to the overall axiological-cultural systern of values, mores, customs, rituals, embodiments, etc.?

f) What does the way a culture "talks" about its rnembers and the environment tell us about the way it "thinks" about them, that is, the way it typically cognizes and categorizes experience of World and Self?

C) DOMAINS INVOLVED:

a) Categorization and Prototification of Natural and Non-Natural Concepts:

Phenomenologically speaking, the world/environment consists of a virtually infinite number of discriminably different stimuli and objects. An essential cognitive-cultural activity is the parcelling-out of the world/environment into categories and prototypes, taxonomies and domains. Many non-identical stimuli can be treated as equivalent. Typically, universal principles involve: focal points, saliency, codability, prototypes (e.g colors). On the other hand, culture-bound specifics involve: elaboration of language categories organized into fields and domains with superordinate and subordinate categories; category boundaries rnay be fuzzy and blended. Categorization for Natural Categories (eg. 'colours') is served by the constructivist creation of image schemata, metaphoric and metonymic mappings, prototypes, reflecting in a whorfian fashion an ontology of first-, second-, third- order properties and relations, as well as superordinate and subordinate features and attributes. A general principal

for non-natural categories is Searle's pnnciple of constituted categories: "X counts as Y for Z" (eg. 'marriage').

b) Categorization of Emotions (Prototypical Scripts, Scenarios, and Conceptual Mappings):

Most cultures recognize at least six basic human emotions (happiness, anger, sadness, fear, surprise, disgust) each associated with a culture-specific set of somatic-affective expressive correspondences as well as systems of encoding and interpretation schemas. scripts, scenarios and scnpts (Wierzbicka, 1992). Specific cultural information is needed to account for differences in metaphoric mappings, prototypical scenarios and scripts and their attendant ontological, epistemological and axiological assumptions (Kovecses, 1995; Matsuki. 1995).

c) Cognitive-Cultural Model of Self/Person:

All cultures encode their awareness of individuality, ie what the individual perceives as the boundaries between the self and the world, as well as the self and other selves, the individual and the collective (the 'us' and 'them'). The manifestation of this categorization is likely to be a specific view on the relationship between the demands of private life and those of social commitments. From this conflict may stem attitudes and concepts toward: relationships, bonding, courting, pnvacy, altruistic behaviours, entitlements, commitments, etc. These in turn may shape the manifestation of such values as: solidarity, individuality, membership-acceptance, empathetic ntuals and attitudes, etc.

The cognitive-cultural model of self is for the most part culture-bound. For instance, the Western Conception of Person, according to C. Geertz (1983), is that of a bounded, unique, integrated entity, motivationally and cognitively; a dynamic center of awareness, emotion and judgement organized into a distinctive whole and set contrastively both against other such wholes and against its social and natural background. The concept of self or personhood is socio-culturally mediated and socio-culturally constructed. This means that people construct their own and others' sense of self by relying on public resources, as well as on private experiences for self-construction. The concept of self of a given culture is an integral part of the cultural model of person of that culture. It includes the image-schemata, metaphoric and metonymic mappings, and script-like information with which a culture schematizes cognitive-culturally its members (witness expressions such as: "s/he has a screw loose"; "s/he is a cheek"; "s/he is out of his/her mind"; "slhe feels down"; "slhe has magic"; ""s/he has a soft heart"; "a man is known by the company he keeps"; "the face is the mirror of the soul", etc.; Martín Morillas, in press). It is, by definition, an intersubjective concept included in the cultural models of that culture, and hence in the cultural meaning systems that permeate it. The concept of self may be more or less explicit or implicit, conscious or subconscious, but it nevertheless manifests itself linguistically in complex and subtle ways: lexically, grarnmatically, semantically, pragmatically, discursively (ie. in simple or complex lexemes, word-formation processes, idioms, proverbs, ways of talking, discourse patterns, etc.)

d) Axiological Models (Values, Orientations, Motives, Beliefs, Ideologies):

Along the individualism-collectivism dimension a number of categories can be placed: private and public spheres; in-group and out-group taxonomies; concern with self,

achievement, self-esteem; work ethic; health and sickness; self vs group; self vs others (identity, equity, equality, difference, divergence). Axiological-orientational systmes having motivational and directive force are deeply involved in such catagories, as are value-laden concepts like power, justice, fairness, cooperation, competition, rewards, sanctions, etc.). Likewise, many of these axiological categories are liable to a stereotyping categorization, which generally betray a number of psycho-social tendencies (illusory correlation, essentialist logic, rigid cognitive style, etc.; see Hilton and von Hippel, 1996). Gender, Ethnic, Self and other stereotypes provide a fertile ground for the study of how subjective and intersubjective mental and cultural models interact.

Since the above categories belong to general and specific semantic domains (constellations and fields), they are liable to onomasiological meaning analyses (in terms of dimensions, parameters and features; see Martín Mingorance (1990), for a prograrnmatic proposal developed in full by the Functional-Lexematic school), but it can be argued that a cognitive-cultural perspective integrating domains of analysis as well as specific constructs, methods and hypotheses from cognitive linguistic and cultural anthropolinguistic models may offer more encompassing insights for a proper understanding of the oftentimes seamless relationship of language to thought, affect and action.

V. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Cognitive Anthropolinguistics, in the wake of far-reaching cognitive-semantic developments in the '70's, has emphasized the fact that understanding the meaning of a term entails understanding the implicit 'cognitive-cultural models' underlying it. A cognitive-cultural model works as a sort of intersubjectively-shared "simplified", "schematic" version of experience in the world. Cognitive-cultural models typically encode in a propositional plus motivational format all the information members of a culture possess that enables them to coordinate, interpret, and orient, their actions, beliefs, values, norms, etc. For cognitive anthropologists, terms like 'marriage' 'anger' 'lie' 'smart', 'self' etc. are all 'constituted signs', and as such encapsulate a great deal of cultural information and locally-grounded knowledge. Of course the representation of the cultural meanings of such constituted signs cannot rely exclusively on declarative- propositional schemas or frarnes, for they must also incorporate procedural and non-representationa aspects, since cultural meaning systems, as a special type of intersubjectively-shared information, have more than just representational functions, possessing a great deal of motivational-directive, affective, evoking and axiological-orientational force (D'Andrade and Strauss, 1992). Furthemore, cultural meaning systems work at many levels: they package information simultaneously about word and world (not just the real world, but also the ideal or unreal one), as well as about cognition, emotion and action. Their description therefore requires the integration of information about cognition, emotion, action and talk (from word through discourse to cultural models) in such a way that justice may be done to their representational, motivational, orientational, epistemic and axiological functions. From our standpoint, it is advisable for the linguist concerned with

the description and explanation of **meaning** systems to view language, cognition, emotion and action as interdependent and, therefore, to be accounted for in an integrated fashion. To this end, we favour a merging of cognitive **linguistic** and cognitive anthrological ideas, concepts and models. **The** basic **thrust** of this integration is twofold: that the way we "talk" is a projection of the way we "cognize" and **"feel"** (ie the way categorize things, **objects**, properties, events, etc., and they way we react to **them**); but, at the **same** time, that the way we cognize, **feel** and **talk is** for the most **part also** contingent upon the way we "live" socially (ie the way we go about our daily individual and social lives, the **tasks** the social milieu sets to our minds and selves).

From the theoretical cultural-cognitive model expounded above one may derive a number of more practical **projects**: cultural dictionaries, socio-cultural guides in pedagogic **grammars**, enthnographic descriptions, intercultural cornmunication and cultural studies, etc. In this paper we **have outlined some** of **the** notions from the model that might be involved in the specification of **information** for a (cross)cultural dictionary entry of World and Self concepts.

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