

CULTURAL INFLUENCES IN LANGUAGE LEARNING IN A GLOBAL CONTEXT

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Abstract. Language is one of the most important aspects in connecting people around the world. In the current era of globalisation, the ability to communicate in multiple languages has become very important, whether in the context of international business, diplomacy, or cultural exchange. This research attempts to understand the impact of culture in language learning in a global context. This research is a literature review that uses a qualitative method approach, which means it will analyse and interpret data by relying on information and texts from various sources. The results reveal that culture plays a very significant role in language learning in the current era of globalisation. Language cannot be separated from the culture that shapes it, and the language learning process is often also a journey into a deeper cultural understanding. This affects the learner's motivation, communication style, and perception of the language and culture being learnt.

Keywords: Culture, Language Learning, Global Context

Abstrak Bahasa adalah salah satu aspek yang paling penting dalam menghubungkan manusia di seluruh dunia. Dalam era globalisasi saat ini, kemampuan untuk berkomunikasi dalam berbagai bahasa telah menjadi sangat penting, baik dalam konteks bisnis internasional, diplomasi, maupun pertukaran budaya. Penelitian ini mencoba untuk memahami dampak budaya dalam pembelajaran bahasa dalam konteks global. Penelitian ini merupakan kajian literatur yang menggunakan pendekatan metode kualitatif, yang berarti akan menganalisis dan menginterpretasikan data dengan mengandalkan informasi dan teks dari berbagai sumber. Hasil riset mengungkapkan bahwa budaya memainkan peran yang sangat signifikan dalam pembelajaran bahasa di era globalisasi saat ini. Bahasa tidak bisa dipisahkan dari budaya yang membentuknya, dan proses pembelajaran bahasa seringkali juga merupakan perjalanan ke dalam pemahaman budaya yang lebih dalam. Hal ini mempengaruhi motivasi pembelajar, gaya komunikasi, dan persepsi terhadap bahasa dan budaya yang dipelajari.

Kata Kunci: Budaya, Pembelajaran Bahasa, Konteks Global

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INTRODUCTION

Language plays a central role in uniting people around the world and bridging communication between individuals (Rohmah, 2005). In today's era of globalisation, the ability to communicate in multiple languages has increasing relevance, especially in the context of international business, diplomacy and cultural exchange (Bihari Dash, 2022; Karneli, 2023). However, when one decides to learn a foreign language, this step involves more than just the

mastery of grammar and the expansion of new vocabulary. The process takes them on an in-depth and complex journey, which not only includes linguistic aspects, but also involves a deep acquaintance with the culture associated with the language (Sutrisno, 2023). In the process of learning a foreign language, individuals not only understand the words, but also imbibe the social norms, values and cultural concepts reflected in the language (Celik & Yildiz, 2019). This makes language learning an immersive experience, which connects learners to deeper layers of intercultural understanding, and reveals the complexity of the diverse world around us.

This research seeks to explore more deeply the influence of culture in the language learning process, especially in an increasingly globalised context. The phenomenon of globalisation has connected individuals from different cultural backgrounds into one interconnected global community (C. & Thakkar, 2012; Sudirjo, 2023). This creates unique challenges in the language learning process, where learners often have to deal with diverse cultural differences, including norms, values, and even levels of politeness in communicating in a foreign language (Wong & Esler, 2020). Therefore, it is important for us to realise that language learning is not just limited to mastering new vocabulary and grammar. More than that, it also involves a deep understanding of the cultural context inherent in the language. In an effort to understand these aspects, this research seeks to delve deeper into how culture affects the language learning process, and how a deeper understanding of culture can help learners become more effective and culturally sensitive communicators in this increasingly connected global context.

In the context of language learning, culture plays an integral role in the process. Language, as the primary means of communication, always reflects and is closely related to the values, beliefs and cultural norms inherent in the language-using society (Braçaj, 2014). Therefore, a deep understanding of how culture has a significant impact on language learning is very important and relevant. In language learning, various cultural factors become important determinants in how individuals assimilate and apply language. These factors include stereotypes, communication preferences, language use in everyday contexts, and the way emotions are expressed in communication. All these elements together shape a person's language learning pattern. Therefore, in an effort to improve the effectiveness of language learning, we need to dive deeper into the cultural impact inherent in language. This will help learners better understand the complex aspects of language use, as well as integrate this cultural understanding into their communication skills. Thus, language learning is not just about understanding grammar and vocabulary, but also exploring the meanings, nuances and complexities that arise from rich cultural contexts (Afzal, 2019).

In addition, in the ever-evolving era of modern technology, our access to cultural content in foreign languages has expanded (Wanof, 2023). We can now easily access films, music and literature from different parts of the world that may have previously been out of reach. This phenomenon also has a significant impact on the way we understand and learn foreign languages. The use of technology in language learning has become very relevant. Technological advances have opened up a range of new opportunities in language learning, including the use of language learning apps, online courses, and various other supporting tools (Salaberry, 2001). With these technologies, learners can learn languages in a more interactive, dynamic and personalised way. More than that, research on the impact of technology in language learning also covers a deeper aspect, namely how it affects cultural perceptions in learning contexts. The use of technology can enrich the learning experience by providing direct access to foreign cultures, introducing learners to various aspects of daily life in target language countries, and facilitating a deeper understanding of those cultures (Yang & Chen, 2007). Therefore, this research recognises the importance of exploring the various implications of technology on language learning and cultural understanding (Mahardhani, 2023).

Through a deeper understanding of how culture has a significant impact on the entire language learning process in an ever-evolving global context, this research is expected to provide invaluable insights for various parties, including educators, learners, and curriculum developers. The aim of this research is to broaden the scope of our knowledge and understanding of the close relationship between culture and foreign language learning. As we understand the increasingly important role of culture in language learning, we also open up opportunities to make a more positive impact in the development of language learning methods. A better understanding of how culture affects language learning can provide a foundation for designing learning methods that are more effective, relevant and responsive to learners' needs in an increasingly globally connected world. This research also has the potential to help individuals better communicate in increasingly complex global contexts. By understanding the role of culture in language learning, we can equip learners with stronger communication skills, as well as a deeper understanding of the cultural dynamics at play in cross-cultural communication. Thus, this research aims to make a positive contribution in preparing individuals to face the challenges of global communication in the contemporary era.

METHOD

This research is a literature review that adopts a qualitative approach, which means it will analyse and interpret data by relying on information and texts from various sources. The main

focus of a qualitative literature review is to collate, evaluate and integrate existing knowledge on the topic under study, namely cultural influences in language learning in a global context. In this research, data will be collected from various sources relevant to the topic under study, such as scientific journals, books, research reports, and other articles. The data period covers the time from 2001 to 2023, which allows the researcher to see developments, trends, and changes that have occurred during this period.

The data collection process will involve meticulous text analysis, searching for information, and categorising relevant data for the research topic. Subsequently, the author will collate this information in a structured format, compare and synthesise findings from multiple sources, and identify patterns, themes and trends that emerge from the collected data. One of the advantages of a qualitative literature review is its flexibility in understanding and explaining complex phenomena, as it is not limited by numerical or statistical constraints (Rahman, 2016). In this research, it is important to scrutinise the reliability and credibility of the sources used, as well as critically analyse the information collected. With a qualitative approach, the researcher must be able to present findings objectively and reflectively, provide clear and accurate interpretations, and recognise the limitations of the methods and data used (Bradshaw et al., 2017). The conclusion of this research will hopefully provide a comprehensive picture of the development of the topic under study over the 2001 to 2023 time period, and may also provide recommendations for further research that can broaden the understanding of issues related to the topic.

RESULTS

In the contemporary landscape of our interconnected and increasingly globalized world, the art of language acquisition has risen to paramount importance. It serves as a linchpin for effective communication and stands as a cornerstone for nurturing empathy and comprehension among individuals hailing from a plethora of diverse cultural milieus (Harahap et al., 2023). The significance of being proficient in multiple languages transcends mere utility in the spheres of international business and diplomacy; it extends its reach into the realms of personal development and the cultivation of intercultural competence (Snow, 2020). Engaging in the process of language acquisition transcends the rote memorization of grammar rules and vocabulary. Instead, it unfolds as an immersive journey, akin to a tapestry weaving experience, where the intricate threads of culture interlace seamlessly with the linguistic fabric (Yang & Dai, 2011). This journey not only equips individuals with the tools for effective cross-cultural

communication but also opens doors to profound personal growth and enriched global perspectives.

In the vibrant tapestry of today's linguistic landscape, we encounter a captivating mosaic adorned with an array of languages, dialects, and accents. As individuals hailing from diverse linguistic backgrounds engage in global interactions, the rich hues of culture invariably permeate their language learning odysseys (Ryan, 2006). The endeavor of acquiring a new language transcends the realm of mere mechanical processes; instead, it evolves into a profound voyage, a transformative exploration of the intricate tapestry of cultural nuances interwoven within the linguistic fabric (Wals, 2007). Within this linguistic journey, there exists a captivating realm where the process of language acquisition entails the delicate art of decoding cultural references, the deciphering of enigmatic idiomatic expressions, and the subtle apprehension of intricate social conventions that have found a home within the language's lexicon. This immersive expedition of language learning thus becomes a captivating fusion of linguistic and cultural exploration, a dynamic voyage where words are more than just linguistic tools—they become vessels that carry the essence of a society's customs, values, and traditions, ultimately enriching the communicative experience on a global scale (Azzaakiyyah, 2023; Liando et al., 2022).

As an illustrative example, embarking on the journey of learning Japanese transcends the confines of grammar and vocabulary acquisition. It entails a profound exploration into the nuanced realm of Japanese honorifics, commonly referred to as "keigo," where one must grasp the art of addressing others with utmost respect. Additionally, it delves into the cultural significance of bowing—a gesture that embodies reverence and humility within Japanese society, reflecting the intricate web of customs and traditions woven into the linguistic tapestry. In a parallel vein, the pursuit of mastering Arabic extends far beyond the realms of script and pronunciation (Qurratul ain & Zunnorain, 2015). It evolves into a captivating odyssey that invites learners to immerse themselves in the essence of hospitality, a cornerstone of Arab culture. Moreover, it beckons them to delve into the heart of communal values that bind Arabic-speaking communities together, offering insights into the profound sense of unity and interconnectedness prevalent in the Arab world. Furthermore, this linguistic journey unveils the rich tapestry of religious customs and traditions that play a pivotal role in shaping the multifaceted Arabic-speaking milieu. Thus, learning Arabic is an immersive endeavor that not only broadens one's linguistic horizons but also opens the door to an enriched understanding of the multifaceted culture that accompanies it (Muslim & Harisca, 2021).

DISCUSSION

Culture manifests itself in various intricate ways throughout the language learning journey, shaping the very core of this multifaceted endeavor (Zein et al., 2020). At its inception, culture weaves a captivating tapestry of motivations that drive individuals towards the path of language acquisition (Savira Cesarandari, 2019). These motivations, diverse and profound, are often ignited by a deep-seated fascination with the culture associated with the language in question. Whether it be the allure of exploring far-off lands, the yearning for cross-cultural connections, or the pursuit of ambitious career prospects on a global scale, culture acts as a magnetic force that beckons learners forward. These multifarious motivations are not merely fleeting inspirations but enduring flames that kindle the spirits of language enthusiasts, fuelling their determination and resilience. As they navigate the intricate terrain of language acquisition, learners encounter a myriad of challenges. These trials may range from mastering complex grammatical structures to conquering the intricacies of pronunciation and intonation. Yet, it is the unwavering presence of cultural motivations that becomes their steadfast companions on this arduous journey. These motivations are a source of inspiration, serving as a wellspring of strength and endurance, helping learners surmount the inevitable hurdles that stand in their way. Thus, culture's influence in the realm of language learning is not confined to mere surface-level interests; it is an intrinsic and enduring element that infuses the journey with depth and purpose (Kuo & Lai, 2006). It serves as a powerful catalyst that transforms language acquisition into a profound exploration of cultural connections, a testament to the enduring symbiosis between language and the rich tapestry of human culture.

Moreover, culture exerts its considerable influence on the intricate realm of communication styles and preferences, a domain where its impact becomes even more pronounced and significant (Dwivedi et al., 2023). Across the globe, diverse cultures have meticulously crafted their unique norms and etiquettes when it comes to politeness, directness, and the intricate dance of non-verbal communication (Patel et al., 2011). To navigate the intricate maze of language effectively, one must don the mantle of cultural awareness. In this captivating interplay, culture becomes the silent conductor orchestrating the symphony of communication. Each culture's composition is a melodic tapestry woven from threads of linguistic nuances, each note carefully attuned to the societal rhythms that permeate daily life. Understanding these intricacies is not merely a matter of convenience but a fundamental necessity for effective language use and meaningful cross-cultural exchanges. For instance, consider the contrasting landscapes of English and Japanese. In the realm of communication, these two languages inhabit vastly different spheres, guided by their distinct cultural values. In

English, a culture that often prizes directness and forthrightness, the use of explicit language and clarity in expression is frequently the norm (Karismawati et al., 2021). However, journey to Japan, where subtlety and indirectness reign supreme, and you'll find an entirely different landscape (Mitsuhashi & Gyobu, 2021). In this cultural milieu, what remains unsaid carries as much weight as spoken words. Here, the art of communication lies in nuances, where silence can speak volumes and subtlety is celebrated. Thus, culture's indelible imprint on communication styles and preferences is not a superficial overlay but a foundational underpinning. It underscores the dynamic interplay between language and culture, a testament to the profound influence that cultural norms and values wield over the intricate tapestry of human interaction.

The intertwined relationship between language and culture not only enriches the language learning experience but also presents a distinctive set of challenges that learners must navigate (D. Kim, 2020). Among these challenges, stereotypes and biases emerge as formidable barriers that can significantly influence learners' perceptions of a language and its associated culture. When individuals harbor preconceived notions about a culture, these notions can inadvertently seep into their understanding of the language itself, potentially hindering the learning process (Breese et al., 2023). However, it's important to recognize that stereotypes and biases are not inherent to the language or culture but are rather a product of limited exposure and understanding. They can stem from media portrayals, hearsay, or even personal anecdotes, and they often oversimplify the rich tapestry of a culture, reducing it to a set of generalized assumptions. For instance, common stereotypes might associate a particular language with a specific accent, making it challenging for learners to embrace the full spectrum of linguistic diversity within that language (R. Kim et al., 2019). Overcoming these stereotypes and embracing cultural diversity is an essential and transformative aspect of effective language learning in a global context. It requires learners to embark on a journey of cultural exploration, shedding preconceived notions along the way. This process involves engaging with authentic cultural experiences, engaging in open dialogue with native speakers, and immersing oneself in the myriad facets of a culture beyond the stereotypes.

By actively challenging stereotypes and biases, learners can unlock a deeper, more nuanced understanding of both the language and the culture it represents (Hentschel et al., 2019). They can appreciate the diversity of accents, dialects, and regional variations within a language, recognizing that each one contributes to the rich tapestry of linguistic expression. Additionally, they can develop a heightened sensitivity to the cultural norms, customs, and values that shape language use, fostering not only effective communication but also genuine

cross-cultural understanding. In essence, the journey of overcoming stereotypes and biases in language learning is a transformative one. It transcends language proficiency, evolving into a profound exploration of cultural pluralism and the celebration of diversity (Aula & Ichwan, 2022). It underscores the idea that language is not just a tool for communication but a gateway to the multifaceted worldviews and experiences that define our global community (Rijal, 2023).

In the digital age, technology has spearheaded a transformative revolution in the realm of language learning and cultural immersion (Melkonyan & Matevosyan, 2020). The advent of online resources, language learning applications, and virtual language exchange platforms has ushered in a new era of accessibility and convenience, offering learners an unprecedented opportunity to engage with authentic cultural content from around the world (Canals, 2020). Through these digital avenues, learners can embark on a multifaceted journey of language acquisition and cultural exploration. They can access a wealth of resources, ranging from foreign films, music, literature, to social media (Ausat, 2023), all of which serve as dynamic windows into the rich tapestry of the cultures in which these languages are spoken. For instance, streaming platforms provide access to a vast array of foreign films and television series, allowing learners not only to improve their language skills but also to gain profound insights into the cultural nuances, societal norms, and historical contexts that shape the narratives.

Moreover, language learning applications offer interactive experiences that extend beyond vocabulary and grammar drills (Guaqueta & Castro-Garces, 2018). They often incorporate cultural elements, such as idiomatic expressions, colloquialisms, and regional dialects, ensuring that learners are well-equipped to navigate the diverse linguistic landscape of their chosen language. Additionally, virtual language exchange platforms connect learners with native speakers, enabling authentic conversations that bridge linguistic and cultural divides (Jiang & Li, 2018). However, while technology has opened doors to boundless opportunities, it also presents certain challenges that demand vigilant consideration (Suherlan, 2023). One such challenge is the risk of cultural misappropriation, wherein learners may inadvertently adopt elements of a culture without a full understanding of their significance or appropriateness. This risk underscores the importance of promoting cultural sensitivity and respect in the digital language learning environment.

Furthermore, technology can sometimes oversimplify the complexities of culture, reducing it to a series of stereotypes or surface-level observations (Adhianto et al., 2019). This oversimplification can hinder learners from developing a deep and nuanced appreciation for the multifaceted nature of the cultures they encounter. It is essential, therefore, for learners to

approach digital resources with a critical and culturally informed perspective, striving to delve beyond the superficial to truly understand and respect the cultures they engage with. In conclusion, the digital age has brought about a revolution in language learning and cultural immersion, offering learners unparalleled access to authentic cultural content (Anggeraini, 2020). While technology enriches the language learning experience, it also necessitates responsible engagement, cultural sensitivity, and a commitment to understanding the intricate relationship between language and culture in an increasingly interconnected world.

In an era of unprecedented global interconnectedness, the examination of cultural influences on language acquisition assumes heightened significance (Grigoryeva & Zakirova, 2022). The intricate interplay between culture and language learning has evolved into a subject of paramount relevance, holding profound implications for educators, learners, and curriculum developers across the globe (Smaoui, 2021). This multifaceted exploration into the nexus of culture and language serves as the bedrock upon which the foundation of more effective, culturally attuned language teaching methodologies is constructed. At its core, this endeavor is driven by a collective aspiration to equip individuals with the linguistic and cultural competencies necessary to navigate the intricate web of global communication with finesse and respect (Ohara, 2023). The contemporary landscape demands a new paradigm in language education, one that transcends mere linguistic proficiency and delves deeper into the cultural fabric that is intricately woven into the tapestry of each language (Pujiani et al., 2022).

The symbiotic relationship between culture and language is manifest in a myriad of ways. Language is not a mere conduit of communication but a vessel that carries within it the values, norms, and social constructs of a given culture (Tektigul et al., 2022). It encapsulates the essence of identity, reflects historical narratives, and encapsulates the collective wisdom of a community. Therefore, to truly master a language is to embark on a journey of cultural discovery—a journey that transcends words and phrases to encompass the ethos of a society. Educators, the torchbearers of this transformative approach, play a pivotal role in reshaping language pedagogy (Peedikayil et al., 2023). Armed with a deeper understanding of the cultural underpinnings of language, they can craft teaching methods that foster not only linguistic fluency but also cultural empathy (Sercu, 2006). These methods recognize that language cannot be divorced from the cultural contexts in which it thrives and evolves. Moreover, learners stand to benefit immensely from this paradigm shift. They are no longer passive recipients of language but active explorers of culture. Their language acquisition journey is enriched as they unlock the nuances of cultural references, decode the intricacies of idiomatic expressions, and navigate the subtleties of social conventions embedded within the language. Armed with

cultural insight, learners are better equipped to bridge the gap between linguistic diversity and cultural understanding (Ahtif & Gandhi, 2022). In essence, the study of cultural influences in language learning is a dynamic endeavor that transcends the confines of academia. It is a call to action—a call for educators, learners, and curriculum developers to embrace a new era of language education (Azzaakiyyah et al., 2023; Said Ahmad et al., 2023). It is a recognition of the interconnected world in which we live and the imperative to communicate confidently and respectfully in this complex global landscape. Through this understanding, we pave the way for a future where language is a conduit not only for communication but also for fostering cross-cultural harmony and appreciation in an ever-evolving world.

In summation, the intricate interplay of cultural influences within the realm of language learning, particularly in the context of our interconnected global society, manifests itself as a multifaceted and transformative phenomenon. These cultural influences, as we have expounded upon, cast a wide net of impact, leaving no aspect of language acquisition untouched. First and foremost, they unfurl their profound effects in the realm of motivation—a driving force that steers language learners on their arduous yet rewarding journey. Cultural allure, travel aspirations, and career ambitions all form the bedrock upon which language learning motivations are built. These motivations, akin to compass needles, point learners in the direction of linguistic mastery, carrying them through the inevitable tribulations that arise during the learning process. Additionally, cultural influences shape the very manner in which individuals communicate. Diverse cultural norms prescribe varying levels of politeness, directness, and reliance on non-verbal cues in communication (R Hassen, 2016). Recognizing and internalizing these nuanced preferences is paramount for effective language use. Take, for instance, the divergence between the English and Japanese approaches to communication; while the former leans toward directness, the latter values the finesse of indirectness. These cultural nuances demand careful consideration and adaptation from language learners.

Nevertheless, it is essential to acknowledge that cultural influences, while enriching the language learning experience, also present unique challenges that must be confronted head-on. Stereotypes and biases can cloud learners' perceptions of a language and its associated culture, leading to misconceptions and potentially hindering the learning process. It is imperative that learners, with their ever-open minds, actively work to dispel these stereotypes, embrace cultural diversity, and foster cross-cultural understanding. This process goes beyond linguistic proficiency; it is the hallmark of a culturally attuned and empathetic global citizen. In essence, cultural influences permeate every facet of the language learning journey, both enhancing and complicating the experience. With an informed and open-minded approach, language learners

can harness the transformative power of cultural influences, navigating the intricate landscape of our multilingual world. By doing so, they contribute not only to their linguistic proficiency but also to the cultivation of a global community founded upon the pillars of cross-cultural understanding, respect, and harmony—a world where the boundaries of language become bridges to a shared human experience.

CONCLUSION

Research on this topic reveals that culture plays a very significant role in language learning in the current era of globalisation. Language cannot be separated from the culture that shapes it, and the process of language learning is often also a journey into a deeper cultural understanding. This affects the learner's motivation, communication style, and perception of the language and culture being learnt. While culture provides richness and complexity to language learning, there are also challenges to overcome, such as stereotypes and cultural biases that can hinder the learning process. However, with a deep understanding of the role of culture in language learning, we can develop more effective and culturally sensitive approaches to teaching foreign languages.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Suggestions that can be given for the results of this study include: 1) **Multicultural Approach in Language Teaching:** Language educators should adopt a multicultural approach that incorporates cultural understanding in language teaching. This may include the introduction of relevant cultures, stereotypes that may arise, and culturally appropriate communication practices. 2) **Emphasis on Cultural Learning:** In addition to teaching grammar and vocabulary, language courses should actively integrate cultural learning. This can include exploring literature, film, music, and social media from countries where the language is spoken. 3) **Stereotype Awareness:** In the context of language learning, it is important to promote awareness of cultural stereotypes that may affect the perception of a particular language and culture. This can help counter prejudice and promote deeper understanding. 4) **Wise Use of Technology:** Technology can be a powerful tool in language and cultural learning. However, it needs to be used wisely and culturally sensitive to avoid errors in cultural interpretation. 5) **Intercultural Collaboration:** Intercultural collaboration between educational institutions from different countries can help deepen cultural and linguistic understanding. This can involve student exchanges, joint projects, and training programmes for educators. 6) **Further Study:** Further research into how culture affects language learning in different global contexts and the

influence of technology in this process could provide deeper insights. By implementing these suggestions, we can ensure that language education in this globalised era not only prepares individuals to communicate effectively but also to understand and respect the diversity of cultures that exist around the world. This will help build cultural bridges and increase cross-cultural understanding in an increasingly connected global society.

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