

“US AND THEM”: STUDIES OF THE HIERARCHY OF OPPOSITES OF THE GLOBAL BUSINESS COMMUNICATION SETTINGS AND CULTURES AND BINARY STRUCTURES IN INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION THEORIES

1. RESEARCH CONCERNING THE BINARITY OF OPPOSITIONS IN CULTURAL STUDIES AND COMMUNICATION

1.2. THE ‘BINARY OPPOSITION’ AND OPPOSITION AS UNIVERSAL CONCEPT

The categorization of business cultures as a research approach will be presented. Business Communication serving as a medium for understanding and managing communication in different business cultures is a practical application of communication for specific purposes presented in the business industries. In this article we will present binary structures of communication. Research of the binary structure of intercultural communication in international business communication cultures demonstrates the preference of binary structures and opposites as groundwork of the research method. So this method of this research tells us already the impact of the binary structure as a method of research, which is limited by the reduction of binary structures instead of polyvalence. For Lévi-Strauss among the universal structures of the mind are opposites as the basis of social structure and culture. Barthes writes in *Elements of Semiology* about the dichotomic concept of language/speech: “The (dichotomic) concept of language/speech is central in Saussure and was certainly a great novelty in relation to earlier linguistics which sought to find the causes of historical changes in the evolution of pronunciation, spontaneous associations and the working of analogy, and was therefore a linguistics of the individual act. In working out this famous dichotomy, Saussure started from the multiform and heterogeneous’ nature of language, which appears at first sight as an unclassifiable reality’ the unity of which cannot be brought to light, since it partakes at the same time of the physical, the physiological, the mental, the individual and the social. Now this disorder disappears if, from this heterogeneous whole, is extracted a purely social object, the systematized set of conventions necessary to communication, indifferent to the material of the signals which compose it, and which is a language (*langue*); as opposed to which speech (*parole*) covers the purely individual part of language (phonation, appli-

cation of the rules and contingent combinations of signs)". (Barthes) In the article *Binary Opposition* (1996) of the *Dictionary of Cultural and Critical Theory* is written: "A relationship of opposition and mutual exclusion between two elements: a crucial term in the theories of structuralism. Examples of such oppositions would be masculine/ feminine, cold/heat, or up/down. The phrase appears in the work of the French structural anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss on myths, particularly those of the indigenous American tribes. He analyzes their legends as embodying major oppositions between mythical archetypes of certain animals, such as the Frog and the Snake. Each animal has certain associations, and the relations between these associations are analyzed according to the relations between the mythic figures which epitomize them. In effect every mythic creature stands for certain meanings. From this maneuver is extracted a general rule: a pair of antagonists is the fundamental element of all mythic narratives, When one element of the relation is present, so too, and necessarily, is the other by means of an operation of difference predicated upon direct opposition. Binary oppositions occur in all myths and so can be seen to be the universal factor in the production of stories. Lévi-Strauss asks why this should be so, and his answer is that these binary oppositions so produced are the symptoms". (*Dictionary of Cultural and Critical Theory*) The cultural studies theory known as structuralism uses the term called 'binary opposition' to explain the structure of human knowledge. Also many cultural and natural phenomena are explained as binary systems composed of two parts. Chandler distinguished in *Semiotics for Beginners* the following two types of analysis:

Paradigmatic analysis	Representative examples
Syntagmatic analysis	'Surface structure'
Substitution	Paradigmatic transformations
Transposition	Paradigmatic transformations
Addition	Syntagmatic transformations
Deletion	Syntagmatic transformations

Illustration 1. Categories of Change in Rhetoric

The four basic transformational processes correspond exactly to the four general categories to which Quintilian (circa 35-100 AD) assigned the rhetorical figures (or tropes) as 'deviations' from 'literal' language. (Chandler) Chandler wrote in *Semiotics for Beginners*: "Dualism seems to be deeply-rooted in the development of human categorization. Jakobson and Halle observe that 'the binary opposition is a child's first logical operation'. Whilst there are no opposites in 'nature', the binary oppositions which we employ in our cultural practices help to generate order out of the dynamic complexity of experience". (Chandler)

Structural Opposition	Dualism (two items in one category, not necessarily contradictionary)	○ and ●
Structural Opposition	Antithesis (oppositional structure)	○ vs. ●
Opposition of content	Opposition (implements contradiction)	○ and ●
Opposition of content	Contradiction (opposition of two items)	○ is not ●
Partial Opposition	Partial Opposition	☺ and ☹

Illustration 2. Types of Oppositions

The binary structure of values of communication in a cultural analysis is for example practiced in the distinction of ‘high context culture’ and ‘low context culture’ or in the cultural communication analysis done by Geert Hofstede using the four dimensions ‘Power Distance’, ‘Individualism’, ‘Uncertainty Avoidance’, and ‘Masculinity’ that have opposite counterparts. Also other contrastive approaches for the categorization of cultures will be discussed. Case studies of the contribution of professional and educational institutions for the application of intercultural communication studies will exemplify the binarity. The self-representation and the representation of the other culture we will exemplify with cases of business institutions and educational institutions that focus on intercultural business communication. We demonstrate here the assets and values which are necessary for the establishment of both intercultural business communication as a field of study and intercultural business communication as a business. Hooker wrote in *Cultural Differences in Business Communication*: “Business practices are shaped by deeply-held cultural attitudes toward work, power, trust, wealth—and communication”. (Hooker) In the article *Binary Oppositions* of the *Literary Encyclopedia* is written: “A binary opposition is a pair of opposites, thought by the Structuralists to powerfully form and organize human thought and culture. Some are commonsense, such as raw vs. cooked; however, many such oppositions imply or are used in such a way that privileges one of the terms of the opposition, creating a hierarchy”. (*Literary Encyclopedia*)

In the *Dictionary of Cultural and Critical Theory* is written about the binary opposition: “A relationship of opposition and mutual exclusion between two elements: a crucial term in the theories of structuralism. Examples of such oppositions would be masculine/ feminine, cold/heat, or up/down. The phrase appears in the work of the French structural anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss on myths, particularly those of the indigenous American tribes”. (*Dictionary of Cultural and*

Critical Theory) Eagleton wrote in *Working with Feminist Criticism* about 'patriarchal binary thought': "How these oppositions are constructed, the meanings they contain, what is revealed or hidden by such oppositions, how to separate these couples are important considerations. In literary circles discussions about canonical versus non-canonical texts, high culture versus popular culture, the imaginative versus the theoretical are all examples of debates related to binary thinking. (...) Feminists have found this subject relevant because of their belief that binary thinking upholds patriarchy: thus feminists have a vested interest in understanding and dismantling the processes of binary thought". (Eagleton 1996: 89) Research on opposition is as old as Western philosophy. The *Square of Opposition* is a collection of logical relationships in a square diagram. The doctrine of the square of opposition originated with Aristotle. (Parson) According to Ferdinand de Saussure, the binary opposition is the means by which the units of language have value or meaning. Binary opposition is according to the *Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* "the principle of contrast between two mutually exclusive terms: on/off, up/down, left/right etc; an important concept of structuralism, which sees such distinctions as fundamental to all language and thought. The theory of phonology developed by Roman Jakobson uses the concept of 'binary features', which are properties either present or absent in any phoneme: voicing, for example is present in /z/ but not in /s/. This concept has been extended to anthropology by Claude Lévi-Strauss (in such oppositions as nature/culture, raw/cooked, inedible/edible), and to narratology by A. J. Greimas (see actant)".

Hoa wrote in *Binary Oppositions of Cultural Values and Common Conceptions in Intercultural Communication*: "When two persons from two different cultures come into contact, a 'third' culture is constructed in interaction. An ability to do this is believed to be helpful in encounters. In particular it highlights the role of binary opposition of cultural values as a baseline for developing such understanding and knowledge with many values falling in the middle. It is, therefore, critical to keep in mind that such values should not be taken as absolute". (Hoa)

Rhetoric as a system ever since allowed the practitioner to apply it based upon a systematic variety of elements it offered written down in rhetorical treatises. While examining the rhetorical structures of antithesis as codified in rhetorical handbooks, we also face uncommon rhetorical terms. The antithetical construction of rhetorical figures is a means of persuasion. Blackwell-Starnes in *Deconstructing Rhetoric* wrote:

„Kristeva

Traditional language use depends on the positing of structures (thetic). Artistic practice, transgresses the boundaries of ordinary structures which fractures the traditional modes of significance to retrieve semiotic energy from the fracture. (Semiotics is the drive within the language or the «birth-

place» of the language). Harnessing this semiotic energy allows the artist to create new cultural meanings—new cultural signs—since meaning in culture is based on signs, Kristeva is arguing that the artist is creating a new sign. It is the semiotic energy that brings about a new text (this energy is referred to as the genotext). The energy of the genotext leads to the phenotext (the actual linguistic structure that results). With this pattern, Kristeva argues, the text is shaped by both the linguistic and social structures of the symbolic, cultural order”. (Blackwell-Starnes 2009)

Binarity is also structurally related to the antithetic construction of speech which finds its scientific place in system of rhetoric. In the *Dictionary Unabridged* the adjective ‘antithetic’ has the meanings 1. of the nature of or involving antithesis and 2. directly opposed or contrasted; opposite. Its origin can be traced back to the years 1575 to 1585 in the English language and Greek *antithetikós* as equivalent expression to ‘antithénai’ for ‘to set in opposition’. (*Dictionary Unabridged*) In *The Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia* antithesis is “a figure of speech involving a seeming contradiction of ideas, words, clauses, or sentences within a balanced grammatical structure. Parallelism of expression serves to emphasize opposition of ideas”. (*The Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia*). According to the *American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* an antithesis is 1. direct contrast; opposition. 2. The direct or exact opposite 3. A. A figure of speech in which sharply contrasting ideas are juxtaposed in a balanced or parallel phrase or grammatical structure. B. The second and contrasting part of such a juxtaposition. 4. The second stage of the Hegelian dialectic process, representing the opposite of the thesis. (*The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*). According to *Collins English Dictionary*, an antithesis comprises 1. the exact opposite, 2. contrast or opposition, 3. In rhetoric the juxtaposition of contrasting ideas, phrases, or words so as to reduce an effect of balance, such as my words fly up, my thoughts remain below, 4. In philosophy the second stage in the Hegelian dialectic contradicting the thesis before resolution by the synthesis. (*Collins English Dictionary*). According to *Collins Thesaurus of the English Language*, an antithesis as a noun comprises 1. opposite, contrast, reverse, contrary, converse, inverse, antipode They are the antithesis of the typical married couple and 2. contrast, opposition, contradiction, reversal, inversion, contrariety, contraposition the antithesis between instinct and reason. (*Collins Thesaurus of the English Language*). In rhetoric an antithesis is a juxtaposition of contrasting words or ideas (often, although not always, in parallel structure). This is closely related to the Topic of Invention: Contraries, and is sometimes known as the similarly named figure of thought, antitheton. (*Silvae Rhetoricae*). In the *English-German Dictionary* the English-German translation for antithesis suggests for ‘antithesis’ the German equivalents Gegensatz, Antithese, Widerspruch, Gegenpol, and Gegenbild. (*English-German Dictionary*). Antithesis etymologically can be traced back to Late Latin and Greek literally meaning ‘opposition’ derived from

antithenai 'to oppose'. 1529 it was used as the rhetorical contrast of ideas by means of parallel arrangements of words, clauses, or sentences. It is also used for opposition and contrast, and the second of two opposing constituents of an antithesis. In logic it is used for the second stage of a dialectic process. (*Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary*). The word *ἀντέμφοσις* is a difference of appearance. *ἀντεισαγωγή* is a compensatory antithesis. *ἀντίθεσις* is an opposition or resistance. The term *ἀντίθετος* means opposed or antithetic. *ἀντιφράζω* is 'to translate'. The word *ἀντίθεσις* is used for opposition; in Logic, it is the opposition of propositions, and substitution of the contradictory. In rhetoric it is an antithesis. In grammar, it is a change or transposition of a letter. (*A Greek-English Lexicon*). *Anteoccupatio* is in rhetoric an anticipation. (*An Elementary Latin Dictionary*). *A Glossary of Rhetorical Terms with Examples* uses antistrophe and antithesis. (*A Glossary of Rhetorical Terms with Examples*). *Antanaclasis* derived from Greek, ἀντανάκλασις, a figure of speech involving a pun, consisting of the repeated use of the same word, each time with different meanings. *Anthimeria* is the substitution of one part of speech for another (such as a noun used as a verb). It is traditionally called *antimeria*. *Antimetabole* is the repetition of two words or short phrases, but in reversed order to establish a contrast. It is a specialised form of chiasmus. *Antinome* means that two ideas about the same topic that can be worked out to a logical conclusion, but the conclusions contradict each other. *Antiptosis* is the substitution of one case for another. *Antistrophe* in rhetoric is the repeating the last word in successive phrases. *Antithesis* is of contrasting ideas in balanced or parallel words, phrases, or grammatical structures; the second stage of the dialectic process. *Backing* is the supporting an argument's merit. *Charisma* is an attribute that allows a speaker's words to become powerful. *Ideology* is a way of understanding one's external surroundings.

1.2. RESEARCH CONCERNING THE BINARITY IN COMMUNICATION

LeBaron wrote in *Communication Tools for Understanding Cultural Differences at Beyond Intractability* on cultural diversity: "Progress through conflict is possible, and the route is twofold. First, self-knowledge and self-awareness are needed. Without these, our seemingly normal approaches to meaning-making and communication will never be clear enough that we can see them for what they are: a set of lenses that shape what we see, hear, say, understand, and interpret. Second, cultural fluency is needed, meaning familiarity with culture and the ability to act on that familiarity. Cultural fluency means understanding what culture is, how it works, and the ways culture and communication are intertwined with conflicts". (LeBaron) The question 'What is intercultural communication?' Nemše mentioned regarding a 'critical concepts in intercultural communication': "The concept of social distance depicts "the degree to which an individual perceives a lack

of intimacy with individuals different in ethnicity, race, religion, occupation, or other variables. Culture specifies how intimate or socially distant two individuals should be in a given situation, e.g. when do newly acquainted people start using the first names”. (Nemše) Cox wrote in *The Future of Client Communications in MSDN Blogs* (9th of Jan. 2011): The way we communicate is undergoing profound transformation. Text messaging is replacing traditional conversation in many families. Whether we communicate through laptops, slates or smart phones, electronic communication is becoming pervasive. There are risks and rewards from this new chapter in communications implying profound changes in the way we develop, share and exchange information; even the way we work and play”. (Cox)

‘My’ Culture	‘Their’ Culture
‘My’ Language	‘Their’ Language
‘My’ Aim	‘Their’ Aim

Illustration 3. Binariness within Business Communication

2. THE CATEGORIZATION OF BUSINESS CULTURES AS A RESEARCH APPROACH

DiploFoundation wrote on the categorizing of cultures: “Just what are the differences between cultures? Is it useful to look for patterns or categories to make it easier for us to understand these differences? (...) However, we should beware of creating and reinforcing stereotypes. Creating categories ignores fact that within any cultural are sub-groups which may have different traits, and also that individuals within a culture may not follow the norm. Rigid adherence to categories may lead to false assumptions”. (*DiploFoundation*) The categorization made by Lewis is mentioned here: “Richard D. Lewis, author of *When Cultures Collide: Managing Successfully Across Cultures* (London: Nicholas Brealey, 1993), divides cultural characteristics into three groups: “linear active”, “multiactive” and “reactive”. He argues, that people of different nations exhibit characteristics from each of these groups to different degrees. (...) The nations with the most linear active traits are the Germans and the Swiss. Typical examples of multiactive nations are Latin Americans, Arabs, Africans, Indians and Pakistanis. Nations showing reactive traits are the Japanese, and to a lesser degree the Chinese”. (*DiploFoundation*) The question ‘Why is it Important to Understand Other Cultures?’ Griffith answered as follows: “There is no one “right” culture and because of this it shouldn’t be expected for one culture to completely conform to another. International Business is expanding. Many companies are going global. Recruitment, sales, management, marketing and workplace environment are all affected by cultures within your organization. It is important to note that a company does not need to be international to have different cultures within it”. (Griffith)

3. BUSINESS COMMUNICATION AS MEDIUM FOR UNDERSTANDING IN BUSINESS CULTURES

LeBaron wrote in *Communication Tools for Understanding Cultural Differences at Beyond Intractability* on 'high-context communication' and 'low-context communication': "Communication is the vehicle by which meanings are conveyed, identity is composed and reinforced, and feelings are expressed. As we communicate using different cultural habits and meaning systems, both conflict and harmony are possible outcomes of any interaction". (LeBaron) Gupta in *A Quick Guide to Cultural Competency* wrote on communication styles: "There has been a great deal of research done on different communication styles between the genders. Add in national origin, culture and subcultures, accents, and language barriers, to name a few, and you can see how the workforce today is faced with a much more complex situation. So, how do you communicate effectively when you are dealing with so many variables? In business, clarity in communication is vital". (Gupta) *The International Encyclopedia of Communication* writes about business discourse: "Studies of business discourse examine how the work of a business institution gets accomplished through talk and texts. Academic and practitioner interest in business discourse has emerged in a social context where business institutions, notably corporations, have a powerful presence in the world". (*The International Encyclopedia of Communication*) Kemper wrote in the *International Encyclopedia of Communication* that "the "law and policy of government speech" in different countries typically depends upon the nature and type of each government and how much that government controls its press systems. Globalization and related changes to governments more and more influence how those laws and policies are shaped (Globalization Theories)". (Kemper) We can consider speech as the genuine human part within modern mass media. While the transmission is technically realized, the transmitted contents is genuine human speech in the means of the medium used.

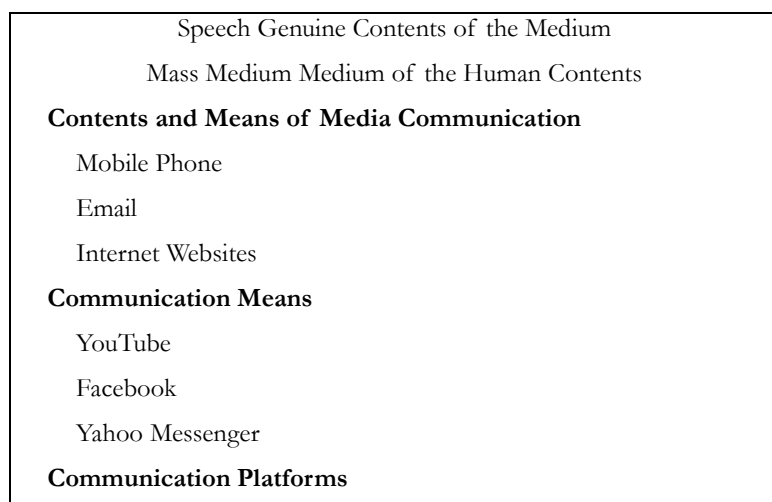


Illustration 4. Communication Means Platforms

4. THE BINARY STRUCTURES OF VALUES IN COMMUNICATION IN CULTURAL ANALYSIS

4.1. THE BINARITY OF HIGH AND LOW CONTEXT COMMUNICATION

Hooker wrote in *Cultural Differences in Business Communication*: “Low- and high-context communication styles are, at root, contrasting approaches to regulating behavior. One way to identify a low-context culture is that behavior norms are often communicated by putting them in writing rather than through personal enforcement”. (Hooker) The blogger Jeffrey wrote in *High Context vs. Low Context Communication*: “First used by author Edward Hall, the expressions ‘high context’ and ‘low context’ are labels denoting inherent cultural differences between societies. High-context and low-context communication refers to how much speakers rely on things other than words to convey meaning. Hall states that in communication, individuals face many more sensory cues than they are able to fully process”. (Jeffrey) Jeffrey wrote in *High Context vs. Low Context Communication*: “In today’s business relations, it’s a small world after all. As more companies turn towards global markets, professionals are finding themselves in foreign locales, wheeling and dealing like never before. However, the key to effective communication between countries is an understanding of each other’s culture, especially a working knowledge of how each society conveys meaning”. (Jeffrey) Jeffrey made the following contrasts:

Communication
Interaction
Association

Illustration 5. Categories of Binariness

Beer wrote in *High and Low Context at Culture at Work*: “The general terms “high context” and “low context” (popularized by Edward Hall) are used to describe broad-brush cultural differences between societies. High context refers to societies or groups where people have close connections over a long period of time”. (Beer) Beer wrote in *High and Low Context at Culture at Work*:

High Context	Low Context
Less verbally explicit communication	Rule oriented
Less written/formal information	Performance according to external rules
More internalized understandings of what is communicated	Knowledge is codified, public, external, and accessible
Multiple cross-cutting ties and intersections with others	Sequencing
Long term relationships	Separation of time, of space, of activities, of relationships

Strong boundaries	Interpersonal connections of shorter duration
Knowledge is situational, relational	Knowledge is more often transferable
Decisions and activities focus around personal face-to-face relationships	Task-centered
Central person with authority	Decisions and activities focus around goals
	High separation of work responsibilities

(Beer)

Beer wrote in *High and Low Context at Culture at Work*: "While these terms are sometimes useful in describing some aspects of a culture, one can never say a culture is "high" or "low" because societies all contain both modes. "High" and "low" are therefore less relevant as a description of a whole people, and more useful to describe and understand particular situations and environments". (Beer) 'Ambiguity' is a term used to synthesize the mixture of cultures with high and low context: "Measured by the use of ambiguities in peace agreements, there is no significant difference between so-called "low-context" and "high-context" cultures. Both low- and high-context cultures use ambiguous language to bridge the gap between negotiating parties. We have Wilson's 14 Points side by side with the Oslo Accords; Chinese cross-textual ambiguities in the Shanghai Communiqué together with American referential ambiguities in the very same document". (*DiploFoundation*) According to *DiploFoundation*, Arab culture, for example, is high context as Arab negotiators attach great importance to context, for example history, and make a sharp distinction between the way matters of state should be conducted and matters of commerce. The first is the realm of principle and morals, and the second, the realm of haggling. Arab negotiators attach high importance to creating bonds of friendship and trust between negotiators, and respect for the honor and dignity of negotiating partners. Less developed, traditional societies tend to give rise to a high context approach". (*DiploFoundation*) According to *DiploFoundation*, the USA are a low context culture: "American society is typical of the low context approach of more developed countries. These cultures view negotiation as an exercise in collective problem solving: knowledge and expertise are applied to find mutually acceptable solutions to problems, and partners expect to adopt a give-and-take approach. Low context cultures subordinate history, personal honour and personal relationships for the purpose of agreement". (*DiploFoundation*)

4.2. THE BINARITY OF POLYCHRONIC CULTURES VS. MONOCHROMIC CULTURES

According to LeBaron, the difference between polychronic cultures and monochronic cultures can be described as a culture, where negotiators from polychronic cultures tend to start and

end meetings at flexible times, take breaks when it seems appropriate, are comfortable with a high flow of information, expect to read each others' thoughts and minds, sometimes overlap talk, and view start times as flexible and not take lateness personally. On the contrary, negotiators from monochronic cultures tend to prefer prompt beginnings and endings, schedule breaks, deal with one agenda item at a time, rely on specific, detailed, and explicit communication, prefer to talk in sequence, and view lateness as devaluing or evidence of lack of respect. (LeBaron) LeBaron used the example of the monochronic time of the Anglo Saxons as contrast of the polychronic time of other areas in the world.

Monochronic Time (Anglo Saxons)	Polychronic time (everyone else)
High Context	Low Context
Clock Time	Situational time
Appointment time	Flexitime
Segmented time	Simultaneous activities
Task-oriented time	Relationship-oriented perspective
Achievement tempos	Experiential Tempos

(LeBaron)

4.3. THE OPPOSITION OF INDIVIDUALISTIC AND COLLECTIVISTIC VALUES

Leake and Black wrote in *Part III — Continuum of "Individualistic" and "Collectivistic" Values of Essential Tools: Cultural and Linguistic Diversity: Implications for Transition Personnel* : "Transition policies and practices typically assume that youth with disabilities and their families give priority to individual-oriented outcomes such as self-determination, self-reliance, and independent living. (...) "Values" as used here includes beliefs, assumptions, and attitudes. "Worldview" is another term that could be used in this way. Values in this broad sense are assumed to guide how people live their lives, including their moral judgments, goals, and behaviors. Exploring and understanding the values of youth and their families is therefore an important key for planning and providing transition services and supports, and in achieving better outcomes". (Leake; Black) Leake and Black wrote on 'decision-making: "Culture influences how decisions are made within a family. In traditional collectivistic cultures, there is likely to be a social hierarchy based on gender, birth order, and/or age. Family elders may be highly respected, and they often have roles of authority with responsibility to make sure family members do what is best for the family rather than what is best for themselves as individuals. Elders may have final say about how far their children go in school, who they marry, or where they work. (...) In American individualism, the ideal is for all

people to be able to freely make their own decisions. The opinions of family elders may be respected, but as youth enter adulthood, they expect and are expected to make decisions about their own lives". (Leake; Black) LeBaron wrote in *Communication Tools for Understanding Cultural Differences at Beyond Intractability* on 'individual identity' and 'communitarian identity': "Individual and communitarian identities are two quite different ways of being in the world. They connect at some point, of course, since all groups are made up of individuals and all individuals find themselves in relationship with various groups. But the starting points are different. To discern the basic difference, ask yourself which is most in the foreground of your life, the welfare, development, security, prosperity, and well-being of yourself and others as individuals, or the shared heritage, ecological resources, traditional stories, and group accomplishments of your people? Generally, those who start with individualism as their beginning tend to be most comfortable with independence, personal achievement, and a competitive conflict style. Those who start with a communal orientation are more focused on social connections, service, and a cooperative conflict style". (LeBaron)

4.4. THE BINARITY OF HOFSTEDE'S PARAMETERS OF GEERT HOFSTEDE'S FOUR DIMENSIONS 'POWER DISTANCE', 'INDIVIDUALISM', 'UNCERTAINTY AVOIDANCE', AND 'MASCULINITY'

Hofstede's four dimensions are:

1. Power Distance
2. Individualism
3. Uncertainty Avoidance
4. Masculinity

Of course these are compound criteria that implement the opposition of two aspects: 'Power Distance' consists of the oppositions of 'farness' and 'nearness'. 'Individualism' consists of the oppositions of 'individuality' and 'group socialization'. 'Uncertainty avoidance' consists of the oppositions of 'certainty' and 'uncertainty'. 'Masculinity' consists of the oppositions of 'femininity' and 'masculinity'. Durant and Shepherd wrote in *'Culture' and 'Communication' in Intercultural Communication* that "one important starting point in thinking about 'culture', in the context of intercultural communication, is the amount of baggage carried by generalized differences between national cultures. Caution is needed, for instance, in relation to studies inspired by Hofstede's (1983) influential work on regionally different world views (cf. his concepts of 'power-distance' and 'uncertainty avoidance' as characteristics of social behaviour and attitude that make it possible to differentiate between regional cultures)". (Durant, Shepherd: 151) Ac-

According to *Kwintessential*, the 'Power Distance' "relates to the degree of equality/inequality between people in a particular society. A country with a high 'power distance' score both accepts and perpetuates inequalities between people. An example of such a society would be one that follows a caste system and in which upward mobility is very limited. A low 'power distance' indicates that a society does not emphasise differences in people's status, power or wealth. Equality is seen as the collective aim of society and upward mobility is common". (*Kwintessential*) 'Individualism' "focuses on the degree to which a society reinforces individual or collective achievement and interpersonal relationships. If a country has a high 'individualism' score, this indicates that individuality and individual rights are dominant. Individuals in these societies tend to form relationships with larger numbers of people, but with the relationships being weak. A low Individualism score points to a society that is more collectivist in nature. In such countries the ties between individuals are very strong and the family is given much more weight. In such societies members lean towards collective responsibility". (*Kwintessential*) 'Uncertainty avoidance' "concerns the level of acceptance for uncertainty and ambiguity within a society. A country with a high 'uncertainty avoidance' score will have a low tolerance towards uncertainty and ambiguity". (*Kwintessential*) Masculinity "pertains to the degree societies reinforce, or do not reinforce, the traditional masculine work role model of male achievement, control, and power. A high 'masculinity' score indicates that a country experiences a higher degree of gender differentiation. In such cultures, males tend to dominate a significant portion of the society and power structure". (*Kwintessential*)

4.5. BINARITIES IN OTHER CONTRASTIVE APPROACHES FOR THE CATEGORIZATION OF CULTURES

4.5.1. Binarities of *DiploFoundation*

According to *DiploFoundation*, other approaches for the categorization of cultures are 'Masculine Approaches to Interaction' vs. 'Feminine Approaches to Interaction'. Masculine cultures value achievement, assertiveness, heroism, and material wealth. Feminine cultures value relationships, caring for the less fortunate, and overall quality of life. The dimension 'Tolerance of Uncertainty' vs. 'Avoidance of Uncertainty' refers to cultures in which people need certainty to feel secure are more likely to have and enforce rigid rules for behavior and develop more elaborate codes of conduct, either formal or informal. The dimension 'Concentrated Power' vs. "Decentralized Power' is concerning the fact that some cultures value equality and distribution of power more. Others expect a hierarchy and that some people will have more power than others. The dimension 'Individual Achievement' vs. 'Group Achievement' is a categorie concerning

the fact that some cultures put more emphasis on individualism; some place most emphasis on the good of the group. (*DiploFoundation*)

4.5.2. The *Binary Pair Method* of Setting Cultural Categories

Chaney and Martin in chapter 4 *Oral and Nonverbal Communication Patterns* of the book *Intercultural Business Communication* introduced the following binary pairs of the characterization of cultures. The dimension 'Monochronic Time' vs. 'Polychronic Time' is related to attitudes toward time, which vary from culture to culture. Countries that follow monochronic time perform only one major activity at a time (U.S., England, Switzerland, Germany). Countries that follow polychronic time work on several activities simultaneously (Latin America, the Mediterranean, the Arabs). (Chaney; Martin) The dimension 'Deductive Reasoning' vs. 'Inductive Reasoning' is concerning thinking. Deductive reasoning means going from broad categories or observations to specific examples; U.S. persons use deductive reasoning. Inductive reasoning starts with observations or facts and goes to generalizations; Asians use inductive reasoning. (Chaney; Martin) The dimension 'Voice Loudness' vs. 'Voice Softness' is used for differences in loudness of speech is culture specific and gender specific: Arabs speak loudly; this is an indication of strength and sincerity. People of the Philippines and Thailand speak softly; it indicates breeding and education. Males usually speak louder than females and at a lower pitch than females. Rate of speech varies with the region of the U.S.; Northerners speak faster than Southerners. (Chaney; Martin)

4.5.3. Fons Trompenaars' Cultural Dimensions

Trompenaars also presents his cultural dimensions as binary settings.

'Achievement' vs. 'Ascription'

'Individualism' vs. 'Communication'

'Human-Time Relationship'

'Specific' vs. 'Diffuse'

'Universalism' vs. 'Particularism'

'Neutral' vs. 'Affective'

People from achievement-oriented countries respect their colleagues based on previous Achievements, while people from ascription-oriented cultures use their titles extensively and usually respect their superiors in hierarchy. The dimension 'Individualism' vs. 'Communication' classifies countries according to the balance between the individual and group interests. People from individualistic cultures ideally achieve alone and assume personal responsibility; on the contrary,

people from communitarian cultures ideally achieve in groups which assume joint responsibility. The dimension ‘Human-Time Relationship’ is established concerning the fact that different cultures assign diverse meanings to the past, present and future. People in past-oriented cultures tend to show respect for ancestors and older people and frequently put things in a traditional or historic context. People in present-oriented cultures enjoy the activities of the moment and present relationships. People from future-oriented cultures enjoy discussing prospects, potentials and future achievement. The dimension ‘Specific’ vs. ‘Diffuse’ indicates differences in how people engage colleagues in specific or multiple areas of their lives. The dimension ‘Universalism’ vs. ‘Particularism’ indicates how people judge the behaviors of their colleagues. Universalistic cultures are focusing more on rules, being precise when defining contracts, tendency to define global standards for company policies and human resources practices. Particularistic cultures are focusing more on the relationships; contracts can be adapted to satisfy new requirements in specific situations and local variations of company and human resources policies are created to adapt to different requirements. The dimension ‘Neutral’ vs. ‘Affective’ is about the behavior of people; people from neutral cultures admire cool and self-possessed conducts and control their feelings, which can suddenly explode during stressful periods. People from cultures high on affectivity use all forms of gesturing, smiling and body language to openly voice their feelings, and admire heated, vital and animated expressions. (Binder)

4.5.4. Other Binary Structures Human-Nature Relationship (Internal Control vs. External Control)

According to Nemše, this dimension indicates how people from different countries relate to their natural environment and changes. Global project stakeholders from internal-oriented cultures may show a more dominant attitude, focus on their own functions and groups and be uncomfortable in change situations. Stakeholders from external-oriented cultures are generally more flexible and willing to compromise, valuing harmony and focusing on their colleagues, being more comfortable with change. (Nemše)

5. CASE STUDIES OF THE CONTRIBUTION OF PROFESSIONAL AND EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS TO INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION STUDIES

In this part of the article we look at the practical use of the binarity of intercultural studies in business organizations. On the German website *Via-web.de International Business Cultures* was written on the conceptualization of culture: “Culture can’t be defined specifically because it the meaning is different for each individual. It is dependent on the circumstances in a society

someone grows up and any other influences in daily life. The definition of culture develops with the individual's experiences". (*Via-web.de International Business Cultures*) Here was written regarding the conceptualization of culture that "there are no definitions which describe the term culture exactly/precisely". Stereotypes are necessary for the description of antithetical or binary oppositions following the assumption that all members of a society behave in a certain way. The business organization *Via-web.de* emphasized stereotypes for the description of a culture: "Most cases are accompanied by stereotypes which probably describe a country's or group's culture roughly (best). Alike stereotypes of course just reflect the basics of a culture which might also not always suit/fit. During the process of adapting to/learning a culture's specific (secret) niceties in most cases we get taught and guided by people of our society which know the cultural background like teachers, friends etc. This means learning in the way groups behave. The most important influence do have our parents which reach us also the right moral understanding they have learned as our cultural tradition because you are not born with an understanding of culture". (*Via-web.de International Business Cultures*).

The U.K.-based company *Cengage Learning* focuses in their business concept on the general antithesis between "Us and Them" and the distinction of two different cultures, when writing about their approach of learning about different cultures: "The basic energizing motive for this book has remained the same since we became interested in the topic of intercultural communication over forty years ago. We believe that the ability to communicate effectively with people from other cultures and co-cultures benefits each of us as individuals and has the potential to benefit the nearly seven billion people with whom we share this planet. We have intentionally selected materials that will assist you in understanding those intercultural communication principles that are instrumental to success when you interact with people from diverse cultures. Fundamental to our approach is the conviction that communication is a social activity; it is something people do to and with one another". (*Cengage Learning*)

Diplomacy as a tool of management between cultures is considered an approach to intercultural business as promoted by the organization *DiploFoundation*. *DiploFoundation* is a non-profit organization based in Malta with offices in Geneva and Belgrade. In June 2006 *DiploFoundation* was granted Special Consultative Status with the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). *DiploFoundation* also plays an important role in a number of global networks, including the Global Knowledge Partnership, the International Forum on Diplomatic Training and the European Diplomatic Training Initiative. (*DiploFoundation*) According to its self-description, key concepts of *DiploFoundation* are:

“Innovation: we are a leading training organization in the field of diplomacy and international relations today because of our commitment to innovation in online learning.

Quality: we strive to offer high quality educational experiences and materials, equally attractive and useful for individuals and institutions in developed and developing countries.

Personal touch: the personal dedication of the Diplo team and the recognition of each learner as an individual are always highly rated in surveys, informal reviews and feedback from our course participants and collaborators. Development cooperation: we have an ongoing commitment to strengthening diplomatic practice and international relations for a range of stakeholders in developing countries in particular. Contemporary focus: our education, training and capacity building initiatives focus on topics of relevance to today’s diplomatic scene, whether these are new areas of study, or traditional topics examined through a contemporary lens. Theory to practice: our activities aim to bridge the gap between theoretical concepts and practical solutions; this is done through close links with real communities of practice and through studying real-life problems. Multistakeholder approach: diplomacy is no longer the exclusive domain of states and diplomats; we promote the involvement of new players, including NGOs, academia, the private sector, and the media”. (*DiploFoundation*)

6. CASE STUDIES OF INTERNATIONAL MARKETING AND CULTURE LESSON PROFESSIONAL MARKETING OF INTERCULTURAL BUSINESS COMMUNICATION:

In *What is the Influence of Culture on International Marketing?* on the website *Marketing Teacher Ltd 2000 — 2011* was written: “Culture is the way that we do things around here. Culture could relate to a country (national culture), a distinct section of the community (sub-culture), or an organization (corporate culture). It is widely accepted that you are not born with a culture, and that it is learned”. (*Marketing Teacher Ltd 2000 — 2011*) In this essay is mentioned that “international marketing needs to take into account the local culture of the country in which you wish to market”. (*Marketing Teacher Ltd 2000 — 2011*) In the professional writings of business professionals that claim to serve with their services as support for companies dealing with international business partners. Here the ‘foreign’ culture is describes with its main cultural features and customs and the advice is the imitation following ‘if you are in Rome, do as the Romans do’ to the extent of the acceptance of the other culture. Business Communication is on the professional website *Effective Business Communication. Negotiating, Making Presentations, Managerial Communication, Cross-Cultural Communication* that serves as a platform for professional business services defined as “any communication used to build partnerships, intellectual resources, to promote an idea, a product,

service, or an organization — with the objective of creating value for your business”. (*Effective Business Communication*) The website also mentions the following assets:

“Effective communication helps you:

anticipate problems

make decisions

coordinate workflow

supervise others

develop relationships

manage knowledge, ideas and creativity

create a clear vision and energize employees

promote products and services”. (*Effective Business Communication*)

Bilinguality is a tool considered useful to overcome binarities of intercultural business communication of the the Italian company *Business Talk*. Among the services offered by this company *Business Talk* we find the following statement:

“Communication Skills Courses

To play a leading part in today’s global environment, it is no longer enough to be able to «get by» in English. Whether you are a company executive who needs to negotiate contracts with foreign clients, a local government representative who frequently attends meetings in Brussels, or a doctor who wants to attend international conferences, you need to be able to communicate accurately, effectively, and persuasively.

Business Talk’s Communication Skills Courses aim to help you do exactly that.

Available at intermediate and advanced levels, depending on topic, each programme lasts between 12 and 30 hours and may be run intensively, semi-intensively or as an ongoing course. Many of the courses also have an optional on-line follow-up component”. (*Business Talk*)

The Irish company *Business Talk* describes as a service provider of setting of international communication objectives:

“Business Talk offers clients a total package in the delivery of communications objectives; the creation and development of its brand image; the promotion of its products and services; the auditing and improvement of internal communications, the provision of re-active internal and external communications in crisis situations; and in the shaping and implementation of policies, programmes and activities consistent with the client’s stated business objectives”. (*Business Talk*)

The company *Peptalk* write about itself that it serves international Public Relations guidelines in order to manage binary and opposite concepts of communication:

„Do you need some advice regarding public relations? Not sure where to start looking? Visit us for a PR Peptalk, and everything will become clear...

Raise company or product awareness Communicate to stakeholders

Launch a service or product Target a new sector

Increase sales enquiries Attract new employees

Attract investor interest Enhance your reputation

Differentiate from your competitors”. (*Peptalk*)

7. A RESEARCH MODEL ON BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

The presentation of business communication of different cultures is often done in professional writings of the business communication industry that advice how to maintain etiquette in business communication that involves participants from more than one culture. So the documentation about intercultural business in various cultures is based upon the professional writings of this business aiming to increase the business culture between two cultures. This material aims to help in a practical way how to deal with another culture. Another area contributing to the research about business cultures is the research done by various researchers and institutions. Also here we find meta-level of discourse that introduces set values and binary structures as a structure for the analysis. The parameters of this research approach are binary. The contrastive analysis of the parameters of the values allows the interpreter to compare two cultures regarding one value. Both the self-representation of a culture and the representation of the other culture is based upon specific assumption about the culture we will call in the following text claimed value. Such a value can be theoretically negative or positive; they are in general positive qualities, since it is uncommon to formulate negative values. The research about intercultural communication is in many cases a descriptive study of cultural habits unique to the way business communication is performed in a culture. It often overlaps with the every-day life of this culture and commonly shared global business attitudes.

Every-Day Life Attitudes of a Culture

Cultural Business Attitudes

Global Business Attitudes

Illustration 6. Elements of Business Attitudes

Claimed values are in many research approaches binary assumptions. They derive from binary structures of opposed values. As such they are from a postmodern perspective not accepted,

since here ambivalence and polyvalence is the predominant type of cultural representation. For example Hograefe's study is based upon the selection of one value with has a pendant, e.g. masculinity vs. femininity.

Self-Representation Representation of the Other Culture
Educational Institutions Business Communication
Business Institutions Business Communication

Illustration 3. Form of Representation

The binarity of values we discuss in the following part. The binarity of values is an assessment tool based upon the existence of a value x or the opposite of the value x , $-x$. Besides the existence of the value x or its opposite the value $-x$, a non-existence of both values or the existence of both values, x and $-x$, is possible. The values are abstract and the interpreter of the culture must decide if they exist or not. A set of sub-values is a helping tool to decide if the value x or $-x$ exist in a society. So a culture can be classified as a masculine culture or a feminine culture, a culture with none of these values at all, or is a mixture of both values. This is an example for the establishment of values in cultural comparative research studies. The meta-level of discourse is created by the setting of parameters, which aim to be universal.

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