

APPLIED ETHNOLINGUISTICS is cultural linguistics, but is it CULTURAL LINGUISTICS?

Bert Peeters

Australian National University, Griffith University

1. Not all cultural linguistics is CULTURAL LINGUISTICS

The claim that “the Cognitive Linguistics movement as we know it today was born out of polemical opposition to Chomskyan linguistics” is unlikely to raise many eyebrows. I made it fifteen years ago (Peeters 2001:85), using words (“polemical opposition to Chomskyan linguistics”) that weren’t mine — and upper case initials (“Cognitive Linguistics”) that most definitely were. For some reason, a formulation used by John R. Taylor in his contribution (Taylor 1993) to a volume I had reviewed for the journal *Word* (Peeters 1998) had stuck in my mind.¹ I combined it with the deliberate decision, grudgingly accepted by the editors of the volume in which my 2001 paper was published, to call ‘Cognitive Linguistics’ what Taylor and many others referred to as ‘cognitive linguistics’. I was convinced a distinction had to be made between Cognitive Linguistics (upper case initials), the theoretical framework based on and associated with the work of Ronald W. Langacker and George Lakoff, and cognitive linguistics (lower case initials), which extends a lot further and encompasses work that, in its basic premises, is diametrically opposed to that of Langacker and Lakoff. Chomsky himself has referred to his work as cognitive linguistics, even though he appears not to have adopted that naming practice for a long time (Fortis 2012:6). As I noted in Peeters (2001:84):

1. The precise quote from Taylor (1993:205) is as follows: “The thesis of the non-arbitrariness of syntax is, of course, in polemical opposition to some major assumptions of Chomskyan linguistics, as well as to post-Bloomfieldian structuralism, out of which Chomskyan linguistics developed”. It also appears in an almost identical form in a later revision of that paper (Taylor 2008:42).

Generativists in particular have more than once expressed their annoyance regarding what they see as the “misappropriation” of the term by Cognitive Linguists. Their research interests, and that of many others, carry an equal entitlement to identification by means of the label *cognitive linguistics*. It is an entitlement which, in the current climate, they will find increasingly difficult to claim.

I am pleased to report that my proposal to differentiate between Cognitive Linguistics and cognitive linguistics hasn’t fallen on deaf ears. There is now widespread agreement that using the exact same label for a broad field of scientific endeavor as well as for a more narrowly defined framework *within* that field has to be at least potentially misleading.²

How does all this relate to the topic of *cultural linguistics*? The answer is that, several years prior to my plea for the use (in relevant circumstances) of upper case initials, Langacker (1994: 31) had underscored as follows the importance of *culture* for language:

Modern linguistic theory — especially generative theory — has (...) tended to minimize (if not ignore altogether) the status of language as an aspect of culture. Most of linguistic structure is regarded as being both innate and modular, leaving little scope for cultural intervention and transmission. However, the advent of *cognitive linguistics* can also be heralded as a return to *cultural linguistics*.

This passage wasn’t about cognitive linguistics (the broad field of scientific endeavor which arguably includes Chomskyan linguistics as well) but about Cognitive Linguistics — or, as I would now rather put it, COGNITIVE LINGUISTICS (one of a number of cognitively oriented approaches within the broader field of cognitive linguistics).³ On the other hand, it *was* about cultural linguistics rather than CULTURAL LINGUISTICS, which at the time hadn’t eventuated. Leaving aside Anusiewicz’s 1995 book *Lingwistyka kulturowa*, written in Polish and so far not available in English (for details and a handful of translated quotes, see Głaz forth-

2. The naming convention I put forward in Peeters (2001) was relayed by others (Taylor 2002: 5, Geeraerts 2006: 3) and eventually adopted in at least two major reference works: the *Oxford Handbook of Cognitive Linguistics* (Geeraerts & Cuyckens 2007) and the *Bloomsbury Companion to Cognitive Linguistics* (Littlemore & Taylor 2014).

3. The suggestion to use upper case initials as a distinguishing device was a step in the right direction, but it wasn’t the right step. My reasons for deciding in favour of small capitals rather than upper case initials include the fact that, in the German-speaking world, where Cognitive Linguistics (*Kognitive Linguistik*) is very well established, the use of upper case initials is the norm for nouns. The original proposal thus didn’t lend itself to systematic implementation in that language.

coming), CULTURAL LINGUISTICS saw the light of day two years later, with the publication of Palmer (1996).⁴

In tracing the origins of the term *cultural linguistics*, CULTURAL LINGUIST Farzad Sharifian repeatedly refers to Langacker (1994: 31). For example, in his own contribution to the monumental *Handbook of Language and Culture*, which he edited in 2015, Sharifian (2015a:473) writes:

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 emphasizing the relationship between cultural knowledge and grammar. He maintained that ‘the advent of cognitive linguistics can be heralded as a return to *cultural linguistics* (...)’ (Langacker 1994: 31, original emphasis).

As the above quote shows, Sharifian isn’t among those who systematically refer to Cognitive Linguistics, with upper case initials, but he appears to have no difficulties with the idea of calling his own framework Cultural Linguistics, thereby leaving the door open for those who take culture seriously, but don’t wish to fully identify — for whatever reason — with Cultural Linguistics, to refer to their work as cultural linguistics (Sharifian 2014: 99–100). Which is exactly as it should be — except that I would, and in this paper will (with the editor’s permission), oppose CULTURAL LINGUISTICS, the framework (printed in small capitals), and cultural linguistics, the broader field (printed in standard lower case). Sharifian (2015b: 515–516) describes the latter as “the general area of research on the relationship between language and culture, which dates back at least to the eighteenth century and the work of influential scholars such as Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767–1835), and later Franz Boas (1858–1942), Edward Sapir (1884–1939), and Benjamin Whorf (1897–1941)”.

2. CULTURAL LINGUISTICS: From imagery to (cultural) conceptualizations

CULTURAL LINGUISTICS, on the other hand, as defined by Sharifian (2015b: 515), is “a rather recent multidisciplinary area of research that explores the relationship between language and *conceptualisations* that are culturally constructed and that are instantiated through features of languages and language varieties”. In his 1996 book, Gary Palmer had conceived of it as a synergy between COGNITIVE LINGUISTICS and “three traditional approaches that are central to anthropological

4. Another proposal for a CULTURAL LINGUISTICS, with strong links to COGNITIVE LINGUISTICS (like Palmer’s; see below), is that of Janda (2008). Several COGNITIVE LINGUISTS are referred to, but Langacker isn’t one of them. Palmer isn’t quoted either. See also Janda (2009).

linguistics: Boasian linguistics, ethnosemantics (ethno science), and the ethnography of speaking” (Palmer 1996: 5), but it is Farzad Sharifian who, as early as 2003, thanks to his multidisciplinary background in anthropology, cognitive science, and linguistics, provided CULTURAL LINGUISTICS with its current interdisciplinary base. At the time, he didn’t yet refer to his own work as CULTURAL LINGUISTICS, reserving that label to talk about Gary Palmer’s writings. However, most if not all of the paraphernalia of what would eventually become his own take on the field were actually in place. The tools were lined up; all that was lacking was a kit to store them. It would take several years and at least two trips to Bunnings before cultural craftsman Farzad found the toolkit that was right for him.⁵ On his first trip, around the time of his inaugural professorial lecture (Sharifian 2011a), he settled for one called *cultural conceptualizations and language*, after the title of a monograph (Sharifian 2011b) published that same year by John Benjamins. It wasn’t too long, though, before he traded it in for another one that belonged to the same brand as partner Gary’s and that was able to accommodate most of Gary’s trusted tools. To put it more plainly, it wasn’t too long before Sharifian *appropriated* the label *cultural linguistics*, applying it to his own theoretical framework. The decision had been made easier by Bagasheva (2012) and Athanasiadou (2013) — both of whom, in their respective reviews of Sharifian (2011b), referred to it as foundational for the newly emerging field of ‘Cultural Linguistics’.

The upgrade from Palmer’s toolkit to Sharifian’s is not unlike the upgrade, in the world of computing, from — let’s say — Windows 8 to Windows 10. While it would no doubt be an exaggeration to claim that the world had been waiting for it, it is at least safe to say that the two toolkits happily coexist. Like Windows users who haven’t made the switch, company founder Gary has no difficulty hanging on to the CULTURAL LINGUISTICS equivalent of Windows 8, whereas junior business associate Farzad swears by the CULTURAL LINGUISTICS equivalent of Windows 10. Some tools are missing from Sharifian’s toolkit; one of them is *imagery*, a term used by Palmer since the early days and inherited from Langacker (Głaz forthcoming).⁶ In his latest writings, Sharifian (2014: 100, 2015a: 474, 2015b: 516–517) has explicitly disavowed Palmer’s tool and term, which is to some extent like a hammer used at the same time as a screwdriver. *Imagery* goes well beyond the visual and refers to any form of culturally constructed conceptualization, hence Sharifian’s decision to use a tool of his own, one that goes back to the kit-less days and that has played a pivotal role in just about everything he has published in the last fifteen years, viz. *cultural conceptualization*. *Imagery*, on the other hand, remains

5. Bunnings is the name of a major Australian hardware store.

6. Another one is *scenario*, on which see Section 5 below.

part of Palmer's toolkit. In a recent paper that acknowledges only his own take on CULTURAL LINGUISTICS, Palmer (2015: 22) differentiates the latter as follows from the so-called 'Lublin school of ethnolinguistics', founded by Polish scholar Jerzy Bartmiński (*italics added*):

The Lublin school of ethnolinguistics appears to have a humanistic preoccupation with discovering the values and presuppositions implied by usages of value-laden words and phrases in common use by communities of speakers. Cultural linguistics seems from my perspective to take a more scientific and objective interest in discovering how patterns of grammatical constructions are governed by culturally defined and value-laden *imagery*.

To examine aspects of cultural cognition and its instantiation in the languages of the world (and therefore in language as a universal cognitive phenomenon), CULTURAL LINGUISTICS, as understood by Sharifian, uses a variety of analytical tools, including *cultural categories*, *cultural metaphors*, *cultural schemas*, and *cultural models*, all of which are forms of cultural conceptualization. Like most if not all other English words ending in *-ation*, the word *conceptualization* can refer to a process or to the result of such a process, so much so that individual instances of categories, metaphors, schemas, and models are not only forms of cultural conceptualization (singular), but also cultural conceptualizations (plural) in their own right. Oddly enough, the term *cultural value*, which is part of common parlance in the language that CULTURAL LINGUISTS use in just about all of their writings, i.e., English, appears to be shunned. A fairly exhaustive search, taking in most of Sharifian's publications (including those of the kit-less period) has netted no more than fifteen occurrences.⁷ The shorter term *value* is marginally more common; occurrences of the combinations *moral value(s)* and *social value(s)* are few and far between. Values are typically conceived of as belonging to a "cognitive system" (Sharifian 2004: 121) or a "value system" (Sharifian 2009b: 174), with core values belonging to a "core value system" (Sharifian 2009a: 418 = 2011b: 197, Sharifian & Jamarani 2013: 353). On the other hand, values are often mentioned in one breath with other aspects of cultural heritage: "beliefs and values" (Sharifian 2003: 191 = 2011b: 6, 2004: 121), "values and beliefs" (Babai Shishavan & Sharifian 2013: 815, 2016: 79), "beliefs, values and norms" (Sharifian 2004: 121), "norms and values" (Sharifian 2007a: 183 = 2011b: 48, 2008: 252 = 2011b: 27, Babai Shishavan & Sharifian 2013: 802, 829), "values and norms" (Babai Shishavan & Sharifian 2013: 829, 2016: 84), "values and principles" (Sharifian 2009b: 173), "rules, values

7. A few more if the updated versions in Sharifian (2011b) are included in the count. The original occurrences include two references to "cultural norms and values", another two to "socio-cultural norms and values", and one to a "core value of culture". See also note 13.

and traditions” (Sharifian 2015b:520), “beliefs, norms, customs, traditions, and values” (Sharifian 2007b:34, 2013:91), and finally “beliefs, worldviews, customs, traditions, values and norms” (Sharifian 2011a:3). As also noted by Głaz (forthcoming), no definition of the term *value* is provided anywhere, which is a reasonable, but not a fool-proof indication that we aren’t dealing with a technical term that belongs in the toolkit. This raises the question of whether any bridges can be built between CULTURAL LINGUISTICS, on the one hand, and my own framework, known as APPLIED ETHNOLINGUISTICS, on the other.

3. APPLIED ETHNOLINGUISTICS and cultural values

Developed without reference to either CULTURAL LINGUISTICS or cultural linguistics, APPLIED ETHNOLINGUISTICS (which is but one form of applied ethnolinguistics) is a by-product of the so-called Natural Semantic Metalanguage (or NSM) approach, illustrated in countless papers by Anna Wierzbicka, Cliff Goddard, and others (including myself). Like the NSM approach, on which I will have more to say later, it makes prolific use of the term *cultural value*, which is fundamental to its endeavors. On this score, APPLIED ETHNOLINGUISTICS has a lot in common with Bartmiński’s (2009) COGNITIVE ETHNOLINGUISTICS and related work such as Anusiewicz (1995).

My own interest in cultural values was triggered by Béal’s (1993) groundbreaking study of French conversational data published in the journal *Langue française* (issue 98, guest-edited by myself), as well as by Wierzbicka’s (2003:69) reference to cultural values in what she calls the “four basic premises in intercultural communication”:

- (1) In different societies, and different communities, people speak differently.
- (2) These differences in ways of speaking are profound and systematic.
- (3) Different ways of speaking reflect different cultural values, or at least different hierarchies of values.
- (4) Different ways of speaking, different communicative styles can be explained and made sense of in terms of independently established different cultural values and cultural priorities.

I came to realize that it is through immersion in a foreign culture that the most important differences with one’s own culture come to the fore, and that the most important differences aren’t differences in customs, traditions, art forms, etc. Rather, the most important differences are differences in cultural values. But talking about cultural values is one thing; defining them is another. So, what do we mean by

cultural values? The answer obviously depends in the first instance on our definition of the term *value*. In the French sociological tradition exemplified by Stoetzel (1983), values are defined as models, ideals stored deep in the human psyche that guide individuals to act in certain ways. Unlike opinions and behaviors, which are surface phenomena, they can only be reached through inference based on external observables. People may waver in their values, and values may change over time, but they will always be there to inspire our actions and to define who we are. In the oft-quoted formula used by the American philosopher John Dewey, values are “what we hold dear.” At a different level, they are general beliefs which determine how we assess real or imagined behaviors (others’, not our own), deeming some of them appropriate, desirable, or valued, and others inappropriate, undesirable, or poorly valued. Australian psychologist Norman Feather (1996: 222) adds a few interesting points:

The values that people hold are fewer in number than the much larger set of specific attitudes and beliefs that they express and endorse. Values are not equal in importance but they form a hierarchy of importance for each individual, group, or culture, with some values being more important than others. Values have some stability about them but they may change in relative importance depending on changing circumstances. They are not cold cognitions but are linked to the affective system. People feel happy when their important values are fulfilled; angry when these values are frustrated.

Now, what about cultural values? In light of what has just been said, they can be defined as values that appear to be widespread within a languaculture, values that underpin the beliefs, convictions, attitudes, and communicative habits generally associated with that languaculture. They aren’t all equally important, hence the idea of a hierarchy. They aren’t universally shared by all members of a languaculture either, hence the use, in the second sentence of this paragraph, of the words *widespread* (with direct reference to cultural values) and *generally associated* (with reference to the kinds of things that are arguably underpinned by cultural values).

The realization that many foreign language textbook authors do not seem to be very good at singling out and commenting on cultural values led to the elaboration of what I originally called the *ethnolinguistic pathways model* (Peeters 2009), a series of pathways that can be used in the advanced foreign language classroom and that are specifically intended to do two things: on the one hand, help advanced language learners use their burgeoning foreign language skills so as to discover the cultural values commonly attributed to speakers of their chosen language; and on the other, make them aware that the language they are learning contains numerous cues they can use to enable them to gain a better understanding of those cultural

values. The *ethnolinguistic pathways model* was eventually renamed and is now known by the term APPLIED ETHNOLINGUISTICS (Peeters 2013a, 2015a).

There are currently five pathways, mostly illustrated by means of French data, that may be used to posit hypothetical cultural values, depending on whether the starting point is a culturally salient (Peeters 2015a) word or word-like unit (ETHNOLEXICOLOGY), a culturally salient phrase (ETHNOPHRASEOLOGY), a culturally salient syntactic pattern (ETHNOSYNTAX), a culturally salient figure of speech (ETHNORHETORICS), or a culturally salient communicative behavior (ETHNOPRAGMATICS). The discovery procedure relies on an abductive process (Peeters 2015a): a sixth pathway, known as ETHNOAXIOLOGY, is available to corroborate initial hypotheses reached on the basis of the other pathways. What led to the choice of these labels rather than any others is the fact that two of them (ETHNOPRAGMATICS and to a lesser extent ETHNOSYNTAX) were already in use in work carried out using the NSM approach, which I have always insisted on relying on in my own experiments with APPLIED ETHNOLINGUISTICS. I simply coined a few additional ones, and provided definitions for all. These have evolved somewhat over the years; the current versions are as follows:⁸

- ETHNOLEXICOLOGY is the study of culturally salient lexical items (such as *langue de bois* in French; see Peeters 2013b). It relies on linguistic as well as non-linguistic evidence, with a view to discovering whether any cultural values, previously known or newly discovered, underpin these items. This may or may not be the case, but if it is, values that were previously known will be better understood, whereas the reality of newly discovered values will subsequently have to be proven via other means.⁹
- ETHNOPHRASEOLOGY is the study of culturally salient phrases and idioms (such as *On va s'arranger* and *C'est pas ma faute* in French; see Peeters 2014a, 2014b). It relies on linguistic as well as non-linguistic evidence, with a view to discovering whether any cultural values, previously known or newly discovered, underpin these phrases and idioms. This may or may not be the case, but if it is, values that were previously known will be better understood, whereas the reality of newly discovered values will subsequently have to be proven via other means.
- ETHNOSYNTAX is the study of culturally salient productive syntactic patterns (such as the pattern *Un X peut en cacher un autre* in French; see Peeters 2010).

8. The first five definitions are highly repetitive, the only difference being what each of the pathways takes as its starting point. Greater variation could no doubt have been achieved, but would have masked the fact that the approach within each of the pathways is fundamentally identical.

9. ETHNOLEXICOLOGY is a successor to what, in earlier work (e.g., Peeters 2009), was called ETHNOSEMANTICS.

It relies on linguistic as well as non-linguistic evidence, with a view to discovering whether any cultural values, previously known or newly discovered, underpin these patterns. This may or may not be the case, but if it is, values which were previously known will be better understood, whereas the reality of newly discovered values will subsequently have to be proven via other means.

- ETHNORHETORICS is the study of culturally salient metaphors and other stylistic devices (such as the *café du commerce* metaphor in French or the *tall poppy* metaphor in Australian English; see Peeters 2015b, 2015c). It relies on linguistic as well as non-linguistic evidence, with a view to discovering whether any cultural values, previously known or newly discovered, underpin these devices. This may or may not be the case, but if it is, values that were previously known will be better understood, whereas the reality of newly discovered values will subsequently have to be proven via other means.
- ETHNOPRAGMATICS is the study of culturally salient communicative behaviors (such as *la râlerie* in French; see Peeters 2013c). It relies on linguistic as well as non-linguistic evidence, with a view to discovering whether any cultural values, previously known or newly discovered, underpin these behaviors. This may or may not be the case, but if it is, values which were previously known will be better understood, whereas the reality of newly discovered values will subsequently have to be proven via other means.
- ETHNOAXIOLOGY is the pathway aimed at confirming the reality of hypothetical cultural values commonly thought of as being defining features of the language culture they are usually associated with. Examples include *la méfiance* and *la débrouille*, both in French; see Peeters 2013d, 2015d). The corroborative process is predicated on a search for linguistic as well as non-linguistic data in support of a presumed value. An ETHNOAXIOLOGICAL examination will often be preceded by one of the other approaches, but may also be carried out in its own right, independently of any preceding investigation.

ETHNOPRAGMATICS as defined here has a more limited scope than it has in NSM inspired work outside of APPLIED ETHNOLINGUISTICS. The list of forms of linguistic evidence relevant for work in ETHNOPRAGMATICS in the broader sense (Goddard 2006: 14–16, Goddard & Ye 2015: 71) suggests that the area covered by the latter is more or less the same as that covered by APPLIED ETHNOLINGUISTICS as a whole. Similarly, ETHNOSYNTAX as defined here is more limited in scope than the broadly defined ETHNOSYNTAX defined by Goddard (2002) and, in his wake, by Gladkova (2015). Both Goddard and Gladkova recognize the possibility of a more narrowly defined ETHNOSYNTAX, and this is the approach adopted within APPLIED ETHNOLINGUISTICS. In addition, in my own work at least, all pathways have been essentially applied in nature; that is, applied with the foreign language classroom

in mind. But they can be ‘applied’ in other ways as well, as most contributions to a recently published special issue of the *International Journal of Language and Culture* (Peeters 2015e) demonstrate, provided they contribute to a better understanding of the language-culture nexus and underscore the rich and complex relationship between language and cultural values.

4. CULTURAL LINGUISTICS and cultural values

As pointed out before, in Sharifian’s work at least (including that produced during the kit-less period), the term *cultural value* is hardly ever used, unlike *(cultural) conceptualization* (as a process) and *(cultural) conceptualizations* (as the outcome of that process), which surface hundreds of times. One of the occurrences is found in an assessment of the NSM approach that runs as follows:

Wierzbicka and her colleagues have developed an approach for exploring the cultural underpinning of speech acts which is known as Natural Semantic Metalanguage (...). Within this approach, cultural values and attitudes, or what they term ‘cultural scripts’, which give rise to pragmatic devices, are explicated in terms of a set of fundamental meanings, termed ‘semantic primes’, which are alleged to be universal. This approach has some appeal to both ‘relativists’ and ‘universalists’. (Sharifian 2005: 341 = 2011b: 113)¹⁰

CULTURAL LINGUISTICS, at least in Sharifian’s writings, does recognize the importance of (cultural) values, albeit in a roundabout kind of way. In some texts, it does so by linking values up with cultural conceptualizations. The link can be fairly vague. When Babai Shishavan & Sharifian (2013: 810, 2016: 83) refer to “first language values and cultural conceptualisations” and to “L1 cultural values and conceptualisations”, respectively, they posit some sort of concomitance or coexistence, but leave its exact nature undisclosed. Sharifian’s (2003: 191 = 2004: 121 = 2011b: 6) claim that “CCs can even emerge in very small cultural groups, where people have rather uniform lifestyles and cognitive systems of beliefs and values” doesn’t provide much relevant information either. Nor does the reference in Sharifian (2011b: 51, 2012: 101) to so-called *dyadic terms*, a “feature of some Aboriginal languages which reflects cultural values attached to family ties”; dyadic terms are said to result from a particular conceptualization in terms of which “the minimal unit in any social domain is at

10. The same passage, up until “alleged to be universal”, can also be found in Sharifian & Jamarani (2011: 229–230).

least two family members” (ibid.).¹¹ Elsewhere (Sharifian 2003: 198 = 2011b: 12), aboriginal conceptualizations are said to “*embody* (...) Aboriginal morals, law, and cultural values” (emphasis added). Fast readers presumably don’t pay much attention: they are convinced they have understood. But have they? What exactly does the verb *embody* mean? Is it a reference to embodiment, one of those fashionable concepts that COGNITIVE LINGUISTS have borrowed from other disciplines, including psychology, philosophy, and cognitive science, then tweaked to suit their own requirements? As COGNITIVE LINGUISTICS and CULTURAL LINGUISTICS have a lot in common, and the link between both has been explicitly recognized (see above), references to *embodiment* in the latter shouldn’t come as a surprise. Alternatively, does the verb *embody* mean what it means or might mean in everyday language? Does it mean something like “to represent in a clear and obvious way”, “to represent in visible form”, “to give form to”, “to be a symbol or example of”?¹² All of the above could be the case. The clearest statement is probably the one in Sharifian (2007b: 34, 2013: 91), where it is pointed out that the conceptualizations developed within cultural groups for virtually every aspect of thought and behavior are “usually referred to as beliefs, norms, customs, traditions, and values”. There is an unambiguous indication here that the term *conceptualization* is intended as a technical cover term for a number of widely used but essentially non-technical terms, one of which is the term *value*.

But as we have seen, the term *conceptualization* is also a cover term for a string of other technical terms used in CULTURAL LINGUISTICS. *Cultural categories*, *metaphors*, *schemas*, and *models* are all forms of cultural conceptualization. Which of these is closest to what APPLIED ETHNOLINGUISTICS refers to as *cultural values*? It looks as though the prime candidate is *cultural schema*. The link between cultural values and cultural schemas is made in a variety of ways, ranging from the vague to the not-so-vague. To show “how intercultural communication may reveal certain cultural norms and values”, Sharifian (2004: 119 = 2011b: 101) intends to exploit “the notion of *cultural schema*”. At this early stage of the text (the excerpt quoted is from the opening sentence), this is all we are being told. Describing the Persian cultural schema of *shekasteh-nafsi* “humbleness” as “a good example of an emergent conceptualization, where a value system originally part of a spiritual tradition finds its way into the literary works of a speech community and then into the cultural cognition of a group”, Sharifian (2009b: 174) posits some sort of

11. Thus, in Kaytete (Central Australia), the suffix *-nhenge*, added to a kinship term, refers to a child when added to the word for “father”, to a younger brother or sister when added to the word for “elder sister”, etc.

12. All definitions are taken from Merriam-Webster’s online dictionary (<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/embody>).

concomitance or coexistence between a cultural schema and a ‘value system’, much like he did in one of the excerpts quoted above that links values up with conceptualizations, but once again leaves the exact nature of that concomitance or coexistence undisclosed. On the other hand, the verb *embody* is used on several occasions, with schemas *embodying* (cultural) norms and values (Sharifian 2004: 121, 2007a: 183 = 2011b: 48, 2008: 252 = 2011b: 27). As before, this raises the question of what exactly the verb *embody* means in this context. A number of other verbs are used as well, including (in alphabetical order) *capture*, *define*, *embrace*, and *(be) relate(d) to*. Sharifian (2009b: 173) points out that the above-mentioned cultural schema of *shekasteh-nafsi* captures one of the core values of contemporary Iran; in more general terms (Sharifian 2015b: 520), schemas *capture* “bodies of rules, values and traditions”. Sharifian (2004: 125 = 2011b: 106) distinguishes between lower-level and higher-level schemas; he mentions a higher-level schema that “*defines* a core cultural value related to social relations”.¹³ According to Sharifian (2004: 121), cultural schemas “may *embrace* any kind of knowledge, including a group’s core beliefs, values and norms”. In the same text, on the same page, there is a reference to “schemas *related to* Aboriginal morals, law, and cultural values”.

5. APPLIED ETHNOLINGUISTICS and CULTURAL LINGUISTICS?

A direct implication of the above findings is that, although in CULTURAL LINGUISTICS the term *cultural value* doesn’t play the prominent role it does in either APPLIED ETHNOLINGUISTICS or the NSM approach, detailed study of culturally specific conceptualizations in general, and of culturally specific schemas in particular, may lead to a more detailed understanding of the cultural values that are upheld in the various lingua- or languacultures of the world. Language plays an important part in the study of those cultural schemas, as one would expect — we are after all among cultural *linguists*. Nowhere does this appear to be stated more clearly than in the following excerpt from Sharifian (2004), which, I regret to say, was left on the cutting room floor during the write-up of Sharifian (2011b). The excerpt is taken from page 121:

A kind of knowledge that may be embodied in cultural schemas is cultural knowledge, including cultural norms and values, which may be reflected in the use of language. Various levels and units of language such as speech acts, idioms, metaphors, discourse markers, etc. may somehow instantiate aspects of such cultural schemas.

13. In the older of the two texts, the term *value of culture* is used instead of *cultural value*. See also note 7.

IN APPLIED ETHNOLINGUISTICS, speech acts would be studied in ETHNOPRAGMATICS, idioms in ETHNOPHRASEOLOGY, metaphors in ETHNORHETORICS. For discourse markers, an important part of most if not all languages, I haven't yet found a clear-cut niche, which is something I can't say I am proud of. I hasten to add, though, in my defense, that the framework remains very much work in progress. Peeters (2015e) includes a study of the Danish discourse particle *lige* (Levisen & Waters 2015) that was described as "an exercise in ethnopragmatics, both in the broader and the more narrow meaning of the term" (Peeters 2015e: 139). *Broader* refers to Goddard's approach, *more narrow* to my own. I am now wondering whether *lige*, as a discourse marker, would not qualify as a culturally salient lexical item, which would make its study an exercise in ETHNOLEXICOLOGY, not ETHNOPRAGMATICS.

What are the implications of this attempt to overlay CULTURAL LINGUISTICS with APPLIED ETHNOLINGUISTICS? As pointed out in the opening lines of Section 3, the latter was developed without reference to either CULTURAL LINGUISTICS or cultural linguistics. If I had to find a home for it, which of the two would it be? In my current thinking, I must admit there appears to be little prospect for an eventual amalgamation of APPLIED ETHNOLINGUISTICS and CULTURAL LINGUISTICS, irrespective of whether we adopt Palmer's or Sharifian's take on the latter. The main obstacle appears to be NSM, which is one of the cornerstones of APPLIED ETHNOLINGUISTICS.

The descriptive tool or natural semantic metalanguage after which the NSM approach is named is the result of decades of empirically validated research by an expanding group of linguists with expertise in a large number of geographically and typologically diverse languages.¹⁴ At its heart lies the concept of 'reductive paraphrase'. To understand what it involves, we need to remind ourselves of an apparently basic assumption that — somewhat surprisingly — many other frameworks appear to have little or no time for. That assumption holds that there is only one worthwhile way to successfully account for what is semantically complex and/or culturally specific: the complexities and specificities have to be removed. This can only be done by providing a paraphrase that is simpler and easier to understand than the original, i.e., a so-called *reductive paraphrase*. As explained on the NSM home page (see note 14):

Reductive paraphrase prevents us from getting tangled up in circular and obscure definitions, problems which greatly hamper conventional dictionaries and other approaches to linguistic semantics. No technical terms, neologisms, logical

14. For a broad introduction that isn't overly technical, see Goddard (2011). Hundreds of other bibliographical references dealing with many different languages and cultures are available on the NSM home page (<https://www.griffith.edu.au/humanities-languages/school-humanities-languages-social-science/research/natural-semantic-metalanguage-homepage>).

symbols, or abbreviations are allowed in reductive paraphrase explications — only plain words from ordinary natural language.

I will return to the term *explication* in a short while. Something that needs to be spelled out first is that not everything can be subjected to reductive paraphrase. Some meanings are already maximally simple and can't be reduced any further. A central tenet of the NSM approach is that, despite enormous differences, all natural languages share the same set of maximally simple meanings. NSM researchers have painstakingly established that common, irreducible core through a long process of trial and error. This process, which has now gone on for almost half a century, has resulted in an inventory of 65 conceptual building blocks called *semantic primes* (or *primes* for short). Vietnamese is one of the most recent languages against which the list of primes has been extensively tested. The Vietnamese and English exponents of the primes are reproduced in Appendix A (taken from Vo 2016).

Reductive paraphrases are thought of as being made up of primes (and sometimes molecules): not just strings of primes, but primes combined into universally intelligible segments, in accordance with universal combinatorial properties.¹⁵ Each prime comes with its own set of combinatorial properties, its own rigorously controlled grammar, replicated — like the primes themselves — in all the languages of the world. This lends extra credibility to the claim that NSM is true to its name and is indeed an intuitively intelligible mini-language, unlike other semantic metalanguages that are neither intuitive nor semantically simple. What is more, unlike these other semantic metalanguages, NSM exists in as many isomorphic versions as there are languages in the world. This is because, in the absence of convincing evidence to the contrary, all its ingredients (primes and grammar) are deemed to be universal. Although, for obvious reasons, the English version has been privileged, all other versions lend themselves equally well to the *explication* of language- and culture-specific ways of speaking, acting, thinking, and feeling. *Explication* is the term used by NSM scholars for a sequence of reductive paraphrases that, together, *explicate* semantically complex and culturally specific meanings in a way that is maximally transparent and culturally neutral. Because they are couched in a culturally neutral metalanguage and can be readily translated from one version of the metalanguage into another, without loss or distortion of meaning, explications are universally intelligible. This, in turn, facilitates cross-cultural comparison and circumvents the dangers of Anglocentrism, to which many areas of linguistics (and other scientific disciplines) often unwittingly succumb.

15. Semantic molecules function as integrated units or conceptual chunks, and may be used alongside semantic primes for the explication of concepts of great semantic complexity. They must be explicated separately, and can't be taken for granted.

NSM explications also allow the cultural norms and values that underpin the lexical resources of a language to be revealingly studied, compared, and explained. Explications of norms and values are referred to as cultural scripts. To talk about “cultural values and attitudes, or what [NSM scholars] term ‘cultural scripts’”, as Sharifian (2005: 341 = 2011b: 113) does in his appraisal of the NSM approach referred to above, is therefore not entirely accurate. In an encyclopedia entry on cultural scripts, using Russian examples, Wierzbicka (2010a: 94) refers to “values such as *iskrennost*” (where *iskrennost* is at the same time a culturally salient word roughly equivalent to “sincerity/frankness/spontaneity” in English), and in a paper on cultural scripts and intercultural communication she presents “the Russian cultural script of ‘iskrennost’” (Wierzbicka 2010b: 66), reproduced in Appendix B — but this doesn’t mean that cultural values and cultural scripts are one and the same. Rather, cultural scripts *explicate* or *are explications of* cultural values, using NSM. In other words, scripts make values — which often remain deeply embedded in the human psyche — *accessible* to cultural insiders and outsiders alike.

Unfortunately, Palmer’s pronouncements on the perceived usefulness of the natural semantic metalanguage don’t augur well for the use, in CULTURAL LINGUISTICS, of cultural scripts — or indeed of any other form of semantic explication using semantic primes. The following are taken from Palmer (2003a: 67–68 = 2006: 16) and Palmer (2015: 22):¹⁶

The scenario concept is particularly important in cultural linguistics because the term directs attention to the imagery of social action and discourse, which has largely been overlooked by cognitive linguistics, particularly in the study of non-Indo-European languages. (...) The approach pursued here resembles that of Anna Wierzbicka in that her cultural scripts are something like scenarios (...). However, unlike Wierzbicka, I do not reduce scenarios to statements composed of a small set of semantic primes [arranged according to the rules of a semantic metalanguage].¹⁷

[T]he cultural linguistic emphasis on scenarios as important culturally defined images is much like Anna Wierzbicka’s focus on scripts, except that cultural linguistics does not find it essential that scenarios be described by a semantic metalanguage consisting of a small inventory of universal terms.

16. The term *scenario*, which surfaces repeatedly in these excerpts, is a borrowing from cognitive science, where it became popular from the 1980s onward. Scenarios capture a sequence of events. Palmer refers to scenarios as one kind of imagery, but like *imagery*, the term *scenario* has not made it into Sharifian’s toolkit. For Sharifian, scenarios are cultural schemas of a particular kind; no separate tool is needed.

17. The passage in square brackets only appears in the 2006 version.

Palmer's most recent assessment, in which he goes on to refer to Wierzbicka's "cogent reasons for the practice, such as the advantage of making definitions understandable to native speakers as well as researchers", is more conciliatory than what he had said before, but it is easy to see that, no matter how "cogent" Wierzbicka's reasons are, Palmer is not about to change his mind.¹⁸ Sharifian's (2005: 341 = 2011b: 113) carefully worded claim that the NSM approach "has some appeal to both 'relativists' and 'universalists'" also remains relatively unaccommodating. He seems to be saying: "Some appeal, yes, but I don't think I will be using it in a hurry..." Too bad. There is no way that APPLIED ETHNOLINGUISTICS is ever going to disavow NSM. No way.

APPLIED ETHNOLINGUISTICS is also not about to give up the term *cultural value*. I can't see anything wrong with the use of everyday terms as an alternative to scientific jargon, as long as reasonable attempts are made to come up with workable definitions if such everyday terms are ill-defined and could therefore be a potential source of confusion. I would like to think that a theoretical framework that uses everyday terms as the cornerstones of its scientific endeavors might have a broader appeal than one that confines itself to, or at least focuses on, scientific jargon. And a broad appeal is exactly what APPLIED ETHNOLINGUISTICS needs, perhaps more so than CULTURAL LINGUISTICS, in that it was conceived for (but not intended to be limited to) use in the advanced foreign language classroom. Of course, the names of the six pathways that have so far been posited within APPLIED ETHNOLINGUISTICS are not exactly everyday terms. Labels such as ETHNOLEXICOLOGY, ETHNOPHRASEOLOGY, ETHNOSYNTAX, ETHNORHETORICS, ETHNOPRAGMATICS, and ETHNOAXIOLOGY are not very user-friendly; some roll off the tongue, whereas others don't. I would like to argue, though, that they aren't among the cornerstones of APPLIED ETHNOLINGUISTICS. Rather, they are convenient ways of referring to each of the pathways, and as such they don't even need to be used in the advanced foreign language classroom. The term *cultural value*, on the other hand, can't be dispensed with, and is certain to appeal to students, as it is a term that they are familiar with through exposure to the media.

18. Palmer's judgment may be clouded by a misunderstanding of some of the fundamental assumptions behind the NSM approach. For instance, in his introduction to a special issue of the journal *Cognitive Linguistics* on thinking across languages and cultures, he refers to the "uncertainty over whether THINK as we know it in English is in fact a semantic universal as asserted by Anna Wierzbicka" (Palmer 2003b: 98). But this is not at all what Wierzbicka is saying. It is not THINK as we know it in English that is a semantic universal, but THINK as it is used in the natural semantic metalanguage, where it is restricted to one of the meanings the verb *think* has in English, a meaning that is irreducible to more simple meanings and that empirical research spanning several decades suggests may be lexicalised, one way or the other, in all the languages of the world.

Is there any chance that CULTURAL LINGUISTICS will give the term *cultural value* wider currency? Time will tell. One thing we know for sure is that it didn't happen in the wake of Malcolm's (2007: 53) discussion of situations where "the natural phenomena of linguistic and cultural difference come up against the humanly contrived phenomena of inequality which enable one cultural group to reduce the life chances of others by making one language variety the only path to education and opportunity". He went on to say that a "constructive approach" to such situations requires "a method of inquiry that is able to keep in focus both linguistic difference and competing *cultural values*" (emphasis added) and he claimed that "it is here that cultural linguistics has a unique contribution to make" (2007: 54). There is no doubt in my mind that the cultural linguistics Malcolm was referring to was CULTURAL LINGUISTICS, since he made his claim in a text originally presented at a workshop on APPLIED CULTURAL LINGUISTICS convened by Farzad Sharifian and Gary Palmer as part of the proceedings of the 8th International Conference on Cognitive Linguistics held in Logroño, Spain, in 2003. Nor is there any doubt in my mind that CULTURAL LINGUISTICS *has* made a unique and hopefully lasting contribution, not so much in terms of *cultural values* as in terms of *cultural categories, metaphors, schemas, and models*, i.e., *cultural conceptualizations*.

Malcolm (2007) is one of eight chapters in a book titled *Applied Cultural Linguistics*, edited by the conveners of the Logroño workshop. It was arguably not until 2007 that Palmer's take on cultural linguistics, i.e., CULTURAL LINGUISTICS, became more widely known, thanks to the input of Farzad Sharifian. However, as it turns out, only six of the eight chapters were originally presented at the workshop. One of the newly added ones was by Cliff Goddard and Anna Wierzbicka, who were invited at a later stage to contribute to the book (Farzad Sharifian, personal communication, 18 December 2015). Although they use the term (*cultural*) *value* more often than the other contributors taken together, their chapter doesn't seem to have had any terminological impact on the field of CULTURAL LINGUISTICS either. One reason could be the inevitable presence in Goddard & Wierzbicka (2007) of large chunks of NSM. Another reason could be the near absence of the term *cultural linguistics*, which appears only once, preceded by the adjective *applied*, at the very end of the paper; in addition, not one entry in the bibliography is associated with work conducted under the CULTURAL LINGUISTICS banner. It makes one wonder whether Sharifian & Palmer (2007) is about APPLIED CULTURAL LINGUISTICS (in line with the Logroño workshop) or about applied cultural linguistics...

6. APPLIED ETHNOLINGUISTICS and cultural linguistics

I would like to end on a high note. Even though it is unlikely that APPLIED ETHNOLINGUISTICS will eventually amalgamate with CULTURAL LINGUISTICS, I do hope they can learn from one another and engage in a mutually enriching dialogue, thereby contributing to “greater cross-cultural understanding and tolerance” (Palmer 1996:296). “A noble endeavour, worthy of every effort”, notes Głaz (forthcoming) in his comments on these words. I couldn’t agree more. I believe both APPLIED ETHNOLINGUISTICS and CULTURAL LINGUISTICS provide useful methodologies for the study of language and culture. Both are forms of a kind of linguistics that recognizes that language is so much more than a matter of cognition. Both have a legitimate place in the broader field of cultural linguistics — as do other frameworks, including but not limited to Bartmiński’s COGNITIVE ETHNOLINGUISTICS, which he hopes will contribute to “a better coexistence of nations” (Bartmiński 2009:221).

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Appendix A. Vietnamese and English exponents of NSM semantic primes
(Vo 2016)

TAO, MÀY, NGƯỜI NÀO, ĐIỀU GÌ ~ CÁI GÌ, NGƯỜI TA, CƠ THỂ	Thực thể từ
<i>I, you, someone, something~thing, people, body</i>	Substantives
LOẠI, PHẦN	Thực thể từ quan hệ
<i>kind, part</i>	Relational substantives
NÀY, CÙNG, KHÁC	Định từ
<i>this, the same, other~else</i>	Determiners
MỘT, HAI, [MỘT] VÀI ~ MỘT SỐ, TẤT CẢ, NHIỀU, [MỘT] CHÚT ~ [MỘT] ÍT	Lượng từ
<i>one, two, much~many, little~few, some, all</i>	Quantifiers
TỐT, XẤU ~ TỐI	Từ đánh giá
<i>good, bad</i>	Evaluators
LỚN, NHỎ	Từ mô tả
<i>big, small</i>	Descriptors
NGHĨ, BIẾT, MUỐN, CẢM THẤY, THẤY, NGHE	Vị từ tâm thức
<i>think, know, want, don't want, feel, see, hear</i>	Mental predicates
NÓI, LỜI, THẬT	Lời nói
<i>say, words, true</i>	Speech
LÀM, XẢY RA, DI CHUYỂN	Hành động, sự kiện, di chuyển
<i>do, happen, move</i>	Actions, events, movement

Ở (ĐÂU), CÓ, LÀ (AI/CÁI GÌ)	Vị trí, hiện hữu, đặc tả
<i>be (somewhere), there is, be (someone/something)</i>	<i>Location, existence, specification</i>
CỦA TÔI	Sở hữu
<i>(is) mine</i>	<i>Possession</i>
SỐNG, CHẾT	Sống và chết
<i>live, die</i>	<i>Life and death</i>
KHI ~ LÚC, [BÂY] GIỜ, TRƯỚC [KHI], SAU [KHI], MỘT LÚC LÂU, [MỘT] CHỐC LÁT, MỘT LÚC, [MỘT] THOÁNG	Thời gian
<i>when~time, now, before, after, a long time, a short time, for some time, moment</i>	<i>Time</i>
ĐÂU ~ NƠI, ĐÂY, TRÊN, DƯỚI, XA, GẦN, BÊN, BÊN TRONG, CHẠM	Không gian
<i>where~place, here, above, below, far, near, side, inside, touch</i>	<i>Space</i>
KHÔNG, CÓ LẼ, CÓ THỂ, BỞI VÌ, NẾU	Khái niệm logic
<i>not, maybe, can, because, if</i>	<i>Logical concepts</i>
RẤT, NỮA	Tác tử
<i>very, more</i>	<i>Augmentor, intensifier</i>
NHƯ	Đồng dạng
<i>like</i>	<i>Similarity</i>

Appendix B. Wierzbicka's (2010b:66) cultural script for the Russian cultural value *iskrennost* (with modified indentation for increased clarity)

[many people think like this:]

at many times someone says something good to someone else

because this someone wants this other someone to know what this someone is thinking at that time

not because of anything else

it is good if it is like this

at many times someone says something good to someone else

because this someone wants this other someone to know what this someone feels at that time

not because of anything else

it is good if it is like this

Author's address

Bert Peeters
School of Literature, Languages and Linguistics
Australian National University
CANBERRA ACT 2601
Australia

bert.peeters@anu.au.edu,
b.peeters@griffith.edu.au