Culture's Software

Culture's Software:

Communication Styles

Edited by

Dorota Brzozowska
and Władysław Chłopicki

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FOREWORD

GEERT HOFSTEDE

Attending the International Conference on Communication Styles at Krosno State College, Poland on 14-16 October, 2013, I felt fascinated by the attention paid to this subject among a public of mainly linguists, and impressed by the variety in communication styles already visible in the contributions to the conference programme. The selection of conference chapters in this volume confirms this variety.

My contacts with the Polish academic world date from 1972 when I attended in Warsaw a small expert meeting on Value Systems organized by the late professor of work psychology Xymena Gliszczyńska. On her recommendation I then also visited Kraków as a tourist. At a conference on Organization Theory in 1975 I learned about an important Polish contribution: Praxiology, the science of effective action, founded by the philosopher Tadeusz Kotarbiński, which influenced management theorists in a number of European countries. Poland was the first Eastern European country where one of my articles was translated and published, and also the first where both the 2005 second and the 2010 third edition of our book *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind* appeared in translation. I lectured in Warsaw and Poznań, and most recently at a conference of Polish sociologists in Szczecin. Polish social science struck me as both productive and practically oriented.

In the present volume the part describing local communication styles, written by insiders from the various cultures, is often quite entertaining to an outsider like me. The part describing the institutional context of communication highlights situations familiar to teachers, students and researchers across all cultures; experiences from which I got new ideas. The last part, about the role of the media, reflects the attention of Polish authors to new developments in this important communication area.

The organizers and editors merit congratulations with the appearance of this volume. It will be a source of inspiration for future communication conferences.

Velp, the Netherlands, August 2014

CHAPTER ONE

NATIONAL DIFFERENCES
IN COMMUNICATION STYLES

GEERT HOFSTEDE

Communication styles are the "software" of communication; they depend on the people involved and on their environment. The way we communicate on the one hand depends on our cultures, and on the other hand maintains them. Human cultures differ for many reasons; this chapter focuses on the influence of the country where we were born and raised. The major part of the chapter deals with communication styles within different national societies (intra-cultural); the last part discusses communication *between* people from different national societies (inter-cultural). Differences in intra-cultural communication styles often reflect differences in values. The author's six dimensions of values-based national culture differences are used as tools. The main influence lies with the dimensions of Individualism versus Collectivism and Long- versus Short-Term Orientation; some attention is paid to the influence of Power Distance and Uncertainty Avoidance. Inter-cultural communication involves partners with different national values. Its success depends therefore largely on finding acceptable common practices, and on the personalities and skills of the people involved.

Introduction

These days everybody talks about ICT, "Information and Communication Technology." This is the "hardware" of electronic information and communication, but our concern is with the **software**. On the one side, communication processes depend on culture and language, and on the other side, the development and transfer of culture depends on communication. So culture is both a condition for and a result of communication. And human cultures differ for many reasons.

The word "culture" can mean different things, including cultivation of natural products, and civilisation of the human mind, but I will use it in the sense common in social anthropology: collective ways of thinking, feeling and acting. My definition is: "**culture is the collective programming of the mind distinguishing the members of one group or category of people from another**." First of all, it is something "collective." One single person has no culture in this sense. S/he has a personality, but for a culture you need a number of people. The term "programming of the mind" is of course a metaphor, but because we are all wrestling with computer programmes these days, most people understand the metaphor. And then our culture is a programme that we don't share with everybody, but it "distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another." I will mainly deal with the category of national societies, of the country where we were born and raised. But one can also distinguish the culture of one's occupation, whether you are a doctor or a lawyer or a carpenter, or of the organisation you work for, even of the department in the university you work for. And also about gender cultures, women versus men.

Our mental programming comes in different layers and some are easier to influence than others. The outer layers are symbols, heroes and rituals. The layer of symbols includes the language we communicate in, and most people pick up new words rather easily. Heroes are the people we respect, we read and talk about. Rituals are activities we engage in for their own sake. These layers are observable for outsiders, but the core of our mental programming consists of shared values, and these are not necessarily evident from the outside. Many values are more in our guts than in our head. They are strong emotions with a - and a + side, such as: evil-good, abnormal-normal, ugly-beautiful, dangerous-safe, immoral-moral, indecent-decent, unnatural-natural, dirty-clean, paradoxical-logical, irrational-rational.

How did we obtain our values? We acquired most of them early in our childhood, because when we were born, we were incompletely programmed. I once watched the birth of a horse, and I was very much impressed because the new-born foal very soon got on upon its little legs and functioned as a complete horse with almost all the abilities, but we humans need at least 10 years for that. During that period we are able to absorb all the programming we need. And that is emotional and physical before it becomes verbal. This programming depends on the environment where we get it, including our parents, other adults and children, material and social conditions. It includes learning the local language accent-free. If you meet someone from abroad who speaks your native language without an accent, you can be almost sure that she or he lived in your country before age 10. Of course after age 10 we can still learn new languages, but

from the way someone pronounces them, we can often tell where she or he has come from.

The basic values we acquired as children are very difficult to change, even if we migrate to another country. One thing you hear when you go to immigration countries is that in homes for the aged, the values the inhabitants learned as children become more and more active.

The practices, on the other hand, the symbols, the heroes and the rituals, can be learned and changed lifelong. For example, all practices belonging to our use of ICT. Most of us have learned to work with computers when we were adults. That meant acquiring a lot of new practices, which now dominate our daily activities. We did not need to change our values, which was fortunate because if we could only work with other people sharing our values, very little work would get done. Shared practices are all we need for working together.

Studying National Cultures

How our ancestors looked at cultural differences between nations is illustrated by a "Völkertafel" from 1725 in the Museum of Art in Vienna. It pictures typical males from ten European countries and lists seventeen characteristics of each. It is not difficult to guess the nationality of the person who made this table, because there is only one country for which all characteristics are favourable. In this case, Germany.

Today we call this stereotyping, and in culture studies this is a deadly sin. Stereotyping means that "Okay, I know Mister So and So from China, so now I know how Chinese people are." Actually the essence of cultures is that they are formed by different individuals getting together. Cultures are like jigsaw puzzles: all pieces are different, and yet together they make a unique picture. Stereotyping is like trying to describe a jigsaw puzzle from one single piece.

One of my contributions to the study of cultures is the dimension approach, which betrays my original training in mechanical engineering. After working for ten years as an engineer, I decided that I was more interested in people, and I became a psychologist. But as an engineer I had learned to look for structure. Cultures are very complex and people write fuzzy things about them, but if you realize they all share a limited number of fundamental problems which provide a structure, you can use that to describe them. To find these common problems, you have to do empirical research on lots of data from real people, and the results should relate to tangible facts in the world and sometimes be able to predict how cultures behave. Through the research I and my colleagues have done, we could

give different national societies scores on the following six dimensional scales, rooted in basic values and related to observable behaviour (Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov 2010):

1. Dependence on others:
    from Individualism to Collectivism
2. Handling inequality:
    Power Distance, from large to small
3. Dealing with the unknown:
    Uncertainty Avoidance, from strong to weak
4. Emotional gender roles, different or similar:
    from Masculinity to Femininity
5. Time perspective:
    from Long- to Short-term Orientation
6. Dealing with natural drives:
    from Indulgence to Restraint

From these six dimensions, some of you may only have seen the first four. Some of you may know five. And actually since our latest book, which appeared in 2010, and owing to Michael Minkov who joined our authors' team, we added a sixth dimension. All six are based on fundamental problems which every human society, however simple, however complex, has to resolve. The first problem is that humans are dependent on other humans, and in particular how much dependence is desirable. The second problem is that there is inequality. Paraphrasing George Orwell's novel "Animal Farm": "All societies are unequal but some are more unequal than others." The third problem is the way we deal with the unknown. There are a lot of things in society we do not know about. And some societies are more easy-going in that respect than others. The fourth problem is the emotional consequence of having been born as a girl or as a boy. We were not consulted before, we were just there one day and then we had to discover the implications of being a girl or a boy; and these implications, especially emotional, differ from one society to another. And that leads to a lot of differences also in the ways those societies function. The fifth problem is time perspective. Some societies look far ahead and some do not look ahead; actually they prefer to focus on the present or even to look back to the past. And the sixth problem, the last one, added recently, is how a society deals with our natural drives as humans. There are a lot of things our natural instincts make us do, but to what extent are we allowed to do them? Some societies will teach their children that life is no fun, it is a matter of duty, work is more important than leisure, and so on. And other societies do just the opposite, and encourage the feeling: "We have come in this world to have as much fun as we can, so let's make sure we get it."

Culture and Communication

There is an obvious difference between intra-cultural and inter-cultural communication. Most of my lecture will be about differences in communication styles within national societies, so in what ways is communication in, say, China different from the communication in, say, Poland? But in the last part, I will also deal with inter-cultural communication, very frequent now. For intra-cultural differences, we have to focus on the values. For inter-cultural communications, practices play a more important role than values; but the personalities of the interacting communicators are even more important.

From the list of six dimensions that I showed you, I can relate four to differences in communication styles. The first one is Individualism versus Collectivism. Individualist societies like direct communication and collectivist ones like indirect communication. The second is Long-term versus Short-term Orientation, which influences on the one hand whether communication is mainly literate or mainly oral, while Short-term Orientation also relates to self-enhancement, people's tendency to make themselves bigger or smaller. Power Distance is reflected in the extent to which the language used in communication depends on people's relative position; it also influences people's sources of information. Finally, Uncertainty Avoidance influences the adoption of new media.

Most of my knowledge in this field I owe to my very productive compatriot Dr. Marieke de Mooij, who recently published a book on "Human and Mediated Communication around the World" (de Mooij 2014). The following is strongly inspired by, or directly copied from, her work.

Fig. 1-1. The dimension of Individualism and Collectivism in relation to communication styles

Individualist societies	Collectivist societies
"I", independent self	"We", interdependent self
Unique personality	Member of in-group
Direct, personal, verbal	Indirect, visual, metaphorical
Universalist, all are the same	Particularist, ours and theirs
Low Context communication: everything should be explicit	High Context communication: many things are implicit
An honest person speaks his/her mind	Harmony should be preserved, direct confrontations avoided
Active search for information in different media	Heavy use of social media, word of mouth, passive search

Figure 1-1 lists points of contrast between communications styles in individualist and collectivist societies. In fact, no countries are entirely on the one or the other side, all are somewhere between the two poles. The distinction between low-context and high-context is derived from the author Edward T. Hall (1976). A practical consequence is that while business contracts in the United States tend to be very long, as everything has to be written down, in Japan they can be short, because many things are known and understood by everybody. In individualist societies speaking one's mind is considered a good thing, confrontation can be healthy, but collectivist societies value harmony: even if you don't agree you don't say it in that way. In individualist countries like Holland there is still a difference between urban and rural areas: the latter tend to be more collectivist. I have lived in the Dutch countryside and I remember that when our neighbour, a farmer woman, reacted to something I said with "neighbour might be right," it meant she strongly disagreed. Finally, individualist societies will use social media for actively searching for information; collectivist societies will use social media for communication within the in-group.

Figure 1-2 ranks a number of countries on the Individualism-Collectivism dimension.

Fig. 1-2. A ranking of selected countries on the Individualism-Collectivism dimension

Individualist
    USA, Australia
      UK, Canada
        Netherlands, Belgium
          Hungary, Italy
            Nordic countries
              Baltic countries
                German speaking countries
                  Poland, Czechia, Slovakia
                    Spain
                      world average
                        India, Japan
                          Russia, Turkey, Greece
                            Brazil
                              Balkan countries
                                Islamic countries, Africa
                                  China, East Asia
                                    Spanish America
                                      Collectivist

Fig. 1-3. The difference between communication processes in individualist and collectivist societies

Individualist model of interpersonal communication: linear processing

Collectivist model (narrow exit, wide entrance): Harmony & empathy essential

Source: M. de Mooij, 2014
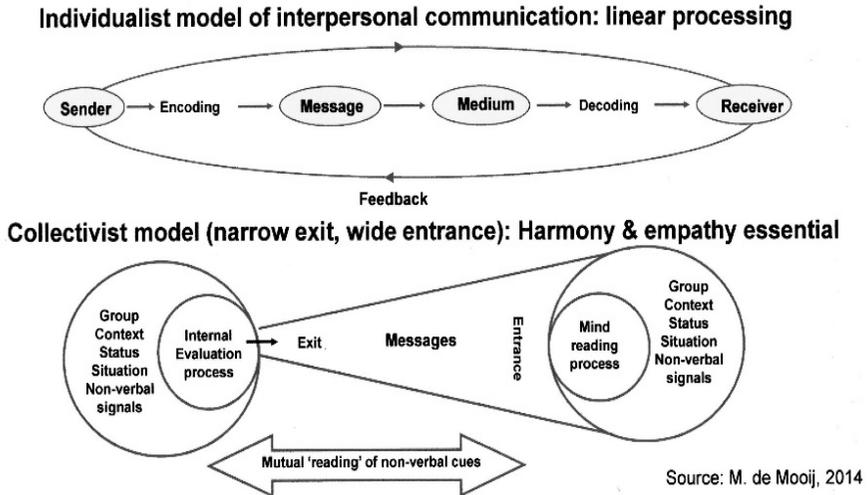
Figure 1-3 is how Marieke de Mooij pictures the difference between communication processes in individualist and collectivist societies. The individualist model of interpersonal communication is linear, with a sender encoding a message, transported via a medium and decoded by a receiver, who may reverse the process in a feedback message. In the collectivist model, before a message goes out it is internally evaluated in a sending group context. The message is received and evaluated in a receiving group context; it may be verbal, symbolic or seen as a non-verbal signal. The sending and the receiving group constantly exchange non-verbal cues. In my presentation, the two models were illustrated with an American advertisement for a food supplement: the product and what it was supposed to do for you, verbal, direct and personal, versus a Spanish advertisement for beer: the word "Friday," bottles on a bar, and neckties hung on the railing: indirect and emotional.

Fig. 1-4. The dimension of Long- versus Short-term Orientation in relation to communication styles

Long-term oriented societies	Short-term oriented societies
Patience, perseverance	Need for instant reaction
Modesty, self-effacement	Boasting, self-enhancement
Adaptation, pragmatism	Sacrosanct traditions
Learn from other countries	Proud of my country
Literate cultures	Oral cultures
Thrift: sparing with resources	Spending and borrowing
Low use of Facebook, few friends in social media	High use of Facebook, many friends in social media

Figure 1-4 lists points of contrast between long- versus short-term oriented societies, general issues and issues related to communication styles. Again, no countries are entirely on the one or the other side, all are somewhere between the two poles. This dimension was originally based on research with a questionnaire inspired by Chinese scholars; at that time we could obtain scores for no more than 23 countries. In the 2010 third edition of our book, Michael Minkov redefined the dimension and calculated new, revised scores from items in the World Values Survey, a data archive based on representative samples of national populations, for 93 countries.

Long-term oriented cultures tend to be literate, while short-term ones tend to be more oral. Of course short-term oriented countries have their literature too, but in long-term oriented cultures, literature is more important.

In the social media, Facebook is more popular at the short-term side; it is a place where people try to make themselves big, to get visibility, to have many friends. Long-term oriented cultures do not like that, they prefer contacts to remain anonymous, and to limit their number of social media friends.

Fig. 1-5. A ranking of selected countries on the Long- / Short-term Orientation dimension

Long-term oriented
    Korea, Taiwan
      Japan, China
        Germany, Switzerland
         Baltic countries
           Ukraine, Russia
             East-European countries
              Belgium, Netherlands
             France, Italy
           Nordic countries
            world average
              UK, India, Pakistan
                Spain, Portugal, Turkey, Greece
              Brazil
               USA, Australia
                Spanish America, Africa
              Islamic countries
                Short-term oriented

The ranking in Figure 1-5 is completely different from their ranking on Individualism versus Collectivism in Figure 1-2. On the long-term side we find the East Asian countries at the top, then Germany and Switzerland and also the Baltic countries. Ukraine and Russia are next on the long-term side, and the East European countries including Poland. The Netherlands, Belgium, France, Italy and the Nordic countries are close to the middle of the scale, and beyond the border line on the short-term side we find the UK, India and Pakistan. Next Spain, Portugal, Turkey and Greece, followed by Brazil. Really short-term oriented are the USA and Australia, countries of Spanish America like Mexico and Argentina, African countries and at the extreme short-term side Islamic countries, looking more to the past than to the future.

In my presentation, the two models were again illustrated with two contrasting advertisements: on the long-term side, a Japanese ad for a copying machine, showing a little boy standing in front of a huge tree, suggesting long-term growth. On the short-term side, an American ad for ice cream, with its only text in large letters: "For instant pleasure, rub gently and remove top."

Fig. 1-6. Consequences of Collectivism / Individualism and Short- / Long-term Orientation for communication and media (courtesy of Marieke de Mooij)

Collectivist	Short-term oriented	Long-term oriented	Individualist
Intensive interpersonal communication	Oral communication, elaborate	Literate, preference for writing	Active information search
Social media = virtual family	Self-enhancement needs	Modesty	Individual preferences
Intensive use of social media	Preference for self-enhancing social media (Facebook)	Preference for anonymity	Information via search engines and media
Many personal contacts	Many friends in social media	Few friends in social media	Selective friendships

Figure 1-6 summarizes the consequences for communication and media of both Collectivism versus Individualism, and Short- versus Long-term Orientation. For example, in collectivist cultures one has many personal contacts, and in individualist cultures, one has selective personal friendships. In short-term oriented cultures one has many "friends" in social media, while in long-term oriented cultures, one has few such friends.

Fig. 1-7. Power Distance (courtesy of Marieke de Mooij)

Power Distance: Rightful place vs equality
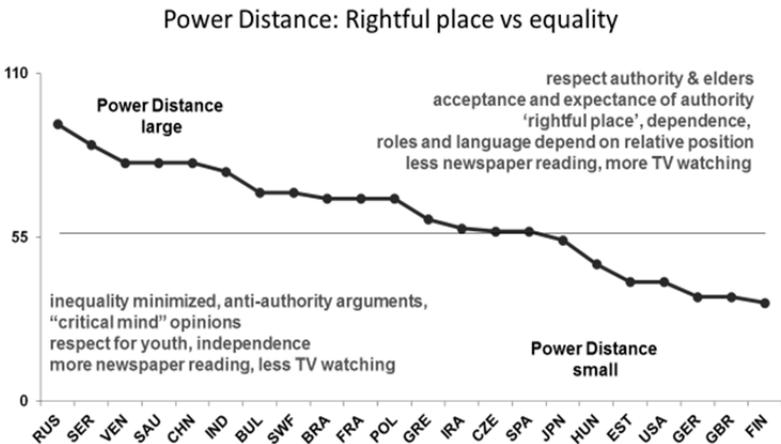
The other two dimensions to be related here to communication styles are Power Distance and Uncertainty Avoidance. Figure 1-7 ranks a selection of countries by Power Distance, from large to small. Cultures with a large Power Distance feel that in a good society, everybody has her or his rightful place. Some people are on top and many people are below and that is the way it should be. Cultures with a small Power Distance feel that in a good society, everybody should be equal. At the large Power Distance side we find Russia and Serbia, countries in Latin America, Saudi Arabia, China and India. We find relatively small Power Distances in the Nordic countries, Britain, Germany, USA, the Baltic states, Hungary, Japan.

On the large Power Distance side people show their respect for authority also in communication, there is less newspaper reading, and more TV watching, while in small Power Distance countries there is more newspaper reading and less TV watching, people have a stronger need to find out for themselves. In large Power Distance cultures when people see somebody on TV who tells them how it is, then they think this is how it is. In large Power Distance cultures, we can also expect more respect for older people, in smaller Power Distance cultures more respect for younger people. My own country, the Netherlands, is on the low Power Distance side. After reaching retirement age in Holland, I became a visiting professor in Hong Kong, China. This proved a pleasant move because there I got much more respect than I had experienced in Holland. In Holland they would say: "This fellow is old now, what can he still tell us?" But in Hong Kong it was: "This man has lived so long, he must know a lot."

Fig. 1-8. Uncertainty Avoidance (courtesy of Marieke de Mooij)
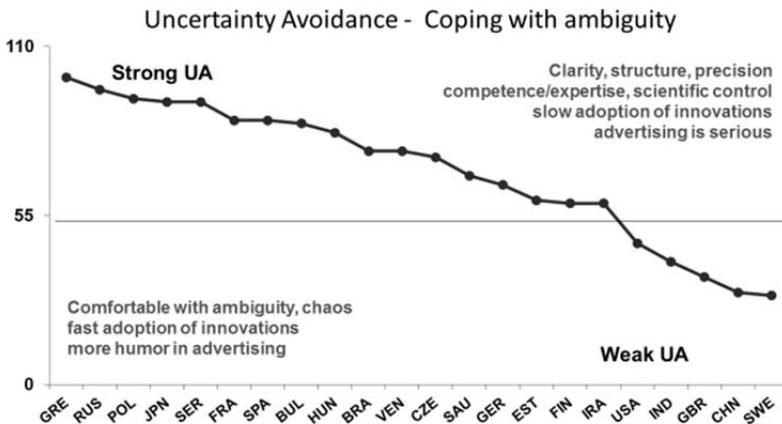
Figure 1-8 ranks a selection of countries by Uncertainty Avoidance, from strong to weak. Uncertainty Avoidance is the way a society reacts to ambiguity: the resistance in a society against new, unfamiliar, unpredictable people, things and ideas. Among the countries where Uncertainty Avoidance is strong, we find Greece and Russia, Poland and many others. In East Asia, this dimension opposes Japan to China: Japan is an uncertainty avoiding country, Chinese society tolerates uncertainty much more easily. In Europe, Germany, Belgium and France are uncertainty avoiding, Sweden, Denmark and Britain are uncertainty tolerant. Uncertainty avoiding cultures tend to prefer absolute truths and structure, and to be good at making precision products. You will buy your watch from an uncertainty avoiding country. New ideas are more likely to be born in uncertainty tolerant countries, but often inventions from the uncertainty tolerant side are turned into products on the uncertainty avoiding side.

With regards to communication styles, humour is more usual in advertising at the weaker uncertainty avoiding side. In Germany, with somewhat stronger Uncertainty Avoidance, advertisements often show a doctor in a white coat who will tell you what is good for you, no joke. Weaker Uncertainty Avoidance cultures tend to introduce new inventions faster. Eventually they may be adopted everywhere, but in strongly uncertainty avoiding cultures it takes more time. Research by Marieke de Mooij shows this in the case of access to Internet in 12 European countries in 2002 and in 2007. In 2002, strongly uncertainty avoiding cultures had less access to Internet anywhere; in 2007 most of them had got Internet at work, but not yet at home.

Intercultural Communication

So far, we were dealing with differences in intra-cultural communication. The last part of my presentation is about inter-cultural communication. Intercultural contacts are as old as mankind; some were peaceful like in trade, but many were violent, through war.

In today's globalized world, successful nonviolent inter-cultural communication is essential. Learning these takes three steps:

1. **Awareness** of the existence of cultural differences
2. **Knowledge** about the cultures involved, including one's own
3. **Skills** in communicating with people holding different values, through developing shared practices

The most difficult is to learn about one's own culture, the way it is perceived by our communication partners from other cultures. An old English nursery rhyme goes as follows:

"The Germans live in Germany,
The Romans live in Rome,
The turkeys live in Turkey
But the English live at home."

The difficulty of recognizing our culture at home is illustrated by the British Philosopher David Hume in an Essay dated 1742:

"The English, of any people in the universe, have the least of a
  national character; unless this very singularity may pass for such"

In the first part of this chapter I related intra-cultural communication differences to differences in values. Inter-cultural communication, by definition takes place between partners with different values; the way it functions is through shared practices: symbols, heroes and rituals. Symbols in this case are words, gestures and objects whose meaning to the other party has to be learned. Important symbols in intercultural communication are trade languages like Swahili, or business pidgin "Englishes." Essential heroes in intercultural communication are intermediaries, who gain the confidence of both sides. Important rituals in intercultural communication include eating and drinking together, what, when and where.

But the success of intercultural communication also depends strongly on the personalities of the communicators. Modern personality psychology distinguishes five or six personality characteristics, of which in this case two are very important. One is stability, the opposite of the personality characteristic called neuroticism. So stability is low neuroticism, which means that as a person, you will not get nervous in an unexpected situation. You trust your knowledge how to cope with it. And the second characteristic is openness to experience, which some people say is simply another word for I.Q.: intelligence quotient. It means curiosity for what is new. It also includes "serendipity": the art of discovering things you were not looking for. And, of course, the motivation and skills to learn new words and even languages.

In order to become a successful intercultural communicator, exposure to other cultures in childhood and adolescence is very important. I am a fan of programmes that exchange secondary school children for one or two semesters. I met a Dutch girl who went to Argentina, and a German girl

who went to Tanzania. If you really want to become an interculturalist, this is one way of doing it.

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PART I

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES IN COMMUNICATION STYLES

CHAPTER TWO

STYLE AND HUMOUR IN GREEK MASS CULTURE TEXTS

ARGIRIS ARCHAKIS, SOFIA LAMPROPOULOU, VILLY TSAKONA AND VASIA TSAMI

Register clash can be found in (con)texts where either an unexpected register occurs in replacement of the expected one or two different registers co-occur in a single (con)text. In both cases, register humour is produced (Attardo 2001), which seems to be common in modern mass cultural texts where different styles are (re)presented, juxtaposed, and/or fused (Stamou 2011). The aim of the present study is to discuss the functions and effects of register humour in Greek mass cultural texts. After a brief presentation of the relevant literature, the study concentrates on a recent Greek TV series, whose humour largely depends on the contrast between sociolects stereotypically associated with upper-class and with low-class. The analysis of the data intends to show that such humour reflects, sustains, and reproduces hidden ideologies about language use and, in particular, about the code-switching abilities speakers are expected to have acquired in contemporary urban settings.

Introduction

Contemporary media has opened the door to a whole new multistyled world: monolingualism and strict stylistic boundaries have been replaced by a wide variety of languages and speech styles represented in media texts. Standard varieties and conforming to the rules of "appropriate" linguistic behaviour are no longer required -at least not to the same extent as before- from speakers appearing in the media (see among others Woolard 1987; Coupland 2007; Stamou 2012; Tsiplakou and Ioannidou 2012). At the same time, the co-existence of diverse stylistic resources is often exploited for the creation of a humorous effect (Attardo 1994: 2001).

In particular, humour may emerge from the juxtaposition and combination of styles which are perceived as incompatible in a single context.

Given the above, the present study sets out to investigate how such stylistic practices contribute to the production of humour in Greek mass culture texts. This kind of humour "figures prominently in the [Greek] culture" and is "particularly appreciated by Greek audiences" (Antonopoulou 2004: 238; see also Antonopoulou 2002: 212-15; 2004: 249-50). In an effort to account for its extensive use, Antonopoulou (2002: 215 note 22) also observes that "it is certainly not unrelated to the problem of diglossia which has had serious socio-political repercussions in Greece." In a diglossic sociolinguistic context, such as the Greek one, where strict boundaries exist(ed) between different styles, breaching such boundaries is evaluated as particularly "inappropriate" and could result in speakers being ridiculed. Furthermore, when the former low style was declared the official language of the state (i.e. after 1976) and the Greek linguocultural community became a post-diglossic one, the struggle for a "unified," "common" language became prominent, thus perpetuating the competition among standard and non standard styles and reinforcing normalised language ideologies.

Here, we intend to concentrate on the power of the media to impose specific language ideologies or *metapragmatic stereotypes* (Agha 1998: 2007) on the wider audience: via framing style mixing and recontextualisation as humorous, namely incongruous, mass culture texts may marginalise such practices and (further) stigmatise non standard styles. The sociolinguistic values and stances transmitted via stylistic humour seem to serve as guidelines for "appropriate" language use and to promote the existence of (and thus the preference for) a "default" and "omnipresent" style which could potentially be used by all speakers in all contexts. Thus, it will be suggested that stylistic humour works at the opposite direction of media's recent tendency to endorse a variety of styles: it serves at establishing a single, idealised linguistic norm. In the Greek case in particular, the humorous exploitation of styles seems to be stronger and more salient than the mere diversity and coexistence of styles.

In what follows, we first offer working definitions of the main theoretical concepts employed here: *style*, *stylistic humour*, and *metapragmatic stereotypes* (section 2). Then, we discuss how stylistic humour and language ideologies are closely interconnected in studies investigating such humour in Greek (section 3). The analysis of the data (in section 4) involves 2 extracts from Greek TV shows, where specific metapragmatic stereotypes on stylistic use emerge not only from stylistic humour itself but also from the characters' explicit metalinguistic

comments on it. Finally, section (5) rounds up the discussion and offers some research goals to be attained in the future.

Style, Stylistic Humour, and Metapragmatic Stereotypes

Contemporary approaches to style (see among others Mugglestone 2003; Coupland 2007; Androutsopoulos 2010) favour a more contextualised and performative perspective on linguistic variation rather than a static, essentialist one, which would relate stylistic choices to speakers' social features and would identify stylistic boundaries between different contexts. Nowadays, stylistic analysis explores "how style resources are put to work creatively" (Coupland 2007: 3) and investigates how speakers design their speech styles in relation to their audiences and the identities they wish to construct both for themselves and their audience(s). This can be attested, among other contexts, in the mass media, where, at least in the Western world, a variety of styles is used and standard varieties are no longer the only styles permitted and endorsed. Different styles including dialects, sociolects, registers, etc. are employed, combined, reframed, and disseminated via mass culture texts, thus allowing speakers to draw from a wide variety of resources to create their own style(s) and social meanings.

At the same time, style mixing and recontextualisation have often been related to the production of humour. In contrast with postmodern perspectives on style (see above), the combination of diverse styles and the unconventional use of stylistic resources are often evaluated as "incongruous," hence they are employed for the production of what Attardo (1994; 2001; 2009) calls *register/stylistic humour*.[1] Humour in general occurs when our expectations are violated: something happens that seems to be different from what was expected. When it comes to stylistic resources, humour may be produced when the expected style is replaced with one (or more) unexpected one(s), or when various styles co-occur in a single (con)text and (at least) one of them is perceived as incompatible therein.

Literature on stylistic humour is rather scarce (Attardo 1994: 231), but can still shed some light on the ways it is employed and the functions it performs. First of all, literature suggests that stylistic humour occurs

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[1] Although Attardo (1994: 2001) initially limits his discussion to register clashes within a single text, namely *register humour*, later on he opts for the term *stylistic humour* (Attardo 2009: 315), so as to account for different kinds of speech variation. In the present study, we prefer the second term which covers a wider range of phenomena.

predominantly in mass culture texts, such as TV shows, literary texts, and live performances (see Woolard 1987; Attardo 1994: 230-53, 262-68; 2001: 104-10, 123-25; Bainschab 2009; Berglin 2009; Gardner 2010; Hiramoto 2011; Venour et al. 2011: 126; Arampatzis 2012: 67, 79; Tsiplakou and Ioannidou 2012; Adetunji 2013: 4-6; and references therein). Such humour is used for characterisation, that is, for ascribing specific attributes to the characters of such texts, which more often than not contributes to their humorous dimension. More specifically, characters opt for a formal or high style where an informal or low one is expected, or vice versa; or they "inappropriately" mix different styles in their effort to address different audiences; in general, they draw on a style which does not fit the occasion. In most such cases, the characters are portrayed as communicatively incompetent and hence embarrass themselves by becoming the targets of humour (Bainschab 2009; Berglin 2009; Gardner 2010; Archakis et al. 2013). Furthermore, the characters sometimes appear to recognise their own stylistic clashes (and the humorous potential of such clashes) by themselves via commenting on them and/or repeating them in different occasions (Berglin 2009: 24-26).

The mere fact that some stylistic uses are considered incompatible and incongruous points to the implicit but not negligible presence of specific language ideologies on how styles are or should be employed. Both the creators of such texts and their (intended or actual) recipients appear to share specific views on stylistic use, which are indispensable for understanding and appreciating stylistic humour: without them, the humorous dimension of stylistic clashes would be lost. Following Agha's (1998: 2007) proposal, such views and ideologies constitute *metapragmatic stereotypes*. The term refers to speakers' internalised models of language use which guide their own linguistic behaviour and enable them to make judgments about their own language use or that of others. Such stereotypes influence speakers' linguistic performance and interpretation of discourse in actual interactions. They are shaped by the sociocultural context speakers interact in and, more specifically, by the ways discourse is used and evaluated therein. Hence, it could be suggested that the analysis of stylistic humour could reveal (at least some of) the stereotypes speakers have on styles and their use. Via investigating which stylistic performances are framed and perceived as incongruous, we could understand what seem to be the audience's expectations concerning the "proper" use of stylistic resources.

In this context, we intend to argue that stylistic humour is employed in mass culture texts as a means of deterring speakers from using stylistic resources in an incongruous manner. The fear of being laughed at, that is,

of becoming the target of humour (see Bergson 1978/1900; Billig 2005: 79-82, 176-80, 194-99, 202-7), could turn out to be an effective way of convincing or even forcing speakers to conform to specific rules of "appropriate" and "correct" stylistic behaviour. It could therefore be suggested that the stylistic humour produced by the characters of TV shows (in the present case), advertisements, etc. becomes a rhetorical device and "a means of disciplinary teaching" (Billig 2005: 177) as to how styles are expected to be used in specific contexts. It is exactly under this capacity that stylistic humour is examined here as a means of transmitting and eventually imposing specific language ideologies on speakers in general and TV viewers in particular.

Stylistic Humour and Language Ideologies in Greek

As already mentioned (in section 1), Greek stylistic humour is often related to Greece's diglossic past and post-diglossic present. It is therefore not accidental that when stylistic humour is investigated in Greek, scholars tend to associate it with language ideologies and sociolinguistic conflicts. This section is intended to show that, at least since the 1960s, Greek stylistic humour has been related to the sociolinguistic conflict between the two competing styles, *dimotiki* and *katharevousa* (see below). In post-diglossic Greece, namely after 1976, this struggle has been transformed into a quest for a "unified," "omnipresent," "default" variety and this is reflected in the particularities of stylistic humour from 1976 onwards. This transformation will be traced here in studies investigating stylistic humour in various Greek mass culture genres since the 1960s.

Greek diglossia is one of the typical cases discussed in Ferguson's (1959) seminal paper on diglossic communities. For several centuries, there have been two different linguistic traditions in the Greek linguocultural community associated with different varieties: the *low* variety, *dimotiki*, that is, the mother tongue of Greek speakers; and the *high* one, *katharevousa*, that is, a scholarly variety imitating ancient Greek, taught at school, and marking its users as "educated" and "belonging to higher social strata." The two varieties were usually mutually exclusive, in the sense that they could not appear in the same context. Hence, stylistic differences and subsequent conflicts seem to be culturally salient and socio-politically significant in the Greek linguocultural community, not only since the foundation of the Greek state but also many centuries before that (Horrocks 2010).

Not unexpectedly, stylistic differences have become a common means of characterisation in Greek mass culture texts, since they have been

considered strongly indexical of speakers' social, political, or cultural particularities (e.g. profession, social class, place of origin, age, gender, education, political affiliation). Focusing on popular Greek comedies from the 1960s, Georgakopoulou (2000: 120) suggests that such texts "[echo] the social variation that exists between speakers" in an effort to create humour. Film characters do not only use formal katharevousa or informal dimotiki, but also bureaucratic and rural styles, slang vocabulary, and upper-class switches to English or French, which have been considered prestigious languages among Greek speakers. The juxtaposition of characters and their respective styles is framed as incongruous. At the same time, miscommunication between characters as well as unexpected and/or unsuccessful appropriation and mixing of different styles create a humorous effect. It should, however, be noted that this wide range of styles seems to be represented mostly in the speech of marginal -and thus caricatured- characters. As Georgakopoulou points out, central characters (even low-class ones) more often than not speak the standard Athenian variety, thus putting forward the ideology of a "default," "single," "unifying" variety which "overpowers" all others and pushes toward linguistic homogenisation. This "unifying" variety is not the (then) official language of the Greek state, namely katharevousa, but a version of dimotiki used in Athens, the Greek capital.

Georgakopoulou's (2000) study helps us understand the conflicting forces that operated when it came to stylistic choices and their sociopolitical connotations. Moreover, given that, more than 50 years after their production, such films continue to be very popular in Greece and are nowadays still shown on Greek TV, it could be argued that this kind of humour has not stopped to be circulated and recycled, thus affecting current practices and perceptions not only on how and why humour is created, but also on how different styles are expected to be used.

Greek diglossia officially ceased to exist in 1976, when dimotiki, the low variety, was declared the official language of the Greek state by law, thus replacing katharevousa in Greek institutional and public discourse. A turn is then observed in stylistic humour: the "discredited," no longer prestigious high variety, katharevousa, becomes the main target of stylistic humour. Canakis (1994) investigates such humour in a newspaper humour column published in the 1980's, namely during the first post-diglossic years. In such texts, katharevousa is commonly employed in everyday, informal contexts to refer to mundane topics, often mixed with colloquial elements, thus producing humour which further damaged its prestige. Consequently, dimotiki emerges as the "default," "omnipresent" code, while katharevousa becomes the "incompatible" stylistic choice, even

though for many decades it had been perceived as the "respected," "powerful" variety which made dimotiki sound "trivial" and "unimportant." Language ideologies had shifted in Greece and stylistic humour reflected this shift.

During the 1990s and the beginning of the 2000s, stylistic humour, among other kinds of humour, persists in humorous short stories (Tsakona 2004, 188-202), where katharevousa continues to be incongruously employed in everyday contexts combined with colloquial or even slang expressions. Dimotiki also appears to be mixed with specialised styles/registers (e.g. mathematical, religious, legal, literary), which are thus parodied, as well as with other languages (mostly English). Therefore, dimotiki continues to be constructed as the "default" code (expected to be) prevailing at least in the everyday contexts described in the short stories examined. Similar trends can simultaneously be traced in children's books (Stamou 2012).

More recently, Stamou (2011) explores stylistic humour as a means of representing social boundaries and constructing sharp contrasts among speakers coming from different social strata. The characters in the TV series she examines adopt a monolithic linguistic behaviour and are not able to style shift and adjust themselves to the context. Thus, their behaviour becomes the object of ridicule, even if they happen to be the central characters of the show. Furthermore, styles associated with lower- and middle-classes are less ridiculed than those associated with upper-classes, thus favouring the representation of dimotiki as the "default" code (see above). Hence, Stamou (2011: 331) argues that stylistic humour still promotes the "hegemonic ideologies of standardness and monolingualism."

To sum up, stylistic humour appears to be one of the most common mechanisms for eliciting laughter in Greek mass culture texts, at least since the 1960s. By juxtaposing, mixing, and misusing styles, such texts reflect the conflictual relations among different styles and their speakers, while, at the same time, they recycle the evaluations associated with the diverse stylistic resources. What is more, they seem to direct the audience towards the "appropriate" use of each style, towards "adjusting oneself" to the context, and towards what is constructed as the "default" style, namely a version of urban, middle-class dimotiki which is eventually deemed suitable for every use. Such practices are not irrelevant to the history of the Greek language, in particular its diglossic past and its post-diglossic present. It seems that the Greek audience has -to a considerable degree- been socialised[2] in a context where conflicting styles coexist and such

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[2] It is interesting to note here that stylistic humour surfaces in the private sphere as well. As Georgakopoulou (1997: 148-50, 153-57) suggests, Greek speakers resort