

# РОЗДІЛ 3

## КУЛЬТУРОЛОГІЯ

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### FRAMES AS A CULTURAL CONSTRUCTS

*The article describes frames as shared cultured products. The author suggests the definition of culture as a set of shared understandings embodied in cultural/cognitive models. Cultural/cognitive models are factored into two types: folk theories and expert theories. The author proves that folk theories conflict with scientific ones.*

**Keywords:** *frame, cognitive model, cognitive linguistics, folk theories, scientific theories.*

**Problem statement.** The urgency of cognitive linguistics is caused by providing a new way of studying how we make sense of our experience [1–9]. It examines what cognitive processes play a role in making sense of the world around us and how these cognitive processes contribute to our understanding of issues in language. However, it concentrates only on how cognitive linguistics can be helpful in studying language – to the exclusion of culture at large.

**Previous research.** Cognitive linguists have found that we make use of a relatively small number of cognitive processes in making use of our experience. We categorize the world, organize our knowledge into frames, make use of within-frame mappings (metonymy) and cross-frame mappings (metaphor), build image-schemas from bodily experience and apply these to what we experience, divide our experience into figures and grounds, set up mental spaces and further mappings between them in the online process of understanding, and have the ability to skillfully and creatively integrate conceptual materials from the mental spaces that we set up. Moreover, we do not do most of this in a conscious way; our cognitive system operates unconsciously most of the time. It is these cognitive processes that participate in our unconscious meaning-making activity [1–9].

**The aim** of this paper is to focus on cognitive processes that play a crucial role in our cultural meaning-making activity. These are frames. In exploring the issues connected with frames, I will proceed as follows. First, I will

take up the issue of how we can characterize frames in general. And then, I will turn to the issue of the inherently cultural nature of frames.

**Main body.** So what is a frame? We can use the following working definition of frames: “A frame is a structured mental representation of a conceptual category” [6, p. 64]. This definition is so vague and general that it allows us to consider essential features (i.e., necessary and sufficient conditions) and feature lists of other kinds as a kind of frame also. After all, such feature lists can also be conceived of as structured representations of conceptual categories. The notion of “frame”, however, is typically reserved for cases of mental representations that cannot be given as feature lists [4, p. 223]. A more comprehensive name for structured representations of conceptual categories in general, including both feature lists and frames proper, would be (cognitive) model, which is indeed often used as a generic term for the mental representation of categories of both kinds.

Roughly the same idea of what a frame is has been called by a variety of different names in the vast literature on the subject. These include, in addition to frame, script, scenario, scene, cultural model, cognitive model, idealized cognitive model, domain, schema, (experiential) gestalt, and several others [2]. There is sometimes variation even within the same author as regards the terms used. The different terms come from different branches of cognitive science, and so the words used may have a slightly different meaning. In this article, I will use many of these interchangeably, because the basic idea is similar to each of them: they all designate a coherent organization of human experience.

In the classical approach, meaning is given in terms of necessary or sufficient conditions (i.e., by means of essential features). From the perspective of an experientialist cognitive science, meaning is defined by frames; as the best known formulation of this idea suggests, “meanings are relativized to frames/ scenes” [4, p. 225]. To see how this works in practice, let us take an example. What is the mental representation of the conceptual category MONDAY? Can it be defined in terms of features that are inherent in the concept of “Monday”? Could we propose something like “the first day of the week” as an inherent feature? Not really, because to say that it is the first day of the week only makes sense against the background of the concept of “week”. Could we propose as an inherent feature that Monday is a day? No, because the concept of “day” itself only makes sense in a certain system of knowledge about the movement of the sun. The only thing we can do to define what Monday is, is say that the concept makes sense against the background of several frames: the natural cycle of the movement of the sun, and the seven-day calendric cycle. The former gives us an idea

of what a day is; the latter tells us that there are seven units (days) in what we call a week. Against this background, we can provide a definition for “Monday”: “the first day of the week”. There are no inherent features here. The concept is defined in terms of two frames that exist independently of the concept. However, they are both necessary for its characterization.

An important property of frames is that they are idealized in several ways. One of them is that, often, what the frame defines does not actually exist in the world. For instance, in the case of the current example, there are no seven-day weeks in nature. In nature, we only find the alternation of light and darkness governed by the natural cycle of the movement of the sun. Frames are often idealized in this sense. To capture this aspect of frames, G. Lakoff [7, p. 115] calls such idealizations “idealized cognitive models”, or ICMs for short. This feature of frames makes them open to cross-cultural variation. Particular frames may exist in only one or a few cultures, as is the case here, where the notion of our kind of calendric cycle is a peculiarity of the European world.

This brings us to the understanding of frames not only as cognitive in nature but also cultural constructs; hence the term *cultural model* for the same idea. Cultural models can differ cross-culturally, from group to group, and even from individual to individual. For instance, Hoyt Alverson insists that all experience is intentional, that is, it is conceived of “in a certain manner” [1, p. 97]. Experience that is conceived in a particular manner is captured by (often different) cultural models. At the same time, however, a large number of frames are shared by members of societies and groups within those societies. The fact that many frames are shared across people makes frames cultural products. Thus, frames represent a huge amount of shared knowledge that makes societies, subcultures, and social groups of various kinds coherent cultural formations. The shared character of frames has been recognized by many anthropologists, including Roy D’Andrade [3, p. 283], Dorothy Holland, Naomi Quinn, and Claudia Strauss [5; 9], who propose that culture can be defined as a collection of shared understandings represented by frames, or cultural models.

A well-known example of one such shared frame is the RESTAURANT frame [8, p. 211], as it is used not only by many Americans, but also by Europeans. This frame serves to illustrate the kind of knowledge we have about going to a restaurant. This knowledge can be given as a series of events that follow one another. Another name for frames of this type is script. A script describes a stereotypical situation in a culture – a situation

in which events unfold through time. The RESTAURANT-GOING frame, or script, involves the following events:

- Go to the restaurant
- Be seated
- Study the menu
- Order meal
- Waiter brings meal
- Eat the meal
- Pay
- Leave restaurant

Many members of European and American culture share this script about going to a restaurant. It enables them to understand conversations about restaurants. For example, if someone tells me that he or she went to a restaurant and paid way too much, I can legitimately assume that the person went through all the events listed here. Most important, I can assume that this person paid too much for a meal he or she had and not for buying a pair of shoes. I can be sure about this because the speaker and I share the script of what it means to go to a restaurant. Notice that these elements of the script are not essential features. They can all be easily canceled. I can tell you that I went to a restaurant, was seated, and looked at the menu, but I did not eat anything. At the same time, this script can vary in certain details from culture to culture. For example, in some countries you do not have to wait to be seated; you can go in and find a free table yourself. The cancelability of all these features can thus give rise to cultural variation.

Another source of cultural variation in cultural models are “frame-based” categories. Since ways of eating food can vary cross-culturally, the frame-based categories of selling food may vary from place to place. For example, it is common in Ukraine for butcher shops to sell salo and garlic together in the same butcher shop. In other words, Ukrainians have a frame that includes salo and garlic. This is because Ukrainians commonly eat salo with a garlic dressing. This particular frame of eating salo in Ukraine may not be found in other cultures.

The frames we have in connection with objects and events of the world represent two kinds of knowledge: everyday, or folk, and expert knowledge. Our everyday knowledge is far more extensive than our expert knowledge. Everyday knowledge is knowledge that we use automatically, without conscious thought, and that we acquire without conscious learning or formal education. Our everyday knowledge is represented by “folk theories”, while our expert knowledge is represented by “expert theories”.

On the one hand, we use folk theories (also called cultural models or naive understandings) of the world for most everyday purposes (such as going to a restaurant, reasoning about a particular topic, and understanding sentences). Expert theories (or scientific models), on the other hand, are used by specialists in a field. We can hold folk theories and expert theories about the same aspect of the world. It commonly happens that in such cases our folk and expert theories conflict with each other. For example, linguists have very different models about language than nonlinguists. In this case, we could say that laypeople's folk theories of language may differ considerably from the expert theories of language used by linguists.

Taxonomies constitute another form of cultural/cognitive models of the world. They have a hierarchical structure. Folk and expert taxonomies can differ considerably. For example, whales are commonly regarded as fish in folk theories of the natural world, whereas experts classify them as mammals. Most people – laypersons and experts alike – assume that there is only one correct taxonomy of anything. The fact that folk and expert theories often conflict casts doubt on this assumption. Just as important, expert theories can also clash with each other in attempting to explain a phenomenon, as incompatible scientific accounts of, say, language testify.

**Conclusions.** To sum up, much of our cultural knowledge comes from folk theories, or cultural cognitive models. Our folk theories may conflict with other people's folk theories, and they commonly clash with expert, or scientific, theories. As a matter of fact, the very same person may hold contradictory folk and expert theories of the same phenomenon. The two ideas that culture is largely composed of shared cultural/cognitive models and that there are two distinct type of cultural/cognitive models – folk and expert theories – go a long way in explaining our cultural functioning in the world. The further research can focus on the cultural application and importance of frames.

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#### *Анотація*

#### **Бокун Ірина. Фрейми як культурні моделі.**

*У статті описуються фрейми як продукти, які загально використовуються різними культурами. Пропонується визначення культури як набору спільних інтерпретацій, які реалізуються в культурних/когнітивних моделях. Культурні/когнітивні моделі розкладаються на два види: народні теорії та експертні теорії. Автор доказує, що народні теорії конфліктують з науковими.*

***Ключові слова:** фрейм, когнітивна модель, когнітивна лінгвістика, народні теорії, наукові теорії.*

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#### **Людмила ГНАПОВСЬКА**

### **ПРОСТІР МОВИ: ДІАЛОГ КУЛЬТУР, ДУХОВНИХ ЦІННОСТЕЙ, СВІТОГЛЯДІВ**

*У статті власна назва як згорнутий національно-культурний текст розглядається через інтерпретацію закодованого в її внутрішній формі лінгвокультурного потенціалу. Фрагменти ономазіологічного простору англійських імен кельтського та германського походження пояснюються в контексті загальних світоглядних засад міфопоетичної свідомості.*

***Ключові слова:** культура, міфопоетична свідомість, соціокультурний контекст.*

**Постановка проблеми.** Притаманне сучасній мовознавчій парадигмі посилення на те, що будь-яка мовна одиниця набуває референційних ознак лише завдяки участі у процесах номінації та комунікації мислячих істот (носіїв певної мови), обумовило необхідність дослідження того, з якими структурами суспільного знання співвідноситься семантика мовного знака та які ментальні процеси покладено в основу номінативних процесів. Усвідомлення неминучості виходу за межі замкненої “в-собі-і-для-себе” системи мови та визнання того факту, що мовне значення є закодованою у мисленні інформаційною структурою, а семантична структура, відповідно, являє собою форму концептуальної структури, надало актуальності пошуку та встановленню