

Example A3.2.2 Middle East travelogue

Part 1

A well-known television travel correspondent is doing a series of programmes on Middle Eastern countries. At the end of her programme on Turkey, she is filmed standing on the Syrian border and announcing that her next programme would take her to 'fundamentalist' Syria. The next programme on Syria fronts images of men in kufiyahs and women in abayahs (traditional Arab women's dress) in the old quarters of Damascus and Aleppo.

Part 2

Matthew recently visited Damascus with a group of colleagues, all of whom were well-travelled and sensitive to issues of otherization. Nevertheless, he found himself on

the edge of a discussion of how the dress code for women visitors might be relaxed because there was 'now' a new president. The implication was that 'now' Syrian society might be more modern ('equals liberal' 'equals less fundamentalist' 'equals allowing women to cover less'). He had been in Damascus fifteen years before when the previous government had prohibited university students from wearing Islamic hejab (the head cover for Muslim women) and *abayahs* on the campus; but he did not feel it appropriate to bring this up on the edge of this casual conversation as they were getting on the conference bus. He thus allowed the dominant discourse to rule.

The dominant discourse is so strong that the correspondent probably did not notice the other images

people wearing the traditional dress of the region might not be fundamentalist at all, and might not even be Muslim but Christian.

Example A3.2.3 Traffic problems

In a popular tourist guide series, which has the reputation of being progressive and culturally sensitive, there is a reference to traffic problems in Tehran. It is commented that the inhabitants of this country are just beginning to learn to use traffic lights.

-a less improper use of traffic lights than might have been observed elsewhere.

One can observe, for example, that motorcyclists will sometimes position themselves in front of motorists, in front of the line at which motorists have stopped; and indeed the line itself might be interpreted liberally by some motorists.

factually inaccurate to say that Iranians are just learning to use traffic lights..

Example A3.2.4 Israeli schoolchildren

There is a short piece on a news programme about how children in an Israeli school are coping with the atmosphere of terrorism surrounding the Palestinian–Israeli conflict in the spring of 2002. The school and the children look affluent and middle class. Those who are interviewed speak calmly and articulately. This is followed by a scene of Palestinians throwing stones at Israeli soldiers in a West Bank urban setting with dust, rubble and unfinished building sites.

Israeli school children, seemed ‘normal’, ‘calm’ and (presumably) vs stone-throwing Palestinians.

Example A3.2.5 Abducted children

A television documentary tells a story of a group of British (Anglo-Christian) women travelling to a Middle-eastern country to see their children who have been ‘abducted’ by their Middle-eastern ex-husbands. The men are characterized as despotic; they do not respect prior agreements; they will imprison their children; women and children in their society have no rights.

7 the documentary is one-sided

Thus, the essentialist packaging of the Middle-eastern Other is perpetuated

Example A3.2.6 Abuse of women

An item about the abuse of British women by their husbands appears on a radio discussion programme. However, it quickly becomes apparent that the focus of the item is Hindu and Muslim Asian families. Another radio discussion features a British Asian academic who makes the point that outsiders to 'British culture' might well think that it is characterized by paedophilia, given the quantity of discussion of this issue in the British media.

It may or may not be the case that such abuse is more common within Asian families than within other British families.

Communication

1. Be aware of **dominant discourses** which are easily perpetuated by the **media**, and which lead us to 'think-as-usual' that familiar images of the **foreign Other** are 'normal'.
2. Be aware that even images projected by **sensitive, intellectual sources** can seduce our own sensitivities and intellects into **thinking that they are 'true'**.
3. Although **sensationalism** in the media is something we know about and guard against, we need to appreciate how deeply it exists in our traditional views of the foreign Other.

Task A3.2.1 Thinking about representation



- Think of a situation you have been in or observed that is like one of the examples presented in this unit and describe it in similar detail.
- Provide an example of naturalization in the description and try to link it with a dominant discourse.

DISCIPLINES FOR INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

Table 4 Disciplines

Discussion	Statement	Summary
	Identity	
Unit A1.1 you findpage 6 have	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Respond to people according to how them rather than according to what you heard about them. 2. Avoid easy answers about how people are. Bracket – put aside simplistic notions about what is ‘real’ or ‘unreal’ in your perception of ‘another culture’. 3. Appreciate that every society is as complex and culturally varied as your own. 4. Learn to build up thick descriptions of what happens between you and others – to work out how to communicate as you go along. 	<p>Seek a deeper understanding of individual people’s identity by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) avoiding preconceptions b) appreciating complexity c) not overgeneralizing from individual instances.
Unit A1.2 about page 10 evidence	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. While respecting whatever people say their own culture, take what they say as of what they wish to project rather than as information about where they come from. 6. Take what people say about their own culture as a personal observation which should not be generalized to other people who come from the same background. 	<p>Achieve this by employing <i>bracketing</i> to put aside your preconceptions, <i>thick description</i> to enable you to see complexity, and an appreciation of <i>emergent data</i> to signal the unexpected.</p>
Unit A1.3 and page 16 in the	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Understand how people are creating indeed negotiating their cultural identity very process of communicating with us. 8. Appreciate that you are creating and negotiating your own cultural identity in the process of communicating with others. 9. Appreciate that the creation and negotiation of cultural and personal identity are the same thing. 	

Table 4 (continued)

<i>Discussion</i>	<i>Statement</i>	<i>Summary</i>
	Otherization	
Unit A2.1 page 21	10. Avoid falling into the culturist trap of reducing people to less than they are – in the same way as we must avoid racist and sexist traps.	Seek a deeper understanding of the prejudices, preoccupations and discourses which lead you to otherize.
Unit A2.2 page 25	11. Be aware that what happens between yourself and others is influenced very much by the environment within which you are communicating and your own preoccupations. 12. Become aware of your own preoccupations in order to understand what it is that people from other backgrounds are responding to.	Use this to enable bracketing and to manage your own role in communication.
Unit A2.3 page 30	13. Avoid being seduced by previous experience of the exotic. 14. Monitor our own language and be aware of the destructive, culturist discourses we might be conforming to or perpetuating.	
	Representation	
Unit A3.1 page 36	15. Be aware of the media, political and institutional influences in our own society which lead us to see people from other cultural backgrounds in a certain way. 16. See through these images and fictions when we encounter people from other cultural backgrounds, and always try to consider alternative representations.	Seek a deeper understanding of the representations of the foreign Other which are perpetuated by society.
Unit A3.2 page 41	17. Be aware of dominant discourses which are easily perpetuated by the media, and which lead us to 'think-as-usual' that familiar images of the foreign Other are 'normal'. 18. Be aware that even images projected by sensitive, intellectual sources can seduce our own sensitivities and intellects into thinking that they are 'true'. 19. Although sensationalism in the media is something we know about and guard against, we need to appreciate how deeply it exists in our traditional views of the foreign Other.	

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YMyofREc5Jk> Pellegrino on intercultural communication

SECTION

B

Introduction

UNIT B0.1

'CULTURE' AND 'COMMUNITY' IN EVERYDAY DISCOURSE



Task B0.1.1

The word 'culture' is used in many different ways (often in combination with other words) and with a variety of different meanings.

LAYERS OF CULTURE

People even within the same culture carry several layers of mental programming within themselves. Different layers of culture exist at the following levels:

- The national level: Associated with the nation as a whole.
- The regional level: Associated with ethnic, linguistic, or religious differences that exist within a nation.
- The gender level: Associated with gender differences (female vs. male)
- The generation level: Associated with the differences between grandparents and parents, parents and children.
- The social class level: Associated with educational opportunities and differences in occupation.
- The corporate level: Associated with the particular culture of an organization. Applicable to those who are employed.

CULTURAL DETERMINISM ⁶

- The position that the ideas, meanings, beliefs and values people learn as members of society determines human nature.

CULTURAL RELATIVISM

- Different cultural groups think, feel, and act differently. Do not judge other cultures using your culture as ‘the norm’
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CULTURAL ETHNOCENTRISM

- Ethnocentrism is the belief that one's own culture is superior to that of other cultures.