



Critical Cultural Linguistics (CCL)

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What is it?

Cultural Linguistics focuses on the relation between language and cultural conceptualizations, analysing how linguistic interactions influence the development of cultural conceptualizations, and, at the same time, how language structure and use draw on and reflect cultural conceptualizations. Yet, if cultural conceptualizations are encoded and embodied in language, they are by no means neutral or accidental. *Critical Cultural Linguistics (CCL)* analyses how cultural conceptualizations are shaped by contexts, conditions, power relations, unequal access to cultural and natural resources, as well as by socio-cultural and historical factors. Such an approach is particularly relevant for contemporary globalized contacts, where different languages and cultural conceptualizations constantly get in touch, blend, and mix – or don't. Studies taking a CCL perspective can cast a light on what lies behind cultural conceptualizations and on how language can (re)produce or challenge them.

Who uses the concept?

As a promising new field, CCL has potentially value for specific research strands within Linguistics, Education, Language Education, Communication, Anthropology, History, Sociology, Political Science, Peace and Conflict Studies, and for practitioners.

Fit with intercultural dialogue?

CCL considers cultural conceptualizations as situated constructs, and therefore it can encourage individuals to become aware of how different

systems of cultural conceptualization affect meanings and representations. Such an awareness is notably significant for intercultural dialogues, as it can help interlocutors to negotiate strategies for mutual understanding by mediating across different cultural conceptualizations.

What work remains?

Much work has yet to be done. As a work-in-progress, CCL presents an opportunity and a risk at the same time. Being critical, CCL cannot content itself with a multidisciplinary approach, but should rather choose an interdisciplinary one. CCL should take interdisciplinarity as one of its most prominent features, as it is only through interconnecting elements and perspectives, as well as research and practices, that phenomena can be read in their complexity. CCL can therefore become an exercise in interdisciplinarity, possibly developing a new methodological paradigm where scholars, researchers, educators, and practitioners from different disciplines can work together. Such an approach will also avoid the risk of segregating CCL as just another separate discipline.

Resources

Sharifian, F. (2011). *Cultural conceptualizations and language: Theoretical framework and applications*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Sharifian, F. (2017). *Cultural linguistics*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.