

Planning/Outline of the essay:

- Intro: Problem (different forms of logic in different languages/cultures), Thesis (Not tenable, logic is universal), Outline
- Main Part: first paragraph: position of the Oshima, second paragraph: Arguments against this approach, third paragraph: alternative approach of universal logic, fourth paragraph: consequences for different academic fields
- Conclusion: Summary of discussion, final defense of thesis

The Indispensability of Universal Logic

As globalization becomes a more and more apparent phenomenon, the different cultures of the world are able to communicate and interact more freely and quickly. Cultural differences cannot be denied, thus an interesting question for eurocentric philosophers and scientists arises: is logic, which was always thought of as a universally valid science, also a merely culture-dependent phenomenon? There are many scholars who argue, for example, that Aristotle would have developed an entirely different form of logic if he hadn't been Greek but Mexican. Therefore, one might ask whether not only the languages differ from each other (they obviously do), but also the underlying logic. In this essay, I will argue that it is impossible to have such a relativistic, culture-dependent account of logic and that logic, in contrary to the implied position above, is indeed universal. To do so, I will first of all introduce the position of those who claim that logic is relative. After that, I will argue against this position by formulating counter-arguments. In a next step, I will present a promising, alternative approach of universal logic and point out the consequences for other fields of science if this concept is denied.

Alice Oshima argues that the structure of different language is significant for different concepts of logic. As an English sentence does not digress and is linear in that it is arguing in a straight line, this changes in sentences of other languages, e.g. Persian writing, which emphasises the coordination in contrast to the English subordination. Other examples would be the indirect style of Asian writing, the digressive style of Spanish writing, etc. Oshima draws the conclusion that, because of these differences in the respective writing styles, the underlying rhetoric and even the underlying logic is dependent on the language it is written in. This ultimately leads to a relativization of our concepts of philosophy and science, as, for example, Dufrenne suggests. One should always be aware of the eurocentric context in which one formulates one's ideas.

The concept of Oshima and Dufrenne seems to be a promising way out of cultural imperialism and hegemony. However, it is a deeply flawed and irrational concept as it blatantly contradicts itself: it uses ways of arguing which go back to Aristotle and universal, logical principles in order to dismiss logic. In other words: they refer to something they originally wanted to dismiss. If they didn't use consistent ways of arguing, their entire system of thinking would collapse and they would be regarded as unjustified, irrational thinkers. However, they say that consistency, or at least logical consistency, is not necessary anymore. Thus, their way of arguing is caught in a performative contradiction. To cut a long story short: their content is not in line with the way of arguing they employ.

Having proven the internal inconsistency of Dufrenne's position, it is necessary to develop an alternative to culture-dependent logic. I would argue that there are some logical presuppositions that cannot be doubted rationally, e.g. P or non- P . Anyone who doubts these basic logic principles, which basically go back to Aristotle, is on her way to a self-contradiction and, thus, to leaving a rational discourse. Rational or ideal discourses are those in which the participants communicate freely and without strategic interests; one could say that an ideal discourse is the free negotiation of compromises on the basis of universal laws of logic. Habermas's and Apel's discourse-ethics provide a

stable basis for the development of such a universal discourse which is independent of cultural boundaries as only the formal ways of arguing are regarded as universal, not any content of the discourse. Thus, any eurocentrism or cultural imperialism is avoided as no normative statements or ethical values are transported into another culture, but only a formal way of achieving universally valid compromises. This solution seems to be a much more honest alternative than being over-tolerant and put universal principles of logic into doubt in an irrational way.

The consequences of these two different approaches are obvious: the former approach makes it impossible to discuss any serious content, be it normative or descriptive, with speakers of another language as not only the language but also the basic principles of logic differ. Thus, this seemingly tolerant position makes interethnic and intercultural communication impossible or at least reduces it to a mere exchange of meaningless utterances which are not able to carry any intersubjective truth. The latter approach, however, makes scientific and moral discourse between cultures possible as it provides a solid basis for intercultural communication. The minimal conditions for a rational discourse are specified, but no content is prematurely regarded as granted. Therefore, honest and intersubjectively valid communication which is relevant for both sides and not reducible to a mere exchange of personal opinions is only possible within the latter framework of Habermas and Apel.

This essay has given conclusive evidence that Oshima's position is flawed and should be replaced by a universalist approach in form of a theory of discourse as provided by, for example, Habermas. It is impossible to say that logic principles are culture dependent and at the same time make use of these principles as they are preconditions for any form of arguing which is supposed to be rational. Thus, the presuppositions of arguing in a rational discourse are indispensable. Logic, one can conclude, is universal and must also be accepted by Dufrenne and Oshima. A Mexican Aristotle would have come up with exactly the same logic as did the "original" one in Ancient Greece.