

## INTERCULTURALITY AND ITS LINGUISTIC CONSIDERATION: THREE PARADIGMS

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**ABSTRACT:** This article is based on the understanding that language is highly complex and has a cognitive, cultural, and formal component. Within this framework, the focus is on the network of relationships regulated by multiple perspectives between culture and language (both as system and as usage), particularly considering the multifaceted term “interculturality”. First, in order to establish a common ground, I provide an overview of the different concepts of the interaction between language and culture in the linguistic research discourse. Furthermore, an overview of the various culture-sensitive linguistic analytical approaches will be developed. In the main body, three recent paradigms, each of different provenance, will be critically presented and compared regarding their content-related concept and their performance potential. These are (a) Russian and post-Soviet “Linguoculturology” (LC), (b) Anglophone “Cultural Linguistics” (CL), and (c) “Intercultural Linguistics” (IL), primarily originating in German Studies with a particular focus on multilingualism. It becomes apparent that LC investigates the influence of language on culture, whereas CL aims its attention at the influence of culture on language, while in IL, multi-culturality as well as inter- and transculturality are the focal point. The presented paradigms differ significantly with regard to their respective underlying understanding of culture and their disciplinary orientation: LC and CL exhibit a distinctive cognitive orientation, whereas IL is more based on Contrastive Linguistics and Cultural Studies. The conducted analysis gives evidence of the isolated development of all three schools of thought, especially LC and CL, despite their almost identical research objectives.

**KEYWORDS:** Interculturality, Linguoculturology, Cultural Linguistics, Intercultural Linguistics, language and culture, cultural conceptualisations, culturally sensitive models

### 1 Introduction<sup>1</sup>

Especially within the context of the ongoing process of globalization and migration, keywords such as *mobility*, *connection*, *transfer*, *translation*, *networks*, *interconnection*, *diversity*, and *difference* have increasingly received attention from the general public. Concomitantly, linguistics has, in recent years, gradually adopted a more analytical angle towards culture and interculturality in their sense as processes and perspectives, as well as for cultural inter- and exchange relations, leading to a certain relativization of the former extensive period of the “expulsion of culture from language”,<sup>2</sup> as described by Ehlich (2006). Based on the underlying idea of a strong reciprocal relationship between culture and language, language is thereby understood both as a means of communication, and as a medium for describing and interpreting reality. After all, language serves as a tool for transferring social and cultural traditions, rules, collective values, both oral and written. With regard to the evolution of *Homo sapiens*, the interrelation between language, culture, and cognition was of central importance. From a neurocognitive perspective, language is an inherently human phenomenon combining nature and culture within complex neural structures and processes, profoundly affected by the surrounding cultural setting (cf. Ribes-Iñesta, 2020, p. 95). As recent studies have shown, cultural development even seems to have a greater influence on language development than universal rules of language processing, as is evident, inter alia, in the grammar and vocabulary of a speaker, through which the culture of the speaker is reflected. Thus, as one of the most essential tools for expressing and understanding, language forms an integral part of our identity. Language always possesses a cultural factor, but with a cognitive base.

### 2 Context and objectives

The present article thus acts under the assumption that language is highly complex and consists of cognitive, cultural, and formal elements. Within this framework, the network of relationships between culture, language, and communicative behaviour operating under multiple perspectives will be explored, with a particular focus on the complex phenomenon of interculturality. This immense complexity as well as the obscurity and ambiguity of both ‘language’ and ‘culture’ are part of the reason for a marked lack of an

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<sup>2</sup> All translations of non-English quotations are provided by the author.

international broadly established and widely accepted culturally sensitive subdiscipline dedicated to questions of language and culture (cf. Sharifian, 2015, p. 3).<sup>3</sup>

In this context, the central aim of this article is a systematic insight into the complex interrelation between language, culture, interculturality, and communicative interaction, as well as their linguistic capture, against the backdrop of the heuristic intent of organising and deepening knowledge and research, by means of selected paradigms<sup>4</sup>. A typology of the conceptualisations of the interrelation between language and culture is presented, based on the review of existing literature and significant findings. Then, from the variety of relevant culturally sensitive paradigms, a presentation and critical discussion of three recent fields of research, each of different provenance, with regard to their content-related concept and their performance potential will be given. Essential aspects of the following culture-sensitive approaches will be examined:

- “Linguoculturology,”<sup>5</sup> a concept originating in Russian and post-Soviet linguistics,
- “Cultural Linguistics”, a concept coming from (mainly) the Anglophone world,
- “Intercultural Linguistics”, (mainly) originating in German Studies, focusing specifically on multilingualism.

### 3. Typology for capturing the interrelation of language and culture

Language and culture exhibit multiple parallel characteristics, as both are a system of signs that is (a) exclusively human, (b) carrying meaning, and (c) group cohesive. The mutual interaction between the two – often in conjunction with thought – operates as an object of reflection in various research contexts, whereas the point of view, the emphasis, the interest in knowledge, and the methods for analysis differ, which will be illustrated below.

Multiple conceptual models have risen from the discussion about the interplay of language and culture within the international academic discourse, for which I have developed the following classification:

(1) No connection exists between the two, see the reference of Balázs/Takács (2009, p. 39) to Wardhaugh.

(2) Language has an impact on culture. To this belongs, *inter alia*, the hypothesis of linguistic relativity (also known as the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis), a principle which suggests that the structure of a speakers’ language system has a strong influence on their worldview, thus the individual perception is assumed to vary depending on a speakers’ native language. Another example is the conceptualisation of Weisgerber (1971), where language represents an “interworld” (in the original: *Zwischenwelt*) between reality and consciousness, see Balázs/Takács (2009, p. 39) and Гусева/Ольшанский (2018, p. 323).

(3) Language equals culture. This constellation can be found when language loses its purely encoding character and turns to aesthetics, social aspects, and playfulness, as for instance in phraseology, paroemiology, the use of metaphors, communicative routines, and so on.

(4) Bidirectional interlinking: Here, a reciprocal and symmetric relation of language and culture is presupposed. In that sense, language functions as an element of culture, as central tool of its acquisition; language is requirement, product, and mediator of culture. At the same time, “culture is embedded in language, as culture as a whole is anchored in written texts”, see Гусева/Ольшанский (2018, p. 323).

(5) Culture has an impact on and is reflected in language. For this approach, a unidirectional influence of culture on language is presupposed, “as with a change of reality, national-cultural stereotypes and the language itself are also changed,” see Гусева/Ольшанский (2018, p. 323), as well as Balázs/Takács (2009, p. 39); this relation refers to all culture-specific, marked occurrences of language, such as the concept of *hotspots* and *hotwords* by Agar (1994, p. 99–100) and Heringer (2017, p. 165–188).

(6) Within more recent research work, symbiotic concepts can already be found, which presuppose that language and culture can not be understood as two independent, separate and

<sup>3</sup> Another reason may be found in the fact that, while linguists often preferably focus on the “representationalism” of language, the research field of “language and culture” mainly deals with questions of philosophy (of language).

<sup>4</sup> In this context and in the present paper, the term “paradigm” will be used in its pre-explicative sense, rather than following the understanding according to Kuhn (1970).

<sup>5</sup> This will be explained in more detail, as it is scarcely known outside of Soviet-Russian influenced academic culture.

respectively homogeneous entities. Günthner/Linke (2006, p. 19), for example, emphasize: “Culture is not an ‘other’ that is grafted onto the language, or rather onto the interaction process, instead it is a genuine factor of every human interaction, even of every linguistic utterance. On the other hand, language in this sense is at the same time both a domain as well as a significant medium of the ‘production’, the creation of culture”.

#### 4 Current linguistic approaches

##### 4.1 Diversity of concepts

Notwithstanding the lack of a full-fledged culture-centric linguistic branch lamented in section 2, certain questions regarding the culturality of language and the linguistic character of culture are of concern to several linguistic research fields. Some contributions or, in most cases, merely programmatic statements or prospective ideas within the scope of cultural studies-based linguistics produce, inter alia, the following concepts:

- (1) Anthropological Linguistics/Linguistic Anthropology (i.e., W. A. Foley),<sup>6</sup>
- (2) Colonial Linguistics (J. J. Errington),
- (3) Cultural and Culture Analytic Linguistics (J. Schröter),
- (4) Cultural-Historical Linguistics (P. E. Jones),
- (5) Cultural-Contrastive Linguistics (H. Kniffka),
- (6) Cultural Linguistics (F. Sharifian),
- (7) Culture-Sensitive Linguistics (W. Czachur),
- (8) Ecolinguistics (A. Stibbe),
- (9) Ethnolinguistics (J. Bartmiński),
- (10) Ethnopsycholinguistics (J. Sorokin),
- (11) Intercultural Philology (V. Smailagić)
- (12) Inter-/Transcultural Linguistics (see section 4.4),
- (13) *Kulturtheoretische Linguistik* [‘Culture-Theoretical Linguistics’] (R. Niemann),
- (14) *Kulturlinguistik* [‘Culture Linguistics’] (S. Bonacchi),
- (15) *Kulturwissenschaftliche Linguistik* [‘Cultural Studies Linguistics’] (H. Kuße),
- (16) Linguistic Cultural Analysis (N. Bubenhofer/Y. Ilg/J. Scharloth),
- (17) Linguoculturology (N. F. Alefirenko),
- (18) *Medienkulturlinguistik* [‘Media Cultural Linguistics’] (M. Klemm/S. Michel),
- (19) Migration Linguistics (A. M. Borlongan), and
- (20) Xenolinguistics (D. Slattery).

In the following, the approaches referred to in (6), (12), and (17), which each stem from quite different traditions of thought and research cultures, will be exemplified.

##### 4.2 Linguoculturology (LC)

###### 4.2.1 Genesis and Contents

The fundamentally Humboldtian Linguoculturology (originally: *лингвокультурология*) has constituted itself in Russia during the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century<sup>7</sup> and deals with the basic theoretical study of the interrelation between language and culture, while aspiring to lift this field of research to a new paradigmatic basis. With regard to its approach, LC is to be classified as type (2) of the typology in section 3. A first source of inspiration has been the so-called “страноведение” [‘Regional Studies’], which was emerging (primarily in Germany) during the 1920s and 1930s, and was originally developed as a school and teaching subject to satisfy the need for foreign language teaching, in which the “страна” [‘country’] serves as a basic category. From this subject, the “Linguo-Regional Studies” (originally: *лингвострановедение*) have emerged in the Soviet Union during the 1970s and 1980s in the context of ‘Russian as a foreign language’. The intention was to integrate regional studies in language teaching and to deduce culture through and within language, thus promoting processes of cultural understanding

<sup>6</sup> For reasons of space saving, the bibliographical details are omitted here and only the name of a typical representative or team of authors is given.

<sup>7</sup> The end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century seem to be characterized by a re-evaluation of anthropocentric research approaches: Cultural phenomena and processes were increasingly viewed and interpreted through a lens of the communicative human, and language is explained as a culturally constitutive resource.

and intercultural communication. The basis for orientation is a specific culture, while the objects are language units with “national-cultural” word semantics (*национально культурная семантика*) such as non-equivalent vocabulary (*безэквивалентная лексика*), “background lexis” (*фоновая лексика*), phraseology (*фразеология*), and “projective texts” (*проективные тексты*). The quite lively reception of Linguo-Regional Studies lead to the development of several linguistic subfields, such as Ethnopsycholinguistics and the theory of Intercultural Communication, which led to the establishment of LC as an independent discipline (c.f., inter alia, Алефиренко, 2020 and Евсюкова, Бутенко, 2022 for more detail).<sup>8</sup> Within the research literature, this academic orientation has multiple directions of conceptualisation, two of which are cited here as examples, with varying degrees of informativeness and comprehensibility. Воробёв (2008, с. 37) writes, for example: “LC is a complex academic discipline, which investigates the interplay between culture and language in their functioning and reflects this process as an integrated structure of entities within the unit of their linguistic and extralinguistic (cultural) content.” LC evidently distinguishes itself from other disciplines such as Ethnopsycholinguistics, Linguo-Regional Studies, Sociolinguistics, and Cognitive Linguistics by taking into account three components: (a) the holistic and theoretical-descriptive treatment of the system of cultural values and their objects, which are reflected in language, (b) the contrastive analysis of “linguoculturological spheres” of different languages and (c) the “correlation of language structure and thought pattern and perception of reality of the given people” (cf. Евсюкова, Бутенко 2022, p. 37). LC emphasises that language permeates culture, develops within culture, and expresses culture. Ultimately, language and culture merge together into a whole, which researchers name “linguoculture” (originally: *лингвокультура*) and view as the basis for LC. This, however, is not entirely new, as terms such as *linguaculture* (Friedrich, 1989, p. 307) or *languaculture* (Agar, 1994, p. 60; Risager, 2007, p. 170–173), which are meant to bridge the distance between language and culture, have been part of the international research discourse for quite some time.

The representatives of LC aim at portraying the ensemble of linguistic-cultural information through the form of so-called linguocultural fields, whose units are called “linguoculturemes” (originally: *лингвокультурема*) (Воробёв, 2008, p. 44-46). A linguocultureme connects (a) the form of the symbol, (b) its meaning, and (c) the “cultural information”, which accompany the symbol (the so-called circle of associations). Thus, according to linguoculturologists, orderliness, punctuality, and efficiency are categorized as typical characteristics of “German culture”, whereas, for example, *русская идея* (“Russian idea” as the total of terms which express the historical character and the particular calling, or rather, particular destiny of Russians) functions as a Russian cultural symbol. The content of LC primarily consists of the following structural components and observational perspectives:

(1) Capture of the “linguistic worldview” (*языковая картина мира*), in which linguistic-cultural information and cultural phenomena are reflected in the form of verbal expressions, especially through vocabulary.

(2) Identification of so-called precedent-related phenomena (*прецедентные феномены*) as a component of a “theory of precedents”. The basis of this theory are the “precedent-related texts”, which are relevant to the members of a culture regarding cognitive and emotional relationship and are of super-personal character, meaning that they are known by a broader environment and the speakers may access them at any time during their discourse.

(3) Description of the construct of “linguistic personality” (*языковая личность*), which refers to a three-stage complex of human competences and characteristics, on which the production of language and text depends. This production is, according to LC, characterized by the degree of complexity of the linguistic patterns, the depth and adequacy of the reflection of reality, as well as by a certain target orientation. Consequently, language personality describes a person that is able to produce and receive texts of different types, so basically every human.

(4) One of the main themes of LC – in combination with Russian concept- and worldview linguistics – is “linguocultural conceptology” (*лингвокультурная концептология*) with its not always clearly distinguishable constructs “concept”, “cultural concept”, “linguoconcept”, and “linguocultural concept”.<sup>9</sup> While LC views “linguoculture” as a whole, linguocultural conceptology investigates

<sup>8</sup> For example, Mizin and Korostenski (2019, p. 8), too, emphasize that LC has mainly emerged from Soviet Ethnolinguistics.

<sup>9</sup> “Concept” is to be understood as a knowledge unit rather than an information unit.

individual fragments of linguoculture, which represent the linguocultural concepts.<sup>10</sup> Overall, the concept – according to Тентимишова (2016) – constitutes a constructive term for the storing, processing, and accumulation of information of the linguistic world view.

(5) A terminological variant is the “cultural concept”.<sup>11</sup> It refers to “names for abstract terms, in which the cultural information settles deeply within the terminological core. The key concepts of culture are core or fundamental units of the world view, which carry an existential meaning both for the individual language personality as well as for the complete linguocultural collective” (Самситова, 2011, с. 1046), for example abstract nouns such as *зпex* (‘sin’) or *родина* (‘homeland’), and so forth. To summarize: The cultural concept includes, according to Степанов (2004, p. 40 and 42), in addition to cultural and encyclopedic knowledge, also individual experiences. Moreover, cultural concepts are “cultural genes that belong to the genotype of culture” (Алефиренко, 2013, p. 173) and are genuinely anthropocentric, thus characterized by cultural connotations.

(6) The “linguoconcept” is a unit of culture or the collective, which is set in the consciousness and the language of the individual. Linguoconcepts represent idealisations and are understood as units of universal content-related codes, which are based on individual sensory images. The meaning of lexemes, syntactic schemata, and texts are the source of knowledge of the content of specific concepts.<sup>12</sup> In contrast to the cultural concept, the linguoconcept is connected to language to a greater extent and is more strongly reflected in language. Пташкин (2014) mentions the examples of *soul* and *conscience*).

(7) Lastly, the “linguocultural concept” is, according to Слышкин (2004, с. 21), a “conditional mental unit that is targeted on a complex study of language, consciousness, and culture”. A very broad definition can be found in Воркачѣв (2001, p. 70 and 18): “A unit of the collective knowledge that has a linguistic expression and is characterized by ethnocultural specifics” and serves as an alternative concept for “linguocultureme” and “semantic constant”.<sup>13</sup>

(8) On a higher hierarchical level, the construct of “concept sphere” was developed, which presumably serves as the main objective of the cognitive-oriented LC. The term functions as analogy to *noosphere* and *biosphere* and is supposed to represent the entirety of concepts.

(9) Moreover, the key areas also include, according to Зеленская/Грушевская/Фанян (2007, p. 23), the theory and history of “slovesnost” (‘word-art’, ‘literature’, originally: *словесность*). The term is declared as a unique phenomenon of the Russian humanistic system of education and the Russian culture.<sup>14</sup>

The literature concerning LC extensively discusses its relation to Cognitive Linguistics and demonstrates, next to a few overlaps, various differences. However, with regard to the more recent research approaches of Cognitive Linguistics, it can be said that the similarities dominate, as this field of research ultimately also deals with shared knowledge (“shared” through culture).<sup>15</sup> A certain difference, however, seems to be that LC takes the culture as a starting point to get to the individual consciousness (with a focus on traces of culture in linguistic units), whereas in the approach of Cognitive Linguistics, the individual consciousness leads to the culture; the point of origin is human thinking, which leads to language.

#### 4.2.2 Resulting concepts: “contrastive Linguoculturology” and “Interlinguoculturology”

<sup>10</sup> This linguoconceptology ultimately represents a continuation and advancement of the classic structural and functional semantics, enriched by data from cultural studies, “cognitology”, sociology, history, and other related disciplines, which primarily aims at the investigation of “national-cultural” features of units of the mental lexicon (hence the concepts) (cf. Воркачѣв, 2014, p. 12).

<sup>11</sup> Here, “linguoconcept” and “cultural concept” originate from different ontological areas.

<sup>12</sup> Concepts are represented through words, but the entirety of linguistic means does not provide a complete image of the concept; the word with its meaning can only represent a small part of the concept.

<sup>13</sup> The review of the literature shows that LC does not always apply a strictly distinguishable terminology: Linguoconcept and linguocultural concept are occasionally used synonymously. To sum up its contents, LC partly reconfigures the connection between linguistic and mental units: While, for example, cognitive linguistics utilizes a one-to-one assignment (one lexeme – one concept), LC does not operate with a definite relation, in other words, one (culturally marked) lexeme does not necessarily correspond to one linguoconcept.

<sup>14</sup> This, however, is easily disproved, as *slovesnost* can be found in multiple Slavic cultures (for example in the Czech and the Slovak culture).

<sup>15</sup> It should be noted that within Cognitive Linguistics “classic cognitivism” focuses rather on the universality of cognition, while in “enactive cognitivism” (cf. Sharifian, 2017, p. 9), culture is taken into greater consideration.

Донец (2012, p. 215) programmatically outlines a “contrastive Linguoculturology”, which is supposed to integrate the findings of the fields it is built on, namely disciplinary sources of Contrastive Linguistics and Linguo-Regional Studies,<sup>16</sup> but also those of the theory of translation and the later works by Russian Ethnopsycholinguistics. Worth considering as objects of knowledge are mainly the discrepancies between languages which complicate foreign language learning, translation, or intercultural communication. Its basic method is, according to Донец (2012, p. 215), contrastive analysis and its binary basic unit, contrast, which can be visualized as follows:  $\text{contrast}_{X \leftrightarrow Y} = \text{speciality}_X + \text{lacuna}_Y$ , whereas “speciality” represents a specific unit of language<sub>X</sub> compared with language<sub>Y</sub> and “lacuna” the complete or partial lack of this element in the language<sub>Y</sub>.

Somewhat similar to this is “Interlinguoculturology” (originally: *интерлингвокультурология*) proposed by Кабакчи/Белоглазова (2012, p. 49),<sup>17</sup> which deals with the exploration of the contact between two languages and cultures and investigates the “problem of the secondary cultural orientation of language which refers to the area of a foreign-language culture” (Кабакчи/Белоглазова, 2012, p. 6). In simpler terms, Interlinguoculturology examines the ways in which a culture is represented through a foreign language. What is meant by “cultural orientation of language” (Кабакчи/Белоглазова, 2012, p. 23) is the adaptation of the verbal arsenal of the language to the features of the surrounding culture. Кабакчи/Белоглазова (2012, p. 5 and 139–141) state that the description of Russian culture through “secondary languages” represents a neuralgic point, as for example the graphic reproduction of Russianisms in Latin characters.<sup>18</sup> They note that the own native language, or at least a known foreign language, is utilized when becoming familiar with a new culture. This issue can be deduced from the relation between language and culture: On the one hand, language is historically oriented to its own (internal) culture, on the other hand, it is utilized as a universal means of communication for the complete multicultural world of heteroglossic cultures. Every natural language functions for its carrier as a key to the surrounding culture, with which every language, although to varying extent, orients and adapts itself to its surrounding cultural area. Therefore, when describing another culture, it is necessary to adjust the vocabulary, which is oriented towards its own (internal) culture, to the foreign (external) culture.<sup>19</sup> Consequently, the overall impression arises that for the discipline intended by Кабакчи/Белоглазова (2012), they have developed a rather narrow thematic portfolio.

#### 4.2.3 Linguoculturology under scrutiny

LC has, so to say, arisen as a result of the practice of teaching. While it is currently indubitably ranked among the leading research areas in Russia and in some post-Soviet countries (as well as some Slavists abroad), it is, at the same time, characterized by an indisputable lack of international resonance. Regarding the content-related structuring, it can be noted that many aspects of LC are questionable. The structure of nomination alone is unsuitably chosen, as in the case of the compound noun LC solely the modifier indicates its connection to linguistics (namely *Linguo-*), the root word *culturology*, however, suggests an orientation towards Cultural Studies, thus not towards Linguistics. What stands out upon further inspection, is an insufficient awareness of differentiation, premature generalisations, and a certain inflexibility, for example when within LC it is presupposed without reflection that all members of a given culture think, act, and communicate absolutely identically and that cultures are stable and practically invariable. Moreover, LC regularly utilizes descriptions such as “national” connotations or “national” components of meaning. This, however, is not unproblematic, particularly as the production of meaning is primarily dependent on cultural factors (instead of “national”, in whichever sense).<sup>20</sup> Additionally, according to current socio- and variational linguistics, some languages, such as German, are understood to be a pluricentric or plurinational language, so that, for example, a Russian-German contrastive consideration of “national” components of meaning would be difficult in any case considering the heterogeneity of the

<sup>16</sup> Thus, contrastive LC can be understood as a successive discipline of Linguo-Regional Studies.

<sup>17</sup> This discipline exhibits similarities, inter alia, with Intercultural Communication, Linguoculturology, Translation Studies, Lexicology, Lexicography, and Contact Linguistics (cf. Кабакчи/Белоглазова, 2012, p. 49).

<sup>18</sup> Кабакчи/Белоглазова (2012, p. 150, 233) criticize the heterogeneous spelling variants and see the solution as implementing a “Latin stand-in alphabet of the Russian language” (*вспомогательный латинский алфавит русского языка, ВЛАРЯ*), with which a homogeneous reproduction would be ensured.

<sup>19</sup> Moreover, Кабакчи/Белоглазова (2012) mainly deal with features of the English-language description of the Russian culture.

<sup>20</sup> Besides, “national” would be summarized under the term of “culture” anyhow.

German language. What is to be further noted is that LC empirically only deals with a few “linguocultures”.<sup>21</sup> To conclude, LC is – despite some, for example, practical teaching potentials – neither precisely defined nor systematically constructed.

### 4.3 Cultural Linguistics (CL)

#### 4.3.1 Background and development

Although *Cultural Linguistics*<sup>22</sup> as a distinct research area within linguistics seems relatively new, a number of scholars – such as M. Bloch, R. Lakoff, R.M. Keesing and R. You – have been calling for it directly or indirectly for some time, as Michel (2006, p. 13) recognized. With regard to its content, Ferraro (2008, p. 122) still formulates rather unspecifically when he writes: The “relationship between language and culture [...] is the subject matter of **cultural linguistics**” [emphasis in original]. The special linguistic branch of CL primarily originates in the Anglophone world, although a few contributions stem from other academic cultures, which in turn mainly refer to English publications. For example, Kövecses (2012, p. 16), a Hungarian expert on English studies, presumes that Cognitive Linguistics as a method has proven multiple times that it is more effective than other linguistic approaches with regard to the study of cultural entities and processes and presents the following definition: “Cultural Linguistics is the study of how human communities make the world around them meaningful”. For this meaning making, or rather this meaning construction, mental and cognitive processes are carried out, which include, among others, categorization, the formation of conceptual frames, and the construction of mental spaces in ongoing discourse. Moreover, within and between these frames, processes such as the establishment of correspondences, combination, fusion, or blending take place. According to Kövecses (2012, p. 16), this approach allows for the development of a cognitive cultural theory.<sup>23</sup> The actual pioneer of CL was the Australian based linguist of Iranian descent, Sharifian, who passed away prematurely in 2020. Sharifian (2015, p. 473) postulated a multidisciplinary origin for this linguistic initiative. Within the typological system presented in section 3, CL can probably best be assigned to type (5) and mainly deals with the examination of the relations between language and cultural perception. Thereby, its main focus is on the interplay between language, culture, and conceptualisation. More specifically, CL studies conceptualisations,<sup>24</sup> which have a cultural background and are encoded and communicated through constituents of human language (Sharifian, 2015, p. 473). Thus, the central question is how cultural conceptualisations encoded in language relate to all aspects of human life – from emotions and embodiments through kinship, religion, marriage, and politics to the understanding of life and death. The field of research is especially based on Cognitive Linguistics, but also on complexity science and distributed cognition,<sup>25</sup> as well as anthropology, which is why the emphasis is on the explanation

<sup>21</sup> The international – even Russian-speaking – literature sporadically offers negative evaluations: Павлова (2015, p. 206) criticizes the lack of methods and accuses LC of the fact that “in the last twenty years, it produced at least one generation of linguists that do not have a clear idea of what scientific principles and methods are” (2015, p. 218). Moreover, she even charges LC with “nationalism” as well as with “chauvinism of a great power” (2015, p. 219) and concludes the following: “The superficiality, the disregard of every standard of research work, the primitiveness, the urge for validation, the tendentiousness, the claim to primacy of the ‘own’ over the ‘foreign’ – all this is involved in Linguoculturology in its current hypostasis” (Павлова, 2015, p. 218-219). The assessment by Березович (2018, p. 132-135) is similarly critical, branding Linguoculturology as a pseudoscience and noting in particular, among many other things, the use of false semantic theories.

<sup>22</sup> Peeters (2016, p. 138-139) proposes an odd differentiation between *cultural linguistics* (in lower case, for the description of the broad field of research) and CULTURAL LINGUISTICS (in small capitals, for the description of a narrow, defined, and theoretic framework within this field of research). Similarly, Sharifian (2017, p. 2) seems to differentiate between the broad field of research and the more narrow, theoretic framework: “I use the term Cultural Linguistics, written with upper case initials, to refer to a recently developed discipline with multidisciplinary origins that explores the relationship between language and cultural conceptualisations”. Palmer (1999, 2015), however, consistently writes the name of the discipline in lower case.

<sup>23</sup> Głaz (2017, p. 44-45) compares “Polish cultural linguistics” with “Western-style Cultural Linguistics” and finds three major differences, one of which is capitalisation, as has been discussed before, thus only the remaining two are presented here: First, the understanding of culture differs between the two approaches: While the Polish approach mainly talks about values, Western CL follows a more cognitive approach. The second difference lies in the object of description, as Polish cultural linguistics focus on the language most accessible to them, Polish, whereas Western CL primarily investigates languages such as Navajo or Tagalog, which are distant from the Western languages.

<sup>24</sup> Conceptualisation describes the process, while conceptualisations are the results.

<sup>25</sup> Distributed Cognition: The elements of the cultural cognition of a cultural group are not evenly distributed among the speakers within this group. Thus, cultural cognition is a form of heterogeneous distributed cognition,

of meaning as conceptualisation. CL has originally emerged as the result of an attempt to integrate Cognitive Linguistics into existing approaches of linguistic anthropology – Boasian linguistics, Ethnosemantics, and Ethnography of speaking. Through this synthesis of disciplines, CL was ultimately formed, as Palmer (1999, p. 4-5) found. Even though these three sub-disciplines partly emphasise different features or are based on differing basic theoretic assumptions, they share – according to Kumoll (2005, p. 13) – a specific interest in the native’s point of view (i. e. the culture of a certain group is always looked at through a local lens, thus slowly allowing for the adoption of an ‘insider’ perspective) on the one hand, while on the other hand taking into consideration the socio-cultural base of language (Palmer, 1999, p. 26).

#### 4.3.2 Orientation and contents

A particularly large number of parallels can be found with Ethnolinguistics (and partly also with Ethnosemantics), as CL was, as Mizin and Korostenski (2019, p. 7) emphasize in regard to its origin, devised on basic ideas of American Ethnolinguistics; Lamberghini-West (2013, p. 514) even considers CL and Ethnolinguistics to be synonyms. Palmer (2015, p. 22), however, differentiates between the two and highlights several differences: In CL, the main focus of interest is more on the objective and empirical study of grammatical constructions and the influence culturally shaped value-laden imagery has on them. Meanwhile, according to Palmer (2015, p. 22), at the center of Ethnolinguistics (e.g., the Ethnolinguistic School of Lublin) is a more humanistic approach to the study of (cultural) values of a speaker community. These values are implied in the use of meaningful words or phrases (Palmer, 2015, p. 22). Both disciplines, Ethnolinguistics and CL, are (despite differing focuses) a part of the bigger field of research of cultural linguistics – in lower case, see Peeters (2016, p. 138-139) – and offer equally useful methods to investigate the relation between language and culture. With regard to Palmers (2015, p. 22) differentiation, it is notable that the term *imagery* is used, instead of *cultural conceptualisations* (as done by Sharifian). Although the term *imagery* may be argued to be analogous to Sharifians *cultural conceptualisations* (imagery also describes “conceptual units”, as for example the cultural category; Sharifian, 2015, p. 474), Sharifian decided against the continued use of Palmers (1996) terms including the corresponding analytical tools and thus essentially created the field of the new CL (cf. Peeters, 2016, p. 140-141). The theoretic framework of CL is, according to Sharifian (2015, p. 476; 2017, p. 3), the cultural cognition. Conceptualisation, which is understood to be at the core, often serves as a hyperonym for essential cognitive processes that help individuals structure and understand the world, such as schematization or categorization (Sharifian, 2011, p. 5; 2015, p. 477). Out of these cognitive procedures and interactions within the group, various cognitive “products” arise. Examples for these products are *cultural schemata*, for example the notion of *privacy* or *marriage*, thus describing the cultural construction of knowledge that creates a network of concepts (Sharifian, 2015, p. 479-480). As well as the *cultural category*, for example “apple” – also in the sense of prototype semantics – based on the high familiarity with this fruit as a prototypical fruit within English-speaking regions, whereas in other cultures other types of fruit would be considered prototypical, see Sharifian (2015, p. 480-81)<sup>26</sup>. Both are summarized by Sharifian (2011, p. 5) under the term *cultural conceptualisations*, which represent cognitive systems on the group level, thus within one cultural collective, that are developed through interaction between members of a group. These are continuously renegotiated over the course of generations (Sharifian, 2011, p. 5). While conceptualisations arise through an individual cognitive process, they are, at the same time, externalized through language<sup>27</sup> as *cultural cognitions* and then disseminated within the group. A cultural collective not only emerges through geographical proximity, but also through a shared conceptual world view and the mutual participation of its members in these world views. CL assumes that cultural conceptualisations within a group are not identical for each speaker or equally shared, but rather – as Sharifian (2015, p. 477) explains – “heterogeneously distributed”. To what extent a person is familiar with the cultural conceptualisations of a group simultaneously determines to what

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wherein the speakers exhibit variations and differences between their approach to and their reception of the cultural cognition of the group. Cultural cognition is dynamic and changes over generations and through the contact between different language and culture groups (Sharifian, 2017, p. 3).

<sup>26</sup> With the terms “cultural schema”, “cultural categories”, and “cultural metaphors”, the relationship between language and cultural conceptualisations can be analysed (Sharifian, 2017, p. 7). *Cultural schemata* represent norms, rules, certain beliefs and expectations of specific behaviours, as well as values which are connected to experiences. *Cultural metaphors* are conceptualisations across multiple domains, which are embedded within cultural traditions, i.e., world views, spiritual beliefs, or folk medicine. *Cultural categories* are culturally constructed categories, i.e., meanings of colours, emotions, description of kinship, events, and descriptions of food, which are primarily reflected in the lexicon of this language (Sharifian, 2017, p. 7).

<sup>27</sup> Cultural conceptualisations, however, are not exclusively externalized through language, as Sharifian (2017, p. 6) explains, but may also become visible through art, literature, emotions, or rituals.



extent the person is seen as an insider to the group (cf. Sharifian, 2011, p. 4). In intercultural discursive encounters, different cultural schemata may lead to communicative misunderstandings influenced by culture if the given schema exists, for example, only in one culture or it carries different meanings in both cultures (Wolf, 2015, p. 451-452).

The number of empirical in-depth studies is rising, see for example the anthology by Sadeghpour/Sharifian (2021), which looks at the notion of “World Englishes” through the lens of CL, i.e. taking on the concepts of cultural cognition and conceptualisations. The increasing rootedness of this approach also becomes evident, for example, in the fact that the Springer publishing company established a specific book series titled “Cultural Linguistics” in 2018. New publications, e.g. Mundt/Peters (2021, p. 14), also mention the extension of cultural linguistics into neighbouring disciplines, for example intercultural communication and language teaching.

#### 4.3.3 Overall Conclusion

An overarching issue of CL is the development of an understanding of interrelations between concrete cultural conceptualisations (schemata, etc.) and aspects of a language system (e.g., morphosyntax). In this context, language and culture are understood as complex adaptive systems with high dynamics and plasticity. In accordance with Sharifian (2017), their analytical setting may thus be summarized in the sense that cultural cognition builds the framework for cultural conceptualisations (with its components *cultural schemata*, *cultural categories*, and *cultural metaphors*), which are themselves interacting with the language system (morphosyntax, semantics/pragmatics, and discourse). CL may offer a way out of the abstract construct of “culture” by not being based on this (partly) vague concept, in comparison to other traditional approaches. Thus, the goal is not to analyse speakers and their linguistic behaviour and then assign them to a culture (or vice versa). Instead, CL focuses on the systematic analysis of concrete cultural conceptualisations with the help of analytical tools (as described above), the “products” of conceptualisation (cultural schema, cultural category, also: cultural metaphor).<sup>28</sup> Precisely these analytical tools, according to Palmer/Sharifian (2007, p. 7) may be implemented within the framework of applied Cultural Linguistics, for example for translations, first and second language teaching, or intercultural communication. CL thus not only offers a theoretical framework (cultural cognition), but also an analytical framework (analysis of cultural conceptualisation through analytical tools), see Sharifian (2017, p. 2).

#### 4.4 Aspects of Inter-/Transcultural Linguistics

Intercultural Linguistics as a research field can be understood in at least two ways: (1) with a focus on intercultural aspects of language and communicative interaction, and (2) with a focus on the interculturality of linguistics. Raster (2002, 2008), for example, concentrates more on the latter perspective. The perspective described by (1) is pursued, particularly in previous works of the author of the present paper. The approach of ‘Intercultural Linguistics’ and its subtype ‘Transcultural Linguistics’ (subsequently both: IL), which will be presented here, specifically operates in multilingual constellations and takes into account the heterogeneity as well as the fluidity and hybridity of culture and language. IL utilizes the genuine construction of culture as experience of difference (in the spirit of Lindner, 2002, p. 90-91 and Schroer, 2010, p. 199).<sup>29</sup> Localization and possible paths of IL will be discussed in the following.<sup>30</sup> IL can most fittingly be categorized under type (6) in the typology presented in section 3.

The main intention of IL is firstly the more detailed reflection of the cultural conditioning of linguistic activity on a metalevel. A second objective is to consider the cultural phenomenon of language – with regard to system, use, and function – from an “intra-cultural” and an “extra-cultural” perspective on the object level as well as to identify the diversity of their interrelations as an asset. Thus, IL is a research orientation dedicated to the cultural conditioning of language and communication that can be practised by linguists of various research fields. It is mainly focused on the phenomenon of the contrast between language and culture as well as on the phenomenon of social contact and the culturally oriented interaction of two or more natural individual languages (including their real-life constellations of overlapping), along with the

<sup>28</sup> More broadly speaking, through these viewing tools, features of human language in relation to culturally constructed conceptualisations can be investigated (Sharifian, 2015, p. 477).

<sup>29</sup> With the words of the sociologist Schroer (2010, p. 199): “Culture is aimed at the constant creation of differences”.

<sup>30</sup> The horizons and contours as well as the extensional and intensional determination of IL have already been presented in detail in earlier publications, therefore only their most essential aspects are summarized here.

resulting theoretical and practical processes. Consequently, IL is a multi-component cluster around a combination of investigations concerning, on the one hand Systemic Linguistics, and on the other hand Psycho-, Socio-, Pragma-, and Variational Linguistics. It also includes language policy, which is concerned, inter alia, with multilingualism, contrast, contact, conflict of languages and cultures, cross-cultural communication in the broadest sense, and linguistic-communicative dealings with foreignness and otherness. IL examines everything that might be interesting from a linguistic perspective with regard to the differences, encounter, relation, and reception of cultures. Therefore, IL is both an observation of language (in this sense it virtually encompasses the whole of linguistics) and a specific linguistic sub-discipline. The central research dimensions of IL can, in accordance with Raster (2002, p. 14-15), be constructed as follows: (a) epistemic interest “language from the internal perspective”, (b) epistemic interest “language from the external perspective”, (c) epistemic interest “linguistics from the internal perspective”, and (d) epistemic interest “linguistics from the external perspective”. The most suitable discipline or subject areas for an intercultural-linguistic approach are especially facets of Semiotics, Semantics, Pragmatics, Communication Theory, Sociolinguistics, Discourse Analysis, Metaphor Research, Phraseology, Translation Studies, Foreignness Research and Mentality Research. IL has not yet reached a wide prevalence within the international academic community. It can rather be said that the – not very numerous – publications which mention IL in their title are in reality often about something else, like for example the contributions by Kiklewicz (2011, 2014), which discuss subaspects of Intercultural Communication and not of IL. As with any attempt at innovation, the question of the newness, added value, and of the distinction from existing models poses a dilemma. At this point, this question will be reflected upon only very briefly and only with regard to the “Cultural Studies Linguistics” – interested in communication concepts and dominantly discourse-sensitive – which is not discussed in detail in this article: The latter approach (cf. Kuße, 2011, p. 119) is, in contrast to IL, primarily characterized through an intra-cultural orientation and its research motivation focuses on questions concerning ethno-cultural features and the internal discursive differentiations of cultures.<sup>31</sup> IL does not claim the status of a “hyper-paradigm” for itself. Consequently, the aim is not to strive for a complete and finalized theory of IL, but instead – in accordance with a principle of order and interpretation – the identification, grouping, and usage of intersections of, firstly, linguistic tendencies (i.e., from structuralist to cognitive), and, secondly, sub-disciplines (i.e., from Lexicology to Pragmatics). IL, as it was sketched out in this article, is thus not (yet) to be understood as an autonomous research (sub-)discipline, but rather as a transdisciplinary research practice, for which not mainly the object of investigation, but rather the perspective and the epistemological interest in solving culturally relevant problems are constitutive. It is often not primarily a matter of – as Strunk (2000, p. 120) puts it – “reinventing something, as everything is existing and much more. What matters is to connect one with the other and to weave a bond which connects the individual elements.” Recent illustrative examples for empirical research of IL are the projects “Ungarndeutsches Zweisprachigkeits- und Sprachkontaktkorpus” [‘Hungarian-German bilingualism and language contact corpus’] (for more details, see [www.uzsk.de](http://www.uzsk.de)), and “Deutsche Mediensprache im Ausland – am Beispiel der deutschen Minderheitenpresse in Mittel- und Osteuropa” [‘German media language abroad – through the example of the German minority press in Central and Eastern Europe’] (cf. [www.pressesprache.de](http://www.pressesprache.de)). By now, there are certain further developments – or rather practical applications – of the knowledge culture of IL: For example, Künkel (2021) appeared with a monograph about “Intercultural and Cultural Studies Linguistics” (originally: *Kulturwissenschaftlich-interkulturelle Linguistik*).<sup>32</sup> This publication investigates facets of the interrelation between language and culture specifically in communication and on this basis develops an intercultural approach to communication. Since this book aims at forming a basis for the elaboration of new perspectives in cultural and intercultural foreign language teaching, application-related (didactic) aspects play a central role. Consequently, the volume could just as well have been called cultural and intercultural foreign language teaching.

## 5 Conclusion

This focused comparative analytical overview of research standpoints has given evidence to the inseparability of the closely cooperating entities language and culture through several points in research. Furthermore, it was established that the discussed field of research is characterized by various initial dispositions and assumptions, theoretical bases, and inventories of methods. It is certain, however, that every field aims at the description of language as a cultural phenomenon and of culture as a linguistic phenomenon; LC, as mentioned in 4.2.1, predominantly investigates the impact of language on culture,

<sup>31</sup> Cf. the *native’s point of view* by Kumoll (2005, p. 13).

<sup>32</sup> This term originally comes from Schiewer (2010, p. 110).

whereas CL, as presented in 4.3, primarily considers the influence of culture on language. By comparison, as discussed in 4.4, IL puts multiculturalism as well as inter- and transculturalism in the center of its understanding of the terms and can thus not be easily categorized into the typology in section 3, at most it approximates type (6), as mentioned earlier. Moreover, especially the interdisciplinary orientation, the integrative point of view, and of course the linguistic object area are common to all three approaches. The respective fundamental concepts of culture, meanwhile, appear to differ substantially: While CL and particularly IL decidedly work with an understanding of culture and language that is dynamic and semiotic-constructivist, publications regarding LC mostly express a static and essentialist-normative idea of culture and language.<sup>33</sup> The disciplinary position and the content-related disposition also differ considerably: LC and CL exhibit a prominent cognitive orientation, whereas IL is rather built on foundations related to Contrastive Linguistics and Cultural Studies. In general, none of the exemplified approaches can yet be set up as a truly complete and fully developed theoretical matrix and reach a largely theoretical coherence. All in all, LC and CL are closest to each other. In both approaches, the problem of conceptualisation (the culturally sensitive handling of the respective conceptual linguisticisation of experiences) is given much consideration – albeit with partly different model bases. The former predominantly draws from cognitivism influenced by the Anglosphere, whereas the latter is oriented towards Moscow conceptualism.<sup>34</sup> A considerable terminological confusion arises out of the fact that LC wrongly appears in some works as a synonym for Cultural Studies Linguistics (originally: *Kulturwissenschaftliche Linguistik*) (e.g., Nefedova, 2019, p. 121), while other publications view LC and cultural linguistics – and even Ethnolinguistics<sup>35</sup> – as practically identical (e.g., the publications referenced by Kiklewicz 2019, or Питерс 2017). Whereas in other works CL is understood as the English translational equivalent to Cultural Studies Linguistics (originally: *Kulturwissenschaftliche Linguistik*) (e.g., in Фаттахова, 2017, p. 276) or stands for LC (e.g., in Mirzababayeva, 2021).<sup>36</sup>

Moreover, it stands out that the individual schools of thought – for example LC and CL – are, to a large extent, developing separately, despite almost identical objectives of research as, inter alia, Mizin/Korostenski (2019, p. 11) found. While LC and CL exhibit “more differences rather than commonalities in terms of their methodological tools” (Mizin/Korostenski, 2019, p. 11), they overlap with regard to their goal, their interdisciplinarity, and their foundation in Ethnolinguistics. Interestingly, the representatives of the various accesses in the field of culturally sensitive linguistic thinking forego dialogue among themselves. Within the Western-influenced international research discourse, approaches related to, for example, Eastern Europe, among others, are hardly taken notice of at all. Thus, in the index consisting of 1.096 keywords in the renowned and almost a thousand pages long “HSK” volume “Language – Culture – Communication” (Jäger/Krapp/Holly/Weber/Heekeren, 2016) neither “Linguoculturology” nor “Intercultural Linguistics” can be found. Another example is the relevant article with the title “Aspekte einer kulturwissenschaftlichen Linguistik” [‘Aspects of a Cultural Studies Linguistics’] (Holly/Jäger, 2016, p. 944-956), which takes no notice of the basically eponymous and, in this linguistic field, unique monography “Kulturwissenschaftliche Linguistik” [‘Cultural Studies Linguistics’] by Kuße (2012), an expert on Slavic studies based in Dresden. The publication by Palmer (1999), Palmer/Sharifian (2007), Sharifian (2017) etc., on the one hand, are largely limited to sources in English, whereas works about LC, on the other hand, reference no (e.g., Евсюкова/Бутенко, 2022) or almost no (e.g., Маслова, 2007) sources in English or German. Thus, in the future, there should be a productive conceptual-theoretical and methodological exchange among the culturally sensitive models. All the more so, since culture opens up innovative and fruitful perspectives for linguistics, both as a research object and as an epistemological paradigm, especially in today's reality, which can be described as “post-postmodern” and “post-migrant”. Since language is both shaped by culture and shaping culture itself at the same time, orientations of this kind can support the

<sup>33</sup> For instance, Попкова (2015, p. 150) emphasizes that culture exhibits various stable or, at most, very slowly changing elements that are the same or similar for all members of an ethnic community.

<sup>34</sup> More details can be found in Kuße (2012, p. 60-61).

<sup>35</sup> At one point, Kiklewicz (2019, p. 278) summarizes his perspective, namely that, in the hierarchy of terms, Ethnolinguistics is to be subsumed under Anthropological Linguistics, which is positioned at the very top, and then under Cultural Linguistics, which is positioned one level lower.

<sup>36</sup> In some works (e.g., Bonacchi 2012, p. 384), “culture linguistics” is curiously equated with “culturology”.

currently emerging change from a primarily “national (philological)” to a more culturally sensitive approach to thinking and orientation within language- and literature-related subjects. May the inseparable connection between language and culture no longer remain a mere rhetorical declaration as is still often the case today: Especially with regard to the methodology and empiricism, there is still much need for action and development. Furthermore, for a broad understanding of the complex relationship between culture and language, not only findings from linguistics and cultural studies should be considered, but also research from, inter alia, neuroscience, psychology, and anthropology.

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