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International business wanTED

Manifestation of the cultural characteristics of international communication in the light of Hungarian and American TED talks

PhD dissertation

THESIS BOOK

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1. Introduction

1.1. The relevance of the research

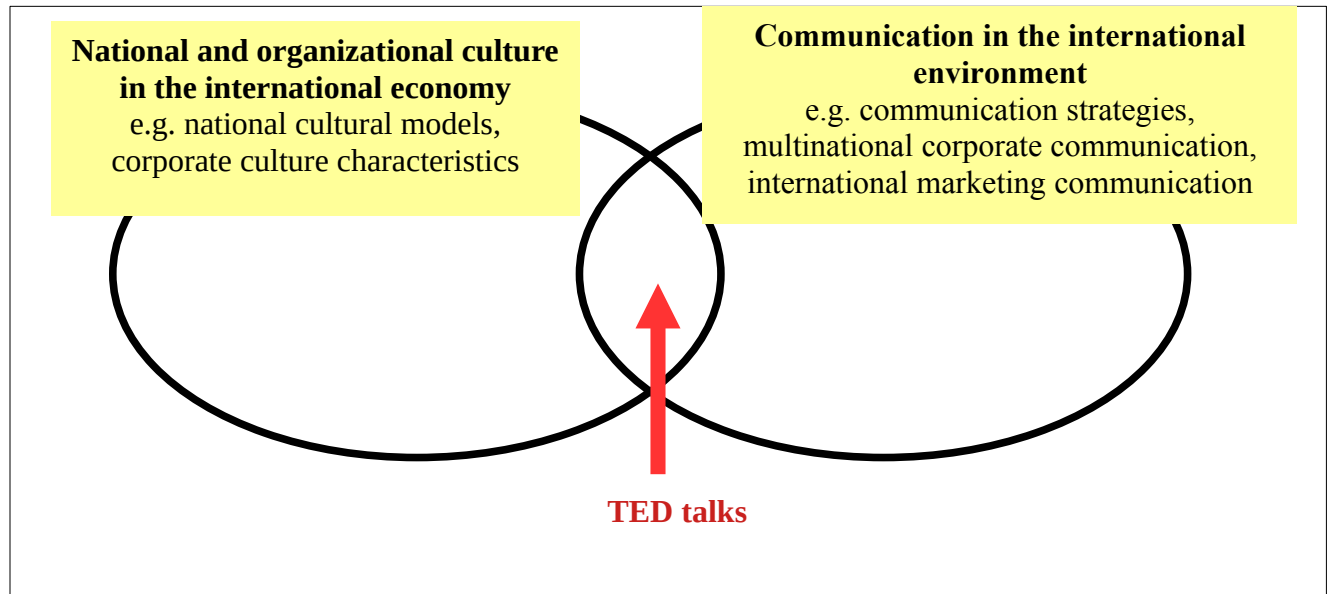
In the 21st century, as a result of globalization, digitization and easier transportation in the international business world, effective cross-cultural communication is becoming increasingly important for companies that want to be successful on the international stage. Whether it is written (business correspondence, contracts) or oral communication (e.g. international negotiation, product or company presentation, conference presentation, etc.), culture and communication are closely intertwined (Merkin et al., 2014). According to Vilert (2011), spoken and written language conveys cultural values, beliefs and behavioural patterns.

Intercultural communication challenges can be considered an everyday problem in international economy and business life. It is not surprising that cultural differences play a particularly important role in misunderstandings at work, which can often lead to suspicion, deterioration of the quality of joint project work or even to failure in cooperation (Merkin et al., 2014). Since international (and therefore intercultural) communication is vital in many business areas (e.g. management, marketing, PR, sales, HR, law, etc.), understanding cultural differences and values is of particular importance.

The scientific field of international management – more precisely intercultural management - aims to understand organizational behaviour determined by culture and to improve and develop the relationship between economic actors in different cultures (Browaeys & Price, 2011 cited in Jarjabka, 2021). In light of this, one of the important tasks of both international corporate management and human resource management is to take national cultural characteristics into account when defining organizational guidelines and operational policy, as well as when making strategic decisions.

This study concerns two important areas of international management (see Figure 1). The national and organizational culture, which has been examined by many researchers in several approaches, both in international and Hungarian terms. We can think here of the creators of widespread national culture models (e.g. Hofstede, 1988; House et al., 2002; Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1997). There is also no shortage of research into Hungarian national and organizational culture (Bakacsi, 1996; Heidrich, 1997; Jarjabka, 2003a, 2003b, 2004, 2011; Hofmeister et al., 2005, 2008; Kopfer-Rácz, 2013; Juhász, 2014; Pozdena, 2020a, 2020b, 2020c; Gálos & Vinkóczy, 2023).

Figure 1. Fields of science and the focus of the present study



Source: Author's edition

In the field of international corporate communication, there have also been many analyzes carried out both by international (e.g. Balmer & Gray, 1999; Farmaki et al., 2022) and by Hungarian researchers (Rekettye, 2016; Géring, 2017). In addition, in the cross-section of the two sets, i.e. in the field of researching the cultural aspects of international communication, there are several analyzes done both internationally (e.g. Hall, 1976; Pollay, 1983; Singh et al, 2005; Hatzithomas et al., 2011) and within Hungary (Borgulya, 1996; Falkné, 2001, 2008, 2015; Topcu, 2005; Hidasi, 2007, 2014; Borgulya et al., 2015; Borgulya & Primecz, 2021). However, no research has yet examined the cultural characteristics of international communication through TED talks, and especially not in relation to Hungarian and American culture. The present research tries to fill this gap.

The thesis compares the cultural characteristics manifested in the American and Hungarian TED lectures. The American-Hungarian relationship is the focus of the research, as the USA is an economically important partner and investor in the Hungarian economy. Product turnover has shown an increasing trend in recent years, both in terms of exports and imports (MNB, 2022). The number of people employed by American-owned subsidiaries ranges between 80,000 and 100,000 people, making it the 2nd largest foreign-owned employer and the 3rd largest nation with foreign subsidiaries in Hungary (KSH, 2022). It can be seen from the data that the United States of America plays a significant economic role in our country, and as a result, intercultural communication present in everyday business practice is vital both in existing business relations and in the field of new opportunities.

1.2. Research objectives and research questions

Cultural research is important in international economy and corporate communication. The main goal of this research is to offer a new approach to it, i.e. to examine the explicit and implicit features of cultural differences and similarities in Hungarian and American TED talks. Within the main goal, some further objectives are outlined based on Hofstede's dimensions (1984). The study:

- explores how uncertainty avoidance is manifested in TED talks,
- points out the manifestation of masculine and feminine values, as well as
- investigates the social perception of the elderly and young people in TED talks.

Finally, since language is the mediator and imprint of culture, I aim to analyse the linguistic means expressing explicit and implicit cultural values, beliefs, and other characteristics connected to culture.

In the framework of researching intercultural communication, which plays an important role in international management, the present empirical study seeks the answer to the following question:

Q: How are cultural differences and similarities manifested in Hungarian and American verbal communication, in the light of economic-themed TED talks?

The sub-questions of the research focus on specific investigation elements based on some specific dimensions of Hofstede's culture model (1984, Hofstede & Bond, 1988).

Q1: How does Hofstede's uncertainty avoidance appear in TED talks?

Q2: How do Hofstede's masculine and feminine values appear in TED talks?

Q3: What is the social perception of young people and the elderly in TED talks?

Q4: What investment preferences can be revealed in TED talks?

The third question is related to the time orientation dimension of Hofstede's culture model. The fourth question examines investment preferences in economic decisions. This aspect is related to the time orientation, masculine/feminine and uncertainty avoidance dimensions. The fifth question focuses on language as a mediator and imprint of culture:

Q5: How do cultural characteristics appear through linguistic means in TED talks?

Cultural models (including Hofstede's model) provide general descriptions of national characteristics, for example, they offer an answer to how a nation deals with uncertainty (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2008). However, what uncertainty means in Hungarian and American culture nowadays (between 2010-2020) has not been the focus of research so far. Based on the review of the literature, Hungary is more strongly uncertainty-avoidant (Hofstede & Bond, 1988), so it can be assumed that this idea surfaces more often than in the American corpus. I formulated the hypothesis as follows

H1: There is a difference in the handling of uncertainty in Hungarian and American TED talks.

Based on the literature, cultural values arise along almost any human communication interaction (Hall, 1976), so the deep-seated values that are rarely explicitly shown during verbal communication are likely to be present in the talks. Narrowed down to a specific dimension, based on the study of the literature, I assume that in the two corpora examined, masculine values come to the surface in a dominant way and feminine values are relegated to the background.

H2: Masculine values characteristic of both cultures stand out in the examined TED speeches.

Despite the fact that based on the literature (Hofstede & Bond, 1988) both cultures prefer shorter-term thinking on the long-term/short-term orientation dimension, Americans are strongly short-term oriented (LTO=26), so quick return on investment and time are important factors. Hungarian is closer to a medium value (LTO=58). Hofstede and Bond (1988) also linked the social perception of old age to this dimension. Based on the long-term-oriented approach, old age is a positive and happy period of life, while the short-term-oriented culture perceives old age as more negative. I would like to test this assumption, supplemented by the perception of youth and young people. Based on this, I assume that:

H3: There is a demonstrable difference between the social perception of the elderly and the young in Hungarian and American TED talks.

Hofstede and Hofstede (2008) also discuss investment preferences, which play an important role in the economy, and argue that investment decision-making is culturally different. Based on this, my hypothesis is that.

H4: There is a demonstrable difference between investment preferences (e.g. purpose, direction, risk of investment) in Hungarian and American TED talks.

In the H4 hypothesis, the investment preferences do not necessarily have to cover realized investments, but rather my goal is to show the approach to investment, the attitude, or the values associated with investment consciously (or subconsciously).

The fifth hypothesis is related to verbal communication and language – as an imprint of culture. Based on the literature, language expression is influenced by culture (Hall, 1976; Cucchi, 2012; Holló, 2019), so my hypothesis reads as follows:

H5: Despite the expectations set by the TED conference and the similar context, national cultural characteristics can be demonstrated through the language tools in the examined TED speeches.

By answering the research questions, valuable information can be obtained for professionals active in international business and academic fields. The results are also useful for those who wish to get to know the deeper layers of the cultural aspects of international business communication.

2. Methodology

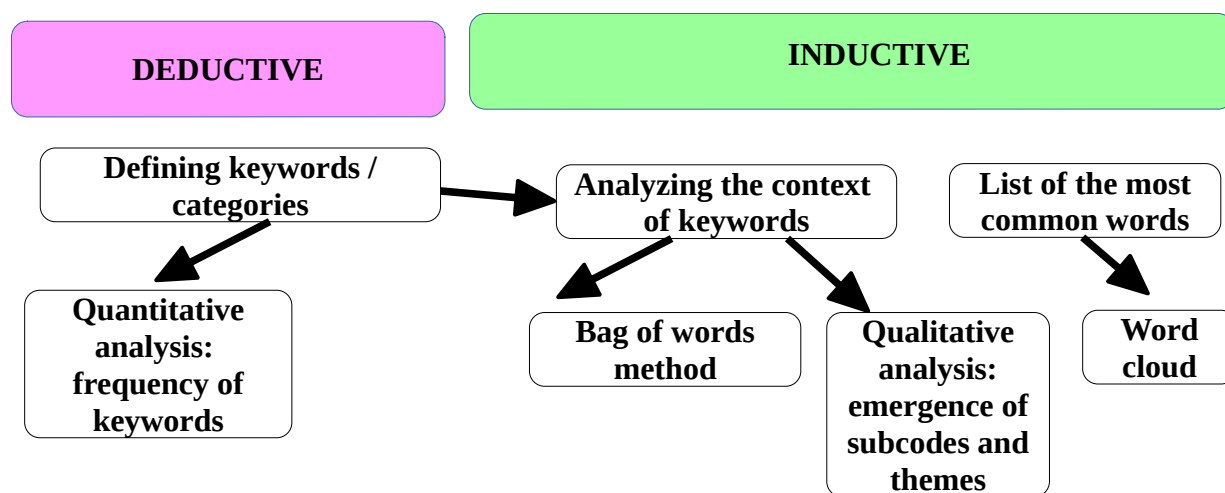
The subject of this research is the scientific examination of the talks on business topics recorded at the standard American and Hungarian TED events. The research is carried out by a complex (quantitative and qualitative) content analysis with special focus on particular cultural dimensions. I used a combined logic, because a combination of methods is an advantage to an investigation (Primecz, 2006).

Based on Antal (1976), content analysis is a research technique in which the systematic examination of utterances reveals information that is not explicitly stated in the communication. He argues that the communicator may not even know about the information as it is hidden in the way the message is coded. This is a particularly important aspect of the present research, since most characteristics of culture are present in a latent manner and can only be examined implicitly from behaviour and verbal statements (Hofstede, 2002).

Bearing in mind that the qualitative content analysis method does not have a generally accepted procedure, the researcher him/herself develops the most suitable method for the study and the categories to be used. These are determined based on the literature (Antal, 1976). I compiled a list of categories suitable for the purpose of the research based on Hofstede's characteristic key phrases, including keywords to which values can be attached, so that deeper beliefs can be brought to the surface through the analysis.

When analyzing the content, I used both deductive and inductive methods (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. The process, methods and tools of content analysis



Source: Author's editing

First, I analyzed the frequency and context of predefined keywords (codes) deductively, then I examined the patterns, themes, and codes that were not defined in advance, but emerged during the analysis. Meanwhile, I prepared a word list for each corpus and examined the most frequently

occurring words in the entire text transcript, from which I created word clouds so that the categories appearing during these could also be studied.

Sample description

TED (Technology, Entertainment, Design) is a non-profit organization and special conference series (TED, n.d.) dedicated to Ideas Worth Spreading. The speeches are approx. 4 to 18 minutes long, well-structured, well-rehearsed, often humorous presentations on interesting topics, which are given at TED conferences in order to convey an idea or message worth spreading. Today, it has become popular worldwide and covers a wide variety of topics, from science to business to global problems. The talks are available in more than a hundred languages. TED conferences are an extremely intense and inspiring experience with thought-provoking presentations lasting a maximum of 18 minutes.

TEDx events are independent, locally organized TED-style programs around the world based on a free TED license. TEDx events have been organized in Hungary since 2010, thus I included American TED talks from 2010 in the study sample. Unfortunately, most of the 2020 events were canceled as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic lock-down measures. Hence, the analysis sample included speeches given at events held between 2010-2019 and published on the world wide web. This covers 10 years of talks.

In order to obtain an analysable sample I narrowed the available hundreds of Hungarian and thousands of American TED talks in the following ways,:

- (1) according to the type of event → TED standard events and TEDx standard Hungarian events
- (2) according to the specified time limit → speeches delivered between 2010-2019
- (3) according to the genre criteria of the presentation → a talk that can be interpreted as a public speech or a business presentation
- (4) according to the speaker's linguistic and cultural background → Hungarian/American mother tongue and/or culture
- (5) according to availability/publicity → publicly available speech
- (6) by business topic → micro- and macro-economic or related topics

After the above narrowing, a total of 195 speeches (107 American and 88 Hungarian speeches) were available in the corpus prepared for the analysis. The total length of the performances of the two cultures is more than 44 hours and contains 367,614 words, which is approx. an amount of text corresponding to 735 typed pages.

Tools of Analysis

To perform the text analysis, AntConc 4.1.4. (Anthony, 2014), a free corpus analysis toolkit was used. The content analysis results provided by the software can be exported in several formats for further data processing, e.g. for statistical and detailed qualitative analysis. I prepared the obtained

results for the statistical calculations, which were carried out in MS Excel and LibreOffice Calc applications. For more detailed descriptive and other statistical tests, I used the GNU Project (2015) PSPP software, which is the Linux equivalent of the SPSS software package standard in the social sciences.

3. The results of the research

3.1. Answering the research questions, theses

Evaluating the results, it is important to note that it can be instructive for members of both investigated cultures to know what can influence our partner's point of view below the surface in an intercultural communication transaction (e.g. business meeting, international trade, discussion of cooperation opportunities, a conference meeting). It is advisable to know what latent values, approaches and views lie behind certain topics in an intercultural conversation: what is located in the invisible part of the iceberg?

The main question of the research sought to answer how cultural differences and similarities are manifested in Hungarian and American verbal communication, in the light of TED talks on economic topics. I examined the selected sample using a complex (quantitative and qualitative) content analysis method. In the interpretation of the results, the research sub-questions and the established hypotheses serve as guidelines, but the results that go beyond the hypotheses are also presented here.

Based on Q1, I researched how uncertainty avoidance defined by Hofstede appears in TED talks. According to my hypothesis:

H1: There is a difference in the handling of uncertainty in Hungarian and American TED talks.

Hypothesis testing is specifically related to uncertainty. The results confirmed that there is indeed a difference between the two cultures. The TED speakers in the Hungarian corpus "addressed" uncertainty several times. However, what is even more interesting is how different the themes and wording are related to uncertainty, it is summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. What is uncertainty according to the speakers?

Only Hungarian speakers mentioned it	Both cultures mentioned it	Only American speakers mentioned it
Accelerated world Workplace Lack of self-confidence	New situation	Climate change Stock market Future Nuclear power plant

Source: Author's editing

Hungarians tend to mention topics important at the level of the individual, such as the way of life in a fast-paced world, workplace, new situations and self-doubt. Americans assume that the management of individual, micro-level uncertainty does not deserve much attention, but Americans rather focus on social, economic and global issues (e.g. climate change, stock market, nuclear power plant, or the future in general). The topics that have arisen in the examined TED speeches outline what answers and solutions the two cultures look for. The result can be useful for business people who want to cooperate at an international level, establish a commercial relationship or even offer a new product or service to the other culture. It outlines what answers and solutions the two cultures look for.

With regard to the difference in uncertainty management attitudes, I highlight two linguistic phenomena in the research. When formulating the above uncertainty, several Hungarian speakers painted uncertainty in the same way: instead of offering any promising solutions, they associated it with additional negative concepts. In contrast, several American speakers immediately offered a solution/choice to deal with uncertainty in almost the same (or the next) sentence.

It is also advisable to observe that in countries that tolerate uncertainty, failure is nothing to be ashamed of. The keyword *failure* is a lot (almost 10x) more frequent in the American corpus and the difference is significant. Based on the speeches, American culture mentions failure as a source of uncertainty several times, it talks about dealing with it more often, and sees it as a natural part of the way to success. This resonates with Hofstede's definition that uncertainty is not a threat, but a natural part of life. Based on the analysis, the hypothesis proved to be true and additional results are added.

T1a: There is a demonstrable difference in the handling of uncertainty in Hungarian and American TED talks because Hungarian TED speakers associate uncertainty with micro-level phenomena, while the Americans associate it with macro-level phenomena.

Most studies (Hofstede, 1994; Bakacsi, 1996; Varga, 2008; Falkné, 2008) classify Hungary as a highly uncertainty-avoiding country. The results of the present study confirmed this. The keyword analysis revealed that the American culture is more accepting of the new, different concept than the Hungarian one. In societies that tolerate uncertainty, new ideas have a positive connotation, innovation is quickly accepted, so the difference between the number of innovations in the two cultures is not surprising. In terms of innovation, Hungary does not perform well, previous research confirmed that the innovation activity of Hungarian enterprises is low (Chickán et al. 2010, OECD, 2010), especially in the field of small and medium-sized enterprises (Kopfer-Rácz et al., 2013).

The American effort towards innovation is also evident in the present research. Since TED talks are expected to present something interesting and new to the audience, the event also "addressed" Hungarian innovativeness. It is highly interesting to see that the focus of innovation in American talks is mainly technological, while innovation in Hungarian talks is more conceptual. However, it is worth observing the Hungarian creativity based on little capital. This was also raised by Falkné (2015). Micro-level innovation with low capital investment is exactly where Hungarian companies can be competitive on the domestic market, but also on the American market.

In relation to research question Q1, I have added a subthesis to the result, according to which:

T1b: In American TED talks, innovation is mainly technological, while in Hungarian it is more conceptual.

Q2 sought the answer to how masculine and feminine values defined by Hofstede appear in TED talks. According to my hypothesis:

H2: Masculine values characteristic of both cultures stand out in the examined TED speeches.

In the frequency list of words, masculine values, such as e.g. work, money are high on the list. These confirm the masculine classification of the two nations by Hofstede & Hofstede (2008). However, it must be seen that despite the fact that Hofstede categorized Hungary to be a more masculine society, the present study revealed that some feminine values are also beginning to become important, such as child, home, family. Nevertheless, *free time* was not among the salient values as it was not mentioned at a measurable amount. Varga (2008) also found the Hungarian profile to be much more feminine than Hofstede & Hofstede (2008). Bakacsi et al. (2002) GLOBE studies showed a medium value on a similar dimension.

Although the majority of the investigated feminine words have a lower frequency, the higher proportion of the words child, home and family in the Hungarian corpus can predict an incipient change in values within society. This may be rooted in the strongly propagated family support policy of the present government, but it can also be considered as a first step in the shift towards more feminine values. Based on these, it is reasonable for an American company to consider "incorporating" these Hungarian values, e.g. into the human resources (HR) policy. It could mean a fringe benefit motivation for the selected Hungarian workforce and may reduce fluctuation. This is particularly important, since family and child-related allowances and holidays in the USA are not as permissive as in our country, e.g. the law provides for 12 weeks of unpaid leave after childbirth (Department of Labor, n.d.), as opposed to the Hungarian two-year paid period of 'GYED' (Child Care Allowance) period (Magyar Államkincstár, n.d.)

The change in values is also supported by the repeated mention of work-life balance in both corpora. However, it should be noted that the change in values can be a slow process, spanning over several generations. The dominance of *work* and *money* is still prevalent if compared to *free time*. The results of the research confirm the study conducted by Hofstede (2001), where strongly masculine countries chose higher salaries instead of more free time. My research also supported the fact that money is an important motivating factor in Hungary. Foreign investors should keep it in mind. Summarizing the evaluation, the hypothesis proved to be basically true, but it needs an addition, so the formulation of the thesis reads as follows:

T2a: Masculine values appear significantly more often than feminine values in both examined TED corpuses.

T2b: A slight shift towards feminine values can be detected in the Hungarian TED talks.

The results of the present research show that in terms of masculine values, it is possible to build on the similarities between American and Hungarian culture during an international collaboration, but the revealed differences must be taken into account at the same time.

Q3 examined the social perception of young people and the elderly in TED talks. According to my hypothesis:

H3: There is a demonstrable difference between the social perception of the elderly and the young in Hungarian and American TED talks.

During the examination of time orientation, it was confirmed that time and speed are important values in both cultures. This supports Hofstede & Hofstede's (2008) classification that both cultures are more short-term oriented, albeit to different degrees. The American is extremely short-term oriented, while the Hungarian is less so ($LTO_{US}=26$ és $LTO_{HU}=58$).

The difference in society's perception of the **young and the elderly** and the resulting generational conflicts can be linked to the dimension of time orientation, but it also arises in Hofstede's key sentences in relation to other dimensions (e.g. uncertainty avoidance, individualism). It is interesting to see that, while two talks in the Hungarian corpus were about generational differences and the workplace conflicts resulting from them, the speakers in the American corpus did not mention this topic at all. This information can be valuable in the field of human resources (HR) management, where an important goal is to ensure the effective cooperation of employees of different ages and nationalities.

Table 2 summarizes the mentioned categories related to the elderly and the young. The study revealed in the Hungarian corpus that in Hungary the older generation has a more important role and higher respect in society than in America, where the less valuable role of the **older generation** was often addressed. In the American corpus, Hofstede's short-term-oriented key phrase, that 'Old age is an unhappy period, but it begins late', echoes almost verbatim (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2008). In the Hungarian corpus, it appears that the elderly often "disapprove" of certain behaviours of the young, but the role of the elderly as a source of knowledge is highly recognized.

Table 2. The role and value of the elderly/young people

	Only Hungarian speakers mentioned it	Both cultures mentioned it	Only American speakers mentioned it
Elderly	Old people disapprove of young ones	Source of knowledge (in the past) A burden on an ageing society	Worthless social role Old age is bitter Helping robots for the elderly
Young	The young need to be taught Source of knowledge	Enthusiastic, willing to work Innovation Pretty, happy, beautiful Immature, rebellious Victims of climate change	Decreasing rate in society Unwilling to raise children Hospital preference Victims of human trafficking

Source: Author's editing

In summary, it can be said that there is a lot of value agreement between the two cultures in terms of young people, based on the examined corpus. There are deeply rooted (sometimes even unreal) beliefs, e.g. the young generation is immature, rebellious or happy. At the same time, some roles brought by the modern era are mentioned, e.g. young people are the source of innovation, but also the victims of a climate change.

Hungarians also name young people as a source of knowledge, but they also want to teach the young. This dual role suggests respect and acceptance from both sides (old and young). Perhaps the repeated mentions of generational conflict may be related to this. American culture prefers the youth, has a lower index of long-term orientation, and old age is an unhappy, less attractive stage of life. This also occurs in the Hungarian culture, however, the elderly are given a more important role than in the American society.

The qualitative analysis revealed the similarities and differences in the attitudes to the elderly and the young between the two cultures. These resonate with the values found on Hofstede's short- and long-term-orientation index, i.e. both nations are basically short-term oriented, with the American one being extremely short-term oriented. Some other Hungarian research also found a short-term orientation in Hungary (Hofmeister et al. 2005; Hofmeister et al. 2008; Kopfer-Rácz, 2013). The present research confirmed the H4 hypothesis and supplemented it with other value propositions. Based on the research I accept the following three theses:

T3a: Based on the TED talks, the role of the elderly in both cultures is both a source of knowledge and a burden on society, but the American view considers this age more worthless.

T3b: Americans consider young people to be more valuable from an economic point of view, while Hungarians consider the transfer of knowledge and two-way respect to be important based on the examined TED speeches.

T3c: Conflicts caused by generational differences come to the fore in Hungarian society based on TED speeches.

Q4 looked for the answer to what kind of investment preference can be revealed in TED talks. According to my hypothesis:

H4: There is a demonstrable difference between investment preferences (e.g. purpose, direction, risk of investment) in Hungarian and American TED talks.

Real estate investment, which traditionally means a lot of security, does appear in the more uncertainty-avoiding Hungarian culture, as described by (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2008). However, the large common set shown in Table 3 also means that Hungarians are open to other investments, as well. In addition to classic financial instruments (government securities, bonds), advertising, they also hope to get a return on the capital invested in themselves, in the environment and in public goods that help the poorer layers of society. Since the study only examined the attitude to investment, the question arises as to whether they would invest their own money or that of others (e.g. of the state or of large companies).

Table 3. What are the investment preferences?

Only Hungarian speakers mentioned it	Both cultures mentioned it	Only American speakers mentioned it
Real estate	Environment Society/public goods Themselves (own development) Financial tools Advertisement	Company/enterprise Infrastructure R&D Raising children Your own digital data

Source: Author's editing

Due to the uncertainty-tolerant characteristic of American culture, people like to invest in riskier things (ibid), such as e.g. businesses and companies started by others. This theme did not arise among Hungarian speakers. It resonates with Kopfer-Rácz et al. (2013), when they emphasized the low risk-taking habits of the Hungarian population, including the extremely high risk avoidance of small business entrepreneurs. The results of the research found the hypothesis partially true, so the thesis is modified as follows:

T4a: Based on the TED speeches, Hungarians prefer lower-risk and long-term real estate investment over risk-tolerant American investment preferences (e.g. other people's business, R&D).

T4b: Based on the TED talks, there is a positive attitude towards investments in environmental protection, social goals and self-development in both cultures.

This is useful to know in an international context, because, for example, when planning an American-Hungarian collaboration, a joint venture or a small business, there are investment opportunities that members of both cultures are happy to support, despite different risk-taking tendencies. The ideas that have arisen may even show new directions for the flow of private or public capital.

Q5 sought the answer to how cultural characteristics appear through linguistic means of expression in TED talks. According to my hypothesis:

H5: Despite the expectations set by the TED conference and the similar context, cultural characteristics can be demonstrated through the language tools in the examined TED speeches.

The communication difference outlined in the literature appeared in the speeches both as a theme and through examples. Even though there is an international expectation for a clear, unambiguous message communication in TED talks, communication specialist speakers gave different advice as to communicating. American speakers highlighted using a simple language, present tense verbs and clear speech. Some Hungarian speakers also supported this view, but a renowned public speaker also emphasized the importance of metaphors, descriptive adjectives and poetic questions in public talks. The results confirm Hall's (1976) theory of **low- and high-context communication** in practice.

In Hungarian speeches, we find many metaphors with an emotional charge, e.g. the elderly is regarded as a ‘source of knowledge’, a new situation is considered the ‘zone of courage’, Hungarians express ideas in a more nuanced way than simply using factual information. Hungarian speeches convey high-context messages, more theoretical and conceptual proposals. For example, the word money appeared 206 times, but specific amounts were only mentioned 25 times. In comparison, Americans illustrated their points with real-life examples and stories, and added specific amounts of money 170 times. This also supports earlier Hungarian research works which found Hungarian communication to be high-context and indirect (Hidasi 2007, Holló 2019). The present study is also in line with the studies of Katan (2006), Kang & Mastin (2008) and Cucchi (2010, 2012), emphasising that culture – consciously or subconsciously – affects the lexical choice and the language formulation.

Based on this, the following thesis can be confirmed and supplemented as follows:

T5: Despite the expectations set by the TED conference and the similar context, national cultural characteristics can be demonstrated through the language tools in the examined TED speeches. American TED talks are dominated by simple, clear speech supported by concrete examples, while in Hungarian communication in TED talks used more emotional words, metaphorical language and contained more theoretical and general formulations.

Based on the above theses, valuable knowledge can be gained for professionals active in the international business and academic spheres. The results are also useful for those who want to get to know the deeper layers of the cultural aspects of international business communication.

3.2. Summary of the theses

Following Hofstede, the study explored contemporary cultural values and preferences, specifically those considered important between 2010-2020 and manifested in TED talks. The hypotheses and theses are summarized in Table 4. The table also contains unexpected results that surfaced during the research.

Table 4. Summary of hypotheses and theses

Hypothesis	True?	Method	Thesis
H1: There is a difference in the handling of uncertainty in Hungarian and American TED talks.	√	Quantitative (word frequency) & qualitative (context) analysis	T1a: There is a demonstrable difference in the handling of uncertainty in Hungarian and American TED talks, because the Hungarian TED speakers associate uncertainty with micro-level phenomena, while the Americans associate it with macro-level phenomena.
		Qualitative (KWIC) analysis	T1b: In American TED talks, innovation is mainly technological, while in Hungarian it is more conceptual.
H2: Masculine values characteristic of both cultures stand out in the examined TED speeches.	√	Quantitative analysis (word frequency)	T2a: Masculine values appear significantly more often than feminine values in both examined TED corpuses. T2b: A slight shift towards feminine values can be detected in the Hungarian TED talks.
H3: There is a demonstrable difference between the social perception of the elderly and the young in Hungarian and American TED talks.	partly	Quantitative (word frequency) & qualitative (context) analysis	T3a: Based on the TED talks, the role of the elderly in both cultures is both a source of knowledge and a burden on society, but the American view considers this age more worthless. T3b: Americans consider young people to be more valuable from an economic point of view, while Hungarians consider the transfer of knowledge and two-way respect to be important based on the examined TED speeches. T3c: Conflicts caused by generational differences come to the fore in Hungarian society based on TED speeches..
H4: There is a demonstrable difference between investment preferences (e.g. purpose, direction, risk of investment) in Hungarian and American TED talks	√	Quantitative (word frequency) & qualitative (context) analysis	T4a: Based on the TED speeches, Hungarians prefer lower-risk and long-term real estate investment over risk-tolerant American investment preferences (e.g. other people's business, R&D). T4b: Based on the TED talks, there is a positive attitude towards investments in environmental protection, social goals and self-development in both cultures.
H5: Despite the expectations set by the TED conference and the similar context, cultural characteristics can be demonstrated through the language tools in the examined TED speeches.	√	Quantitative (word frequency) & qualitative (context) analysis	T5: Despite the expectations set by the TED conference and the similar context, national cultural characteristics can be demonstrated through the language tools in the examined TED speeches. American TED talks are dominated by simple, clear speech supported by concrete examples, while in Hungarian communication in TED talks used more emotional words, metaphorical language and contained more theoretical and general formulations.

In addition to the formulated theses, the following are the additional new and innovative results of the thesis.

- The approach is novel, i.e. the examination and cultural interpretation of the messages conveyed by TED talks in relation to the current economic situation.
- It is a new way of exploring investment preferences of the two cultures. A side-by-side display of traditional investment methods rooted in old beliefs and non-traditional investment methods that respond to the challenges of the modern age.
- Complex content analysis as a method for exploring cultural values and beliefs is also a novel application. Through the analysis of oral communication, invisible, latent beliefs emerge.
- The interdisciplinary approach is also novel in a way that it combines the principles of linguistics, communication science and international management.

3.3. Practical implications

The knowledge of cultural values, similarities and differences that emerged from the research can be transferred to everyday economic life. It is important to get to know the classical beliefs, values and convictions that have been deeply rooted for centuries, but also the contemporary representation of these values, which we were able to gain an insight into during the examination of the TED speeches. The results can be put into practice in the following areas:

- in international business communication. They are useful for both Hungarian and American for managers during oral and written intercultural interactions,
- when planning the HR policy of multinational companies
- in the field of international investments
- for companies looking for international market opportunities
- when planning to work or study abroad,
- in the field of international management training,
- in case of supporting the integration of Americans working and studying in Hungary.

I firmly believe that the present research can contribute to the growing set of our intercultural communication knowledge and the results will have practical implications.

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