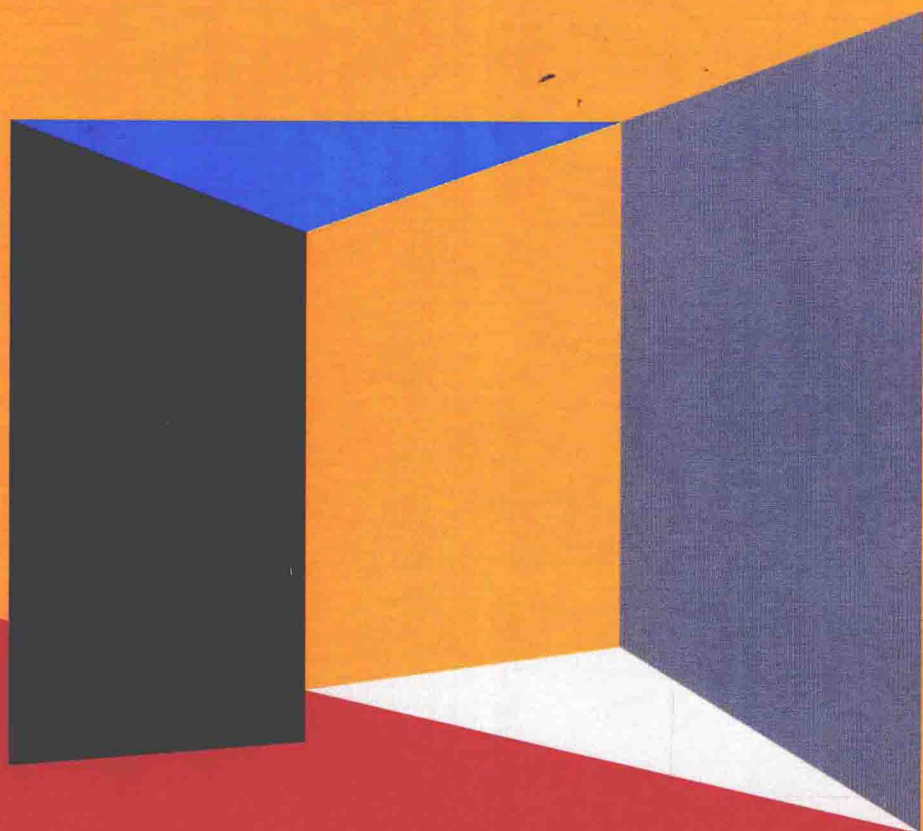


COGNITIVE LINGUISTIC STUDIES IN CULTURAL CONTEXTS 1

Cultural Conceptualisations and Language

Farzad Sharifian



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Cultural Conceptualisations and Language

Theoretical framework and applications

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Monash University



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Cultural Conceptualisations and Language

Cognitive Linguistic Studies *in Cultural Contexts (CLSCC)*

This book series aims at publishing high-quality research on the relationship between language, culture, and cognition from the theoretical perspective of Cognitive Linguistics. It especially welcomes studies that treat language as an integral part of culture and cognition, that enhance the understanding of culture and cognition through systematic analysis of language – qualitative and/or quantitative, synchronic and/or diachronic – and that demonstrate how language as a subsystem of culture transformatively interacts with cognition and how cognition at a cultural level is manifested in language.

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Volume 1

Cultural Conceptualisations and Language. Theoretical framework
and applications
by Farzad Sharifian

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- Sharifian, F. (2010). Cultural conceptualizations in intercultural communication: A study of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 42, 3367–3376.
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Preface

This book covers the theoretical framework of cultural conceptualisations, cultural cognition and language which I have been developing since 2001. It draws on a multidisciplinary background in theoretical fields such as cognitive psychology, cognitive linguistics, cognitive anthropology, distributed cognition, complexity science and anthropological linguistics, to enhance our understanding of the ways in which language, conceptualisation and culture interact with each other. The framework presented in this book contributes in turn to each of these theoretical fields. The transdisciplinary framework provides a disciplinary synthesis by drawing on analytical tools and theoretical notions that previously have often been explored in separation from each other. In addition, the model benefits from and contributes to several areas of applied linguistics including World Englishes, intercultural communication, English as an International Language and cross-cultural pragmatics.

Figure 1, which follows this preface, captures the multidisciplinary nature of the model discussed in the book. The overlapping of the circles at the bottom of the figure are meant to reflect the natural common ground that exists between these theoretical disciplines. The points of intersection between the sub-disciplines at the top are displayed by placing them against a common background frame, which is collectively identified as 'areas of applied linguistics'.

Although the analytical tools that I have used as the basis for the development of this model (such as the notion of 'schema') were borrowed from these disciplines, they have been revisited and expanded in the light of my developing views about the nature of group-level cultural cognition. The ultimate goal of this work has been to establish a framework for the study of language as it is grounded in cultural cognition, which is a missing link in the interface between these disciplines.

This theoretical framework has also been influenced by the work of like-minded colleagues who have emphasised the grounding of language in culture and cognition, notably Professor Roslyn M. Frank and Professor Ning Yu, the other editor of this book series.

Early in the history of the development of cognitive linguistics as a sub-discipline, there was an increasing awareness that cognitive linguists had much in common with cognitive anthropologists, since both groups dealt with their main

area of focus (namely, language and culture, respectively) as cognitive systems. However, this perception soon faded, perhaps because many working in the field of cognitive linguistics did not fully recognise just how closely culture interacts with and shapes language and conceptualisation. Fortunately, a group of cognitive linguists has emerged, sometimes referred to as 'second generation cognitive linguists', who, like myself, are seriously exploring language and cognition in the context of culture. This development should reinforce the interrelationship between cognitive linguistics and cognitive anthropology.

The book includes several chapters which illustrate the application of the theoretical model of cultural conceptualisations to areas such as dialectal variation (in Aboriginal English in particular), intercultural communication and intercultural pragmatics, political discourse, and English as an International Language. These studies indicate the potential applicability of the theoretical framework I have developed and show how it can produce a fine-grained analysis of language by exploring the grounding of language in cultural conceptualisations and thence eventually in cultural cognition.

I hope my work will generate similar studies across a variety of languages and cultures and allow for the investigation of as yet uncharted domains. A merit of this book is that while it is an exercise in theoretical linguistics, it also reveals how the theoretical framework has developed through its application to a variety of areas. Scholars and practitioners in applied linguistics often complain about the irrelevance of the available theoretical frameworks in pure linguistics to their areas of inquiry. I hope this book will bridge this divide and prove to be of interest to scholars with theoretical as well as applied orientations.

While the theoretical framework that I have presented in this book owes much to my multidisciplinary academic background and my readings in areas such as psycholinguistics, cognitive linguistics, cognitive anthropology, cognitive psychology, sociolinguistics and applied linguistics, I have also drawn on my personal linguistic and cultural resources. I grew up in Iran speaking Persian as my mother tongue, and learned English as my second language. In 1998 I migrated to Australia where I continued my studies and undertook extensive fieldwork and research on a number of topics. While pursuing a major theoretical undertaking, that is, developing the theoretical framework presented in this book, I undertook several applied projects, for example, an exploration of the conceptual basis of Aboriginal English as well as an examination of the cultural-conceptual basis of Persian pragmatics. Throughout the work that I have carried out in recent years I have always felt that my theoretical work and my applied research have significantly reinforced each other and have enriched my understanding of each undertaking. I very much hope this book reflects this.

I must add here that my Australian experience, collectively understood, exposed me to various systems of cultural conceptualisations, including that of Aboriginal Australians, making me more and more conscious of the cultural conceptualisations that characterise Iran, the society in which I grew up. I have been privileged in having had life experiences that have given me access to more than one language and culture, enabling me to appreciate the intricate interconnection between language, culture and conceptualisation.

It gives me great pleasure that I have had the opportunity of writing this book and sharing the experiences that have acted as a catalyst for the development of the ideas and research that are included here. Finally, in presenting the research model of this book, Chapters 1 to 3 to some extent revisit key concepts and terms with the goal of extending and deepening the scope of the overall theoretical framework. A certain degree of reiteration of key concepts across the chapters is intentional.

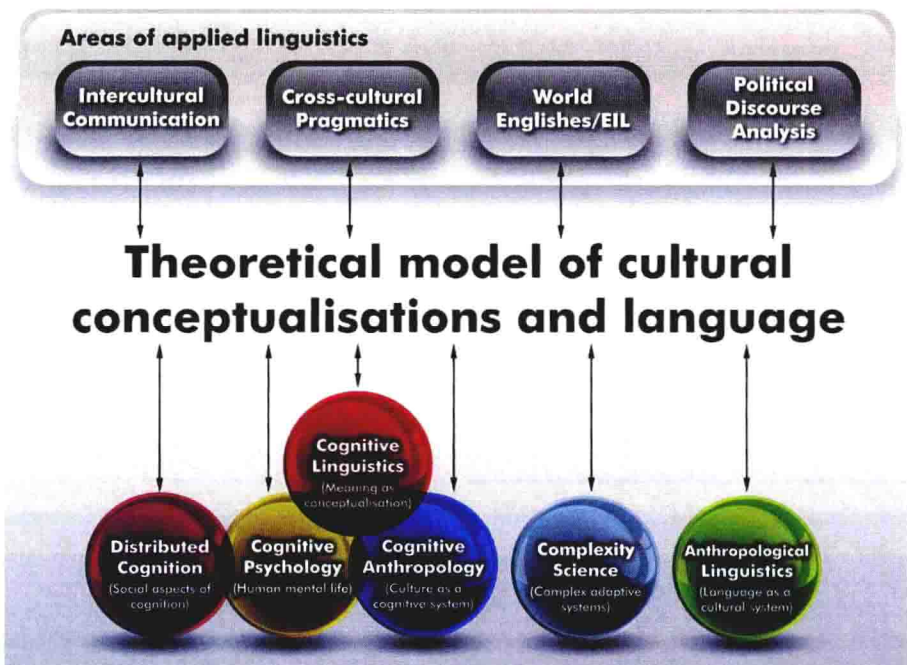


Figure 1. Multidisciplinary nature of the model cultural conceptualisations and language

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PART I

Theoretical framework