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Semantics in cultural perspective overview

Virginia Smith

King's College London, England, United Kingdom

Karrie Florence

King's College London, England, United Kingdom

Franklin Maria

SOAS University of London, England, United Kingdom

Abstract---The article was to aim to investigate the semantics overview based on the cultural perspective. The aim of semantics is to discover why meaning is more complex than simply the words formed in a sentence. Culture is a word for the 'way of life' of groups of people, meaning the way they do things. The excellence of taste in the fine arts and humanities, also known as high culture. An integrated pattern of human knowledge, belief, and behavior. The outlook, attitudes, values, morals, goals, and customs shared by a society. Culture is the characteristics and knowledge of a particular group of people, encompassing language, religion, cuisine, social habits, music, and arts. The word "culture" derives from a French term, which in turn derives from the Latin "colere," which means to tend to the earth and grow, or cultivation and nurture. Well, cultural tradition can take on many forms. A tradition is usually some kind of action or event that is passed on through the generations of a certain group that practices said traditions. So WE would guess that cultural tradition is where a group of people practices certain traditions from a culture. Cultural values are the core principles and ideals upon which an entire community exists. This is made up of several parts: customs, which are traditions and rituals; values, which are beliefs; and culture, which is all of a group's guiding values.

Keywords---culture, religion, social, arts, colere.

Introduction

Schreiber, Amin, Aroyo, van Assem, de Boer, Hardman & Wielemaker (2008), the first key difference between the two terms is the actual set of things that each describes. Tradition would describe a belief or behavior. Green & Krauss (2000), culture, on the other hand, is a term that is not just limited to beliefs and behaviors, though they are included. A custom (also called a tradition) is a common way of doing things. It is something that many people do, and have done for a long time. Usually, people come from the same country, culture, or religion. Machery, Deutsch, Mallon, Nichols, Sytsma & Stich (2010), many customs are things that people do that are handed down from the past. Zhuge (2011), the main difference between culture and tradition is that Culture is the ideas, customs and social behavior of a particular social group whereas Tradition is the transmission of customs and beliefs from one generation to another.

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Corresponding author: Maria, F. maria.f@soas.ac.uk

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Cross-linguistic perspective

The present collection of articles is the outcome of collaborative work carried out within the Space Project in the Language and Cognition Group at the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics. Research has revolved around a set of questions first formulated in a questionnaire by [Bohnenmeyer \(2001\)](#), later expanded by [Bohnenmeyer et al. \(2004\)](#). Initially targeting the formal and functional properties of place names, the research agenda was widened to also incorporate the linguistic categorization of the physical environment, as reflected in generic landscape terms.

[Ferreira, Dantas, Rossi & Ciol \(2008\)](#), each contribution represents a detailed account of one or more of these issues in the context of a particular language (typically in traditional small-scale societies), written by one or more experts on the language in question and based on data from first-hand fieldwork. There are nine such contributions, representing a range of genetically, typologically and geographically diverse languages: Brown's on Tzeltal (Mayan, Mesoamerica), Burenhult's on Jahawe (Mon-Khmer, Malay Peninsula), Cablitz's on Marquesan (Austronesian, Polynesia), [Enfield's \(2008\)](#) on Lao (Tai, Mainland Southeast Asia), [Levinson's \(2008\)](#) on Ye'li Dnye (isolate, Island Melanesia), O'Connor and Kroefges's (2008) on Lowland Chontal (isolate, Mesoamerica), O'Meara and Bohnemeyer's on Serwe (isolate, Mesoamerica), Senft's on Kilivila (Austronesian, Island Melanesia), and Widlok's on 6¼ Akhoe Hai//om (Khoisan, southwestern Africa).

[Zadeh \(1996\)](#), even in this small sample of languages, the cross-linguistic approach allows for a comparison of landscape terms and place names in (a) similar and different ecologies and (b) similar and different subsistence systems. For example, we are in a position to compare the categorial systems of unrelated languages in similar as well as varying ecologies. Also, we can compare systems used in similar subsistence situations but in unrelated languages and vastly different environments ([Piamonte, Abeysekera & Ohlsson, 2001](#)).

Traditions Matter

[Machery, Mallon, Nichols & Stich \(2004\)](#), traditions represent a critical piece of our culture. They help form the structure and foundation of our families and our society. Tradition reinforces values such as freedom, faith, integrity, a good education, personal responsibility, a strong work ethic, and the value of being selfless.

Is landscape a cross-linguistically distinct and easily identifiable domain? European cultures identify categories like 'landscape' and 'geography', but are these to be treated on a par with reasonably well-established semantic domains like kinship, colour, anatomy, and biology? Despite the points raised earlier about the neurocognitive basis and general linguistic ontology of places, our cross-cultural sample suggests there is the reason to be cautious about the integrity of the landscape, at least as far as generic terms are concerned. Unique beginner terms for landscape as a whole are not in much evidence, and no domain-encompassing systems of lexical relations are reported. Brown, for example, proposes the existence of a 'physical environment' domain in Tzeltal on the basis of structural evidence of object properties but shows that terms for such objects do not enter into lexical relations with each other and are not subsumed under an overarching landscape label ([Aikhenvald, 2006](#)).

[Delgado, SáNchez, MartíN-Bautista & Vila \(2001\)](#), other contributions emphasize the inseparability of the landscape from other domains. In his account of 6¼ Akhoe Hai//om, Widlok tells of how notions of landscape are intimately intertwined with notions of settlement, migration, resources, and ethnicity, suggesting that landscape is indeed an artificial domain. Cablitz's account of Marquesan suggests that landscape features are not straightforwardly separable from atmospheric and celestial features. Moreover, Burenhult's

contribution to Jahawe suggests that mapping of the physical environment can be secondary in the sense that it largely draws on other domains, thereby ruling out the landscape as itself representing a distinct and basic domain (Lam, 2010; Vecco, 2010).

Cann, Kempson & Marten (2005), the reinforces the picture of the physical environment as being a setting or scene onto which linguistic categorization can operate in a multitude of ways, both within and across languages. It is less of an independent backdrop in the form of a discrete and self-standing categorial system (again, see Widlok, 2008). Arguably, the landscape is therefore qualitatively very different from semantic domains like kinship, anatomy and life forms. Indeed, such domains are sometimes employed to map the landscape, among other things. However, lexical subsystems of a different sort do seem to make the landscape their major locus Operandi, as will be shown in the following section, and these systems suggest that landscape may form a coherent domain in at least some languages (Turner, 1999; Zhuge, 2004).

Maton (2013), almost all languages have some grammatical means for the linguistic categorization of nouns and nominals. The continuum of noun categorization devices covers a range of devices, from the lexical numeral classifiers of Southeast Asia to the highly grammaticalized gender agreement classes of Indo-European languages. They have a similar semantic basis, and one can develop from the other. They provide a unique insight into how people categorize the world through their language in terms of universal semantic parameters involving humanness, animacy, sex, shape, form, consistency, and functional properties.

Noun categorization devices are morphemes that occur in surface structures under specifiable conditions and denote some salient perceived or imputed characteristics of the entity to which an associated noun refers (Allan, 1977). They are restricted to classifier constructions, morphosyntactic units (e.g., noun phrases of different kinds, verb phrases, or clauses) that require the presence of a particular kind of morpheme, the choice of which is dictated by the semantic characteristics of the referent of the nominal head of a noun phrase by Noppeney & Price (2004).

Dapretto & Bookheimer (1999), noun categorization devices come in various guises. We distinguish noun classes, noun classifiers, numeral classifiers, classifiers in possessive constructions, and verbal classifiers. Two relatively rare types are locative and deictic classifiers. They share a common semantic core and differ in the morphosyntactic contexts of their use and in their preferred semantic features.

Plotkin (2004); Zhuge (2010), primarily sex-based genders can have an additional shape- and size-related meanings. In languages of the Sepik region of New Guinea, the feminine is associated with short, wide, and round, and masculine with long, tall, and narrow objects (e.g., Ndu family; Alamblak). Feminine is associated with small size and diminutives in Afroasiatic and East-Nilotic languages; masculine includes long, thick, solid objects. Hollow, round, deep, flat, and thin objects are feminine in Kordofanian and Central Khoisan languages (Heine, 1982). Unusually large objects are feminine in Dumo, a Sko language from New Guinea (see the summary in Aikhenvald, 2000).

In some languages, most nouns are assigned to just one noun class; in other languages, different noun classes can be chosen to highlight a particular property of a referent. Manambu, a Ndu language from the Sepik area, has two genders. The masculine gender includes male referents, and feminine gender includes females. But the gender choice depends on other factors and can vary: if the referent is exceptionally long, or large, it is assigned masculine gender; if it is small and round, it is feminine.

Rules for the semantic assignment of noun classes can be more complex. The Australian language Dyirbal (Dixon, 1972) has four noun classes. Three are associated with one or

more basic concepts: WE – male humans, nonhuman animates; IWE – female humans, water, fire, fighting; IIWE – nonflesh food. IV is a residue class covering everything else. There are also two rules for transferring gender membership. By the first, an object can be assigned to gender by its mythological association rather than by its actual semantics. [Malinowski & Bates \(2006\)](#), birds are classed as feminine by the mythological association since women's souls are believed to enter birds after death. The second transfer rule is that if a subset of a certain group of objects has a particularly important property, e.g., being dangerous, it can be assigned to a different class from the other nouns in that group. Most trees without edible parts belong to IV, but stinging trees are placed in II.

A typical gender system in Australian languages contains four terms that can be broadly labeled as a masculine, feminine, vegetable, and residual (Dixon, 2002: 449–514). Andian (Northeast Caucasian) languages have a special noun class for insects, and Bantu languages for places (also see [Corbett, 1991](#)).

Cultural variation in cognition and intuitions

[Dvořák & Woltran \(2010\)](#), philosophers typically share the Kripkean intuitions and expect theories of reference to accommodate them. As we discuss more fully, we suspect that most philosophers exploring the nature of reference assume that the Kripkean intuitions are universal. For suppose that semantic intuitions exhibit systematic differences between groups or individuals. This would raise questions about whose intuitions are going to count, putting in jeopardy philosophers' methodology.

Recent work in cultural psychology suggests, however, that one should be wary of simply assuming cultural universality without evidence. In an important series of experiments, Richard Nisbett and his collaborators have found large and systematic differences between East Asians (EAs) and Westerners (Ws) on a number of basic cognitive processes including perception, attention, and memory. These groups also differ in the way they go about describing, predicting and explaining events, in the way they categorize objects and in the way they revise beliefs in the face of new arguments and evidence (for review, see [Nisbett et al., 2001](#)). This burgeoning literature in cultural psychology suggests that culture plays a dramatic role in shaping human cognition. Inspired by this research program, [Weinberg et al. \(2001\)](#) constructed a variety of probes modeled on thought experiments from the philosophical literature in epistemology.

[Burenhult & Levinson \(2008\)](#), these thought experiments, like Kripke's hypothetical naming scenarios, were designed to elicit intuitions about the appropriate application of epistemic concepts. Weinberg et al. found that there do indeed seem to be systematic cross-cultural differences in epistemic intuitions. In light of these findings on epistemic intuitions, we were curious to see whether there might also be cross-cultural differences in intuitions about reference. We lack the space to offer a detailed account of the differences uncovered by Nisbett and his colleagues. But it is important to review briefly some of the findings that led to the studies we will report here. According to Nisbett and his colleagues, the differences between EAs and Ws "can be loosely grouped together under the heading of holistic vs. analytic thought."

[Gittenberger \(2004\)](#); [Milner & Tofte \(1991\)](#), holistic thought, which predominates among East Asians, is characterized as "involving orientation to the context or field as a whole, including attention to relationships between a focal object and the field, and a preference for explaining and predicting events on the basis of such relationships." Analytic thought, the prevailing pattern among Westerners, is characterized as "involving detachment of the object from its context, a tendency to focus on attributes of the object in order to assign it to categories, and a preference for using rules about the categories to explain and predict the object's behavior" ([Nisbett et al., 2001, 293](#)).

Nielson (1989); Mika (2007), of particular importance to sound ethno-pragmatic methodology is the need to avoid terminological ethnocentrism in the metalanguage of description and analysis, and this means, among other things, that the term ‘metaphor’ itself cannot be taken for granted. As an artifact of a particular cultural tradition with its origins in classical Greek rhetoric, this word encapsulates a complex meaning which lacks precise equivalents in many, probably most, of the world’s languages.

Goddard (1997; 2004), it would be ethnocentric to uncritically adopt such a category as a starting point for cross-cultural comparison. This point is not necessarily affected by the fact that the term ‘metaphor’ can be given various technical or theory internal meanings. What really matters is whether our theoretical starting points can be freed of the interpretive ‘spin’ which comes from their being grounded in culture-specific categories, or, to put it another way, whether we understand what we are talking about well enough to translate it into terms which are transposable across linguistic and cultural boundaries, i.e., into simple and maximally culture neutral terms.

Consistent with this goal, this paper employs as an analytical tool the natural semantic metalanguage (NSM) originated by Anna Wierzbicka (Goddard, 1998a,b; Goddard and Wierzbicka, 1994, 2002; Wierzbicka, 1972, 1992, 1996a). This consists of a set of some 60 semantic primes (and their associated grammar) which research suggests are embodied as word-meanings in most, if not all, languages; for example, someone, something, say, do, want, think, because, not (the full list is given in Table 1). Numerous studies have shown that the mini-lexicon of semantic primes, despite its relatively small size, can be used to paraphrase the meanings of complex culture-specific words and grammatical constructions (as semantic explications) and to spell out culture-specific norms and assumptions (as cultural scripts).

Table 1
Semantic primes (after Goddard & Wierzbicka, 2002)

Substantives	I, YOU, SOMEONE (PERSON), SOMETHING (THING), PEOPLE, BODY
Relational substantives	KIND OF, PART OF
Determiners	THIS, THE SAME, OTHER (ELSE)
Quantifiers	ONE, TWO, ALL, MANY/MUCH, SOME
Attributes	BIG, SMALL, GOOD, BAD
Intensifier	VERY
Mental predicates	WANT, FEEL, THINK, KNOW, SEE, HEAR
Speech	SAY, WORDS, TRUE
Actions, events, movement	DO, HAPPEN, MOVE
Existence and possession	THERE IS, HAVE
Life and death	LIVE, DIE
Logical concepts	NOT, MAYBE, CAN, BECAUSE, IF
Time	WHEN (TIME), NOW, AFTER, BEFORE, A LONG TIME, A SHORT TIME, FOR SOME TIME, MOMENT
Space	WHERE (PLACE), HERE, ABOVE, BELOW, NEAR, FAR, INSIDE, SIDE, TOUCHING (CONTACT)
Augmentor	MORE
Similarity	LIKE (HOW, AS)

Conclusion

A tradition is a belief or behavior passed down within a group or society with symbolic meaning or special significance with origins in the past.. Have you ever heard someone say, "That's just semantics?" Basically, they're saying you're picking apart the meaning of a word to draw a different conclusion but it all means the same thing. It's possible the person saying, "It's just semantics," is wrong, though. The purpose of semantics is to propose exact meanings of words and phrases and remove confusion, which might lead the readers to believe a word has many possible meanings. It makes a relationship between a word and the sentence through their meanings. In linguistics, semantics is the subfield that is devoted to the study of meaning, as inherent at the levels of words, phrases, sentences, and larger units of discourse (termed texts, or narratives).

The study of semantics is also closely linked to the subjects of representation, reference, and denotation. There are general semantic clues. For example, when reading a story about cats, good readers develop the expectation that it will contain words associated with cats, such as tail, purr, and whiskers. Sentence context clues are more specific. The field of semantics has three basic concerns: the relations of words to the objects denoted by them, the relations of words to the interpreters of them, and, in symbolic logic, the formal relations of signs to one another (syntax). Semantics means the meaning and interpretation of words, signs, and sentence structure. Semantics can also refer to the branch of study within linguistics that deals with language and how we understand the meaning. Semantic relationships are the associations that there exist between the meanings of words (semantic relationships at word level), between the meanings of phrases, or between the meanings of sentences (semantic relationships at the phrase or sentence level). Following is a description of such relationships.

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