

Culture and Discourse

Linguistic Discourse Analysis

CROSS-CULTURAL STUDIES

GENERAL FRAMEWORK

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CULTURE definitions

CULTURE

DEFINITION BY GEERT HOFSTEDE

- ❑ mental program or software of the mind: collective patterns of thinking, feeling and acting
- ❑ based on values and norms that are shared by the community
- ❑ shared with people who live within the same social environment
- ❑ unwritten rules of the social game
- ❑ learned not innate

Culture as mental programming.

According to Geert Hofstede (2010) every person carries within him- or herself patterns of thinking, feeling and potential acting that were learned throughout their lifetime. Much of these **mental patterns** were acquired in early childhood because at that time a person is most susceptible to learning and assimilating. Using the analogy of the way computers are programmed, we will call such mental patterns of thinking, feeling and acting, ***mental programs*** or ***software of the mind***. Mental programs vary as much as the social environment in which they were acquired. A customary term for such mental software is culture.

Culture is always a **collective phenomenon** because it is at least partly shared with people who live or lived within the same social environment. Culture consists of the **unwritten rules** of the social game. It is the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one social group from the members of other groups. Culture is **learned not**

innate. It derives from one's social environment rather than from one's genes (Hofstede 2010).

In cross-cultural studies, most researchers assume that **culture** is a phenomenon that automatically appears as soon as human beings join into a social group or community. Cultural imprinting of the young members of a social group goes along with their socialization. **Basic values and attitudes** are internalized by individuals during their early childhood. Mostly they are unconsciously learned from the elder generation and unconsciously passed on to the next generation.

COMMUNICATIVE MODEL OF CULTURE

(Jírák/Köpplová 2009, 26-35)

- ❑ represents a semantic environment
- ❑ communication phenomenon - a system of shared meanings, ideas, values, judgments and beliefs
- ❑ Members of a given society continuously shape this system by means of communication
- ❑ (media) communication can be seen as a culturally conditioned environment

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Constitutive / cultural model of communication

(Jírák/Köpplová 2009, 26-35)

- Communication can be perceived as the constitution of a shared space of meanings in which members of a given culture operate
- emphasizes the fact that people share an entire system of meanings, references, and associations that they take for granted
- at the same time, they constantly shape and constitute this system in communication

- The system of shared meanings, ideas, values, judgments, and beliefs forms a whole, often referred to by the umbrella term *ideology* or **culture**
- It is **a social image of society, a shared construction (or map) of the world**
- This model is in the tradition of the theory of social construction of reality, which is constituted in social practice (Berger-Luckmann 1999)

CULTURE AS A MODE OF ORIENTATION

- ❑ *framework for orientation in the social world*
- ❑ *based on (linguistic) signs and communication*
- ❑ *general mechanism that normatively regulates social life through communication (cultural values, norms, standards)*
- ❑ *structuring and organizing mode of social systems*
- ❑ *product of communication, permanently negotiated*
- ❑ *a social community's adaptation to their living conditions.*

(Notarp, 2020, 24-25)

Culture as a frame of orientation.

Culture is a structuring and organizing mode of social systems that is based on linguistic signs and communication. Culture communicatively organizes social life. Culture is a general mechanism that normatively regulates communication through cultural values, norms, standards. Communication then regulates and organizes social life. A single, concrete culture is always the product of a social community's adaptation to their living conditions. The orientation framework "culture" in its concrete manifestation can thus only organize communal life in the community that the respective framework results from. Our culture thus operates our world, orients us in our reality so that we can get by, and, at the same time, our culture

is a product of our society's adaptation to the conditions, possibilities, and necessities that our society is subject to (Notarp 2020, 25).

CULTURE AS THIRD REALITY

M. Fleischer 2006

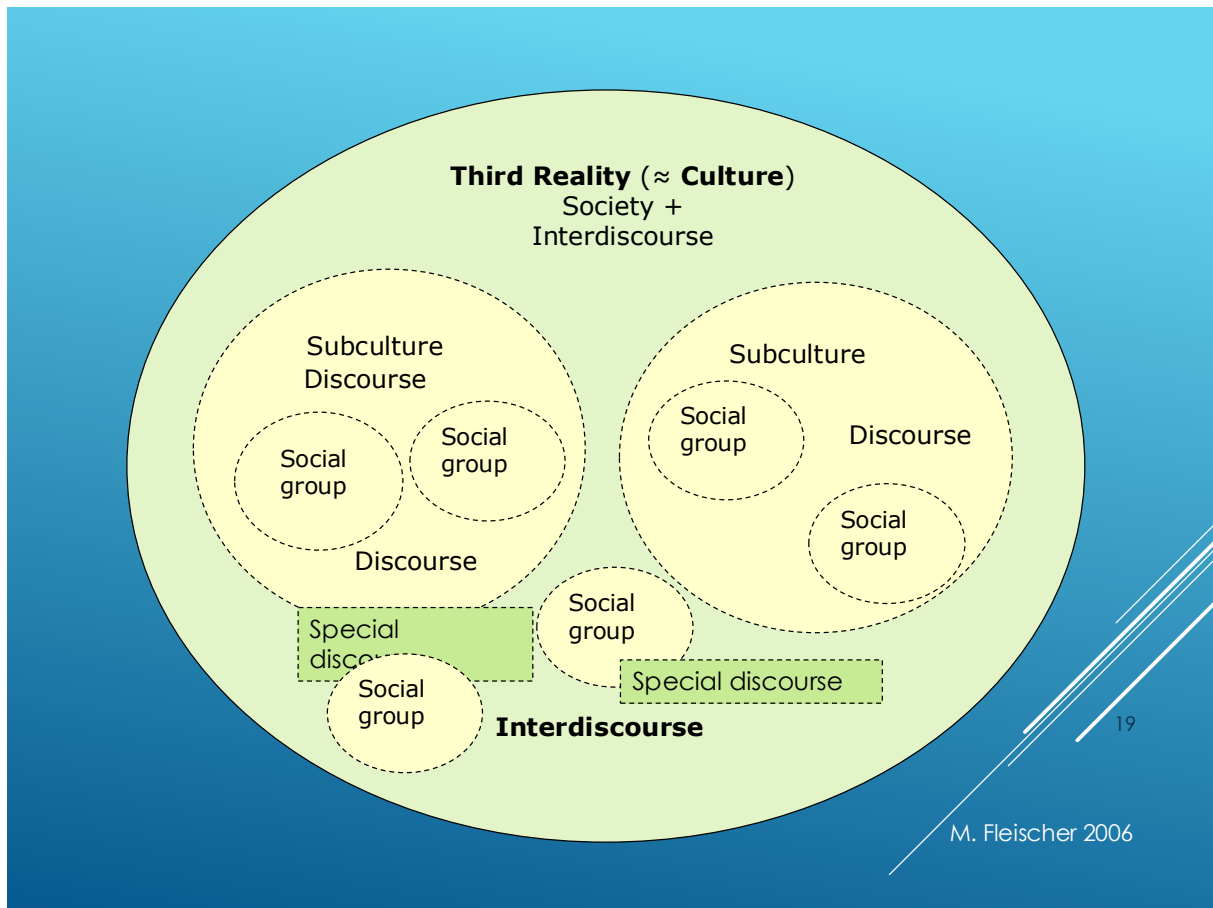
- ❑ semiotic, semantic and thus communicative third reality
- ❑ hierarchically structured system of discourses that is based on the second, social (social groups, supra-groups, society) and first reality (physical and biological world)
- ❑ each society has its own system of discourses – the interdiscourse, discourses and special discourses

Culture is understood as a product of social reality. It is based on the *first*, physical and biological reality (fact) [...] and the second, social reality [...]. **Culture as third reality** is a product of the second, social reality, which is created through the mechanism of communication. Culture is therefore a "semiotic, semantic, and thus communicative reality" (Fleischer 2006, 286).

Culture as a general structure (third reality) is realized through communication in society. The individual culture originates and perpetuates in communication happening in the respective society. For example, Chinese culture is realized in all current and former communications of all Chinese. It is constantly changing and evolving through communication. Old statements are either preserved (e.g. in libraries and museums or in paintings and music media) or are forgotten and thus removed from culture. The way in which the members of a social community communicate is specific. This is first due to their native language. Secondly, it is also determined by a common consensus on how the world should be perceived.

Each social community creates a **specific view of the world** in its communication, i.e. a specific view on how to perceive and understand things.

Since social systems are based on communication and thereby generate the third reality ($\approx$ culture), the stratification of discourses corresponds to the stratification of social systems (Fleischer 2006: 298).



Stratification of social systems

The systemic and evolutionary theoretical perspective leads to the assumption of internal differentiation of social systems into subsystems.

"Social systems are the carrier of communication [...] and at the same time product of communication. Communication carried out by means of utterances creates social formations that function as a supporting system of communication. Communication is therefore the place of manifestation of the social, and the social system is the carrier of this operation. It has no other place" (Fleischer 2006, 295).

The differentiation of social systems into subsystems is based on communication that takes place within them. Fleischer distinguishes three interconnected levels, which are hierarchically arranged according to communication reach and complexity. These are *social groups* ($\approx$ formerly: *cultural groups*), *supra-groups* ($\approx$ *subcultures*), and *societies*.

1. *Social groups*. Social groups are the smallest distinguishable units within the entire social system. They refer to patterns of behavior within families, circles of friends, work groups, student groups, cliques, gangs, etc. From a systemic point of view, communication within these groups has the greatest degree of freedom. This means that "*elements* of discourse and *quasi-discourse*" are created here, but these do not necessarily have to be stabilized and integrated into discourse. Social groups are part of supergroups (Fleischer 2006, 296).
2. *Subcultures* ($\approx$ *Supragroups*). *Subcultures* "consist of social groups of varying numbers and sizes and are formed as a system through a common catalog of norms, rules, and values (i.e., products of communication). Their most important characteristic is that they develop and maintain **a discourse** that is specific to them and characterizes them, through which they express themselves and which subsequently creates them as a subculture. [...] The production of discourses is the dominant component here" (Fleischer 2006, 296f).
3. *Societies*. The system of society [...] includes all subcultures (supra-groups) existing in a socially conditioned space [...], but also discursively adjacent non-native groups (e.g., ethnic minorities [...]). The social system is dominated by the maintenance of discourses or elements of discourse that selectively penetrate this overall space from less complex subsystems, but do not constitute it entirely, as well as the production and maintenance of specific social discourse - **interdiscourse**. [...] Only those elements of discourse that can be generally shared or represent the specifics of society are accepted or created (Fleischer 2006, 297).

Stratification of Communication

Since social systems are based on communication and thereby generate themselves and their reality ($\approx$ culture), the stratification of discourses corresponds to the stratification of social systems (Fleischer 2006: 298). Accordingly, a society's communication can be assigned to specific **discourses**

We distinguish between "discourses," "interdiscourses," and "specific or subject related discourses," which influence each other, with larger discourses encompassing smaller ones (Fleischer, *ibid.*).

Independent discourses arise at the level of supragroups ($\approx$ subcultures), which use and continue them. The discourse of a supragroup is seen as their characteristic feature that distinguishes it from other supragroups. Since the smallest social units – social groups – are not complex enough to develop their own discourse, they use, test and modify the discourse of the next higher level of complexity. (Fleischer 2006: 298ff).

Discourse is the specific way of communicating of a social supra-group or subculture. A social supra-group or subculture (punk or hippie, etc.) creates their third reality (their subculture) through their discourse. Discourses are normative customs of communication. A sub-culture can be identified by their discourse, thus we can distinguish one sub-culture from another by their specific discourses (Fleischer 2006: 299).

On the level of an entire society, communication takes place on the basis of the general interdiscourse, which encompasses and integrates all other discourses.

Interdiscourse is the general overarching discourse of a society. It is the specific way of communicating in the society as a whole. The interdiscourse provides an integrative semiotic space that is mastered and used by all members of society in their communication. Interdiscourse generates the third reality (culture) of a society through communication and is at the same time socio-culturally determined. It encompasses fundamental values and attitudes that are considered essential in society and on which there is a broad consensus. Interdiscourse as such is normative and defines all communication by determining what can be said and in what way. As a general semiotic space interdiscourse has

connecting, integrative functions. It connects and integrates all discourses of the subcultures existing in society (Fleischer 2006: 300f).

Special or subject-specific discourses are defined as part of the discourses and/or the interdiscourse. Special or subject-specific discourses determine a discourse or the interdiscourse with regard to a special matter. For example, we can distinguish *scientific, political, religious, artistic, mass media, legal*, etc. special discourses that occur in communication as an integral part of a discourse or the interdiscourse. Since specialized discourses are topic-related and used in different discourses alike, they have cross-discursive connecting functions (Fleischer 2006: 299ff).

Worldview. At this point, a term is introduced that is significant for the description of the cultural identity of a social community or society. Fleischer defines the concept of *worldview* as a regulatory mechanism of communication. The worldview provides the organizational rules for communication in discourse.

Communication generates, through the mediation of interdiscourse and discourse, various worldviews of differing complexity [...], which in turn are responsible for the organization of communication and for the formation of the third reality in a particular social area (social groups, supra-groups, etc.). Thus, a networked operation takes place (translated from Fleischer 2006: 322).

The explanation of the concept of the third reality by Fleischer was taken from

Notarp 2024

Elements of discourse

In the field of discourse, we can distinguish various elements of discourse that we can subject to empirical analysis and use to find out information about the current state of discourse or culture. We distinguish the following elements of discourse:

Cultural values are words that express an ideal or a measure. We consider cultural values to be valuable in themselves. They represent the basis of evaluation, i.e., the basis from which we qualify things, facts, or characteristics as valuable or worthless.

Cultural values are usually positive concepts that formulate a goal, a desirable state, or a desirable characteristic of culture.

Cultural values have a firmly established and at the same time broad meaning in the cultural system, which makes them versatile.

Cultural values have a guiding function in cultural discourse, determining the direction that is considered desirable throughout the (sub)culture.

Cultural values themselves have no evaluative or normative character. They merely form the basis on which evaluation is carried out.

When it comes to analyzing cultural values, researchers rely on their cultural competence on the one hand, and on the other hand, they allow for the specific use of a term—in the function of a basis for evaluation or measurement (i.e., qualifying something as valuable or worthless)—the identification of this term as a cultural value (Notarp 2020, 48-49).

In every situation, we act on the basis of values and norms that we have acquired in (early) life. They are the basis of our thinking, feelings, and actions. They are the tools we use in thinking, feeling, and acting.

The specific set of values of a social group or society makes up its culture.

The set of values of one social group or society (its culture) differs from the set of values of another social group, depending on the conditions in which these groups or societies live (Hofstede 2005).

Positive values	Negative values
homeland, native country, old homeland, native country	lie
truth	sin
trust	fear
morality, moral credit, moral, moral behavior	enemy
honor	guilt, moral guilt
Czech culture, cultural Czechia, nation	communism, communist utopia
friends, true friend, buddies	betrayal
freedom, free world, freedom of speech	hatred, class hatred
responsibility, responsible, responsibility towards younger generations	revenge
bravery, brave	good and evil
human dignity, human world	moral condemnation
hope	immorality
solidarity	envy
life, human life	
virtue	
good and evil	
credibility	

NORMALITY

What is normal?

Yesterday I visited some friends.
Although they had invited me, no real food was served,
just bread and salami.
Nevertheless, they were nice to me.
Then we drank two bottles of wine,
even though we had already finished dinner.

Normatives

Normatives are elements that express the "normality" of a culture.

Normatives formulate what is considered "normal" or "abnormal" in a given culture.

Normatives measure something based on the normality that applies in a given culture, evaluate *something* according to the standards of "*normal*" and qualify *it* as appropriate or not.

Normatives relate to *the area of normality* (= primarily consisting of values) of a given culture, without being mentioned in each individual case.

Most Normatives assume knowledge of *the area of normality* (values) among all members of the culture.

Normatives distinguish and evaluate (what is bad, what is good; what is normal and what is not; what is acceptable and what is not).

(Fleischer, 2001, 387)

In general, we can use the form of normatives in a variety of contexts. A speaker can use normatives to try to convince others by using phrases such as: "it is clear that...", "it cannot be that...", "it is generally known that...".

The listener of such messages should be convinced that what they hear is in accordance with the prevailing norm. If the listener disagrees with what they hear, it automatically means that they disagree with the prevailing norm – with *normality* – and thus oppose their own culture.

Using normatives, someone presents something as "obvious," "right," "normal," "otherwise impossible," which, on closer inspection, is only "obvious," "right," etc. if the listener shares the same view on things as the speaker.

Normative forms	
necessary, necessity	proper, order
good, reasonable, honest	really
greatest, best, most important	certainly
correct	fair
false, wrong	exemplary
serious, solid	indeed
responsible, trustworthy	optimally
of course	dangerously
modern	generally, commonly, normally
we must/had to, ... it is necessary ... ,we must ensure that, ... something must...	it is irresponsible...
may/may not..., can/cannot...	it is/would be wrong/right ...
we need..., it is necessary...	should, ought to, should be self-evident
obligation to..., right to..., we are obliged to...	be entitled to...
cannot be waived..., it is necessary..., in any case, there must be...,	it is clear that
only when..., it can only be that...	it is true...
	applies/does not apply...

Structured norms
statements, assertions
requirements, commands
criteria

NORMATIVES – NORMATIVES – NORMATIVES

- ... how much our children 's future depends on a good education in the family.
- ... responsibility means providing timely and appropriate answers to the challenges of the present and the future...
- ... that such decisions are made on the basis of clear principles; principles that are universal, that guide our actions - principles of freedom, peace, and justice.
- However, we will counter bad policies in Berlin with good policies in Bavaria.
- Anyone who wants to belong to Europe must share its common values: human dignity, democracy, fundamental rights, the rule of law, and international law.
- The truth is: for most of us, a successful family life remains one of the most important things in life. This is shown by all surveys.
- We want peace. Peace is always the best solution. War is always a catastrophe.
- Solid and trustworthy politics? That is politics that focuses on families with their problems and needs.
- We are doing solid business here, step by step.
- We are fulfilling our obligations for peace.
- The main task of international politics is to prevent wars. That is what guides us.
- The principles of solidarity and participation have brought prosperity and social peace.
- The path to a large and strong Europe is now clear. We have brought together what belongs together, thereby completing the work of great Europeans ...

Normative?	Yes	No
... that we make such decisions only on the basis of firm principles.		
A truly professional journalist should report objectively and independently and should not impose their own opinions on citizens.		
If we want our schools and universities to be up to date...		
It is clear that in our coalition government, disputes sometimes arise.		
... that Islamic societies can become modern societies with democratic constitutions, this can be achieved for the benefit of the people.		
The European Union has grown together as an alliance of shared values, where human and minority rights are protected.		
Romania and Bulgaria already made good progress ...		
We do not need censorship, we do not need an ideological police force, we do not need a new Office for Press and Information if we are to continue to live in a free and democratic society.		
I, of course, agree with Josef Škvorecký's succinct statement that only an idiot would believe everything in the StB and SNB records.		
Every defendant has the undeniable right to inspect their file.		
I recently spoke with the new Minister of Labor and Social Affairs, and we agreed that it is necessary to limit social benefits to those who refuse the jobs offered to them.		
Well, the most painful problem we have here, migration quotas, must be addressed in accordance with Czech national interests.		
And our national interest is, of course, to preserve the sovereignty of the Czech Republic.		
No one can dictate to us who we allow into our territory. And I believe that the concept of migration quotas will end up in the dustbin of history and that in a year's time it will no longer be talked about.		

Stereotypes

Stereotypes are evaluative judgments about certain groups. Stereotypes are associated with a sense of stability and general validity. They have specific temporal and social roots. Their general validity makes them a social mechanism that influences the evaluation of certain groups.

A stereotype is therefore understood as the classification of certain groups and their representation using simplistic, unverifiable, generalizing statements that express a set of values, judgments, and assumptions about the behavior of these groups and their characteristics.

The main function of stereotypes is to demarcate and secure your own group.

Stereotypes can be identified, revealed, and subjected to critical analysis, but they are difficult to change because they are part of intuitive knowledge, i.e., the way people "understand" the society in which they live (Jiráček, Köpplová 2009, pp. 299-300).

The form of a stereotype

- The decisive factor in stereotypes is the creation of a group through generalization, e.g., "Germans," "Poles," "Gypsies."
- Generalization aims to eliminate differentiation, e.g., "some Poles" → "Poles," or "all Poles," instead of "some students" → "students," or "all students."
- A stereotype requires generalization, but that is not enough. In addition, it is necessary to add an evaluative attribute, e.g., "Poles are hard-working," "Germans are always punctual and conscientious." (Fleischer 2001, 410f)

Auto-stereotypes and hetero-stereotypes

Auto-stereotypes refer to one's own cultural group, while *hetero-stereotypes* refer to other/foreign groups. While auto-stereotypes usually contain positive attributes, hetero-stereotypes serve to delimit/define oneself from other cultural groups and therefore usually contain negative attributes.

Stereotypes – yes or no?

	Stereotype	
	yes	no
Isn't it the Germans who are still said to be punctual, tidy, and hard-working?		
In addition, Germans are matter-of-fact. This has the advantage that you always know where you stand. The disadvantage is that they even have an official procedure for emptying the trash. Improvisation hardly exists.		
Poles are very aware of their own history. Unlike in the West, they focus a lot on patterns of thinking and behavior from the past.		
Our (American) unique strengths as a nation—our optimism and work ethic, our spirit of discovery, our diversity, our commitment to rule of law.		
In the 20th century, America saved freedom, transformed science, redefined the middle class, and, when you get down to it, there's nothing anywhere in the world that can compete with America.		
Wherever there is an act of violence, the media immediately suspects "right-wingers."		
No one in Germany, which has experienced two terrible world wars, wants war.		
Poland is 98% Catholic, like Italy or Ireland.		
Everyone (in Poland) works hard to build a small house.		
With the arrival of the new year, it is once again clear that we Germans have the strength to show solidarity both at home and abroad.		
Now is the time for Congress to show the world that America is committed to ending illegal immigration and putting the ruthless coyotes, cartels, drug dealers, and human traffickers out of business.		
So let us hold our heads high and be confident people who rely on our own judgment and do not allow ourselves to be manipulated –		

whether by alleged foreign intelligence services or, in particular, by the Czech press, Czech Television, and other media.		
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Oppositions

By the term "opposite," we mean not only opposites that are commonly known and considered opposites according to our own linguistic and cultural competence, but also opposites that are not widely known but nevertheless fulfill *the function* of opposites in some context. We thus distinguish between *generally known and recognized opposites*, such as "black – white," "poor - rich," "healthy - sick," or "good - bad," and *functional opposites* that contain culturally relevant opposites in a given context, such as "modern society, democratic constitution - traditional Islamic society, authoritarian constitution." Essentially, we believe that opposites are cultural objects that have no counterpart in reality. They are cognitive thought patterns that serve to structure perception. Oppositions therefore represent cultural and culturally specific objects (Fleischer 2001).

German citizens + European Union citizens	are critical of EU enlargement
Democracy and the social market economy	Acceding countries
Germany needs	neighbors to the east
... faced with more than 4 million unemployed, we need a law that ... actually controls and restricts ... immigration to Germany.	immigration from non-EU countries
The interests of the people in Germany	immigration
... only then dismantle our border controls,	when the new member states have achieved the "Schengen standard."
improves our export opportunities	Accelerated growth will increase demand for imports in these countries
our neighbor Poland our partner.	The enlargement of the European Union makes

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