



Comparison of individual differences and Hofstede's culture layers in the SLA process

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ABSTRACT

The preliminary idea of incorporating culture into language teaching has not been thoroughly framed from the Sociopragmatic and Pragmalinguistic dimensions, whereas second/foreign language learning was the focal point of attention in the various contexts. At this point, Hofstede defines the term "culture," and its six dimensions: Masculinity/Femininity, Indulgence/Restraint, Power Distance, Individualism/Collectivism, Uncertainty Avoidance, and Long/Short Term Orientation. It is helpful to remember that each of the six culture layers that Hofstede established may help us to comprehend individual differences, which is the fundamental idea behind the SLA (Second Language Acquisition) process. The relationship between language and culture is examined in the present narrative study by using the lens of Sociolinguistics and SLA principles to understand the role of culture in the SLA process via unrevealing the similarities between Hofstede's culture layers' and the principle of individual differences in SLA (Dörnyei, 2007). Depending upon the results of the present narrative literature review study, the process of learning a language is culture-specific, which is also supported by the idea of "culture" being homogenized. There is undoubtedly no objective tool for assessing culture inside a certain society. Nonetheless, during the SLA process, taking into account the unique characteristics of EFL environments could aid in the development of both large- and small-scale policies and initiatives that will further the process.

Keywords

Individual differences, Sociopragmatics, Pragmalinguistics, SLA, Culture Layers

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Introduction

Language naturally evolves with culture, emphasizing the crucial role of cultural understanding in language education. Hofstede's widely accepted cultural dimensions theory posits that culture significantly shapes individuals, groups, and management theories (Hofstede, 2010). This narrative study investigates the interplay between language and culture through the lenses of sociolinguistics and Second Language Acquisition (SLA) principles. It specifically examines how Hofstede's cultural dimensions align with the SLA process to illuminate the impact of culture on language acquisition. The study asserts that effective language education encompasses more than teaching core competencies and grammar; it also involves integrating

cultural traits. This integration is crucial for understanding a language's sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic functions. Sociopragmatics examines how social context influences language use and interpretation. It focuses on the interaction between language and social factors, such as status, power dynamics, and cultural norms. This field explores how these social variables affect communicative practices, including politeness, formality, and appropriateness in different settings (Holmes, 2013). Pragmalinguistics is the study of the linguistic mechanisms and strategies used to perform communicative functions. It involves analyzing how specific language forms—such as speech acts, discourse markers, and conversational implicatures—function to convey meaning and achieve communicative goals within various contexts (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

For instance, Hofstede's dimension of Power Distance can profoundly affect language learning and teaching. In cultures with high power distance, such as Japan, the use of formal language and respectful address forms is paramount. English learners from these cultures may struggle with informal language usage in English-speaking contexts, such as casual conversations or modern workplace settings where informal communication is common. Conversely, in low power distance cultures like the Netherlands, where egalitarian values prevail, learners might find formal English conventions overly rigid or unnecessary, affecting their language use in professional environments.

Another relevant dimension is Individualism versus Collectivism. In individualistic cultures, such as the United States, language learning often emphasizes personal achievement and self-expression. Learners are encouraged to engage in debates, express personal opinions, and assert themselves. In contrast, collectivist cultures, such as China, may focus more on group harmony and consensus. Language learners from these cultures might initially find individualistic aspects of English discourse, such as assertive argumentation or personal storytelling, challenging. Incorporating culturally relevant practices into teaching can help bridge these differences, making language learning more effective and contextually appropriate.

Furthermore, Hofstede's dimension of Uncertainty Avoidance also plays a role. In cultures with high uncertainty avoidance, like Greece, learners might prefer clear rules and structured approaches to language learning. They may struggle with the ambiguity present in idiomatic expressions or conversational nuances in English. In contrast, learners from low uncertainty avoidance cultures, such as Sweden, might be more comfortable with ambiguous language use and innovative communication strategies. Teachers can address these differences by providing structured frameworks for high uncertainty avoidance learners while allowing more flexible, exploratory activities for those from low uncertainty avoidance cultures.

The study argues that while the intrinsic connection between language and culture is widely acknowledged, integrating Hofstede's cultural dimensions into language learning processes remains underexplored. Addressing this gap, the study explores how incorporating Hofstede's dimensions can enhance language education. By aligning teaching strategies with cultural dimensions, educators can improve both sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic understanding, leading to more effective language acquisition and teaching practices. For example, incorporating role-plays that reflect cultural norms, providing context-specific feedback, and using culturally relevant materials can help learners navigate both linguistic and cultural complexities more adeptly. In conclusion, language education must extend beyond core competencies and grammar to include a deep understanding of cultural traits. Integrating Hofstede's cultural dimensions into the learning process can bridge cultural gaps, making language acquisition more effective and contextually relevant. This approach ensures that learners not only master the language but also navigate its use appropriately within diverse cultural contexts.

Problem Statement

Globalization has intensified the need for educators and students to engage with culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds (Salvage, 2010). CALD refers to individuals or communities whose linguistic and cultural backgrounds differ from the dominant or mainstream culture. This term is often used in educational and social contexts to address the needs of people from diverse ethnic, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds, emphasizing the importance of tailored approaches in communication and education (Clyne, 1991).

However, cultural and linguistic challenges—such as power imbalances between students and teachers and students' understanding of informal cultural norms—complicate this engagement (Shipman, 2015). Given that language is dynamic and responsive to cultural context, it is crucial to understand how sociolinguistics can frame language within cultural norms and motivations. This study addresses the lack of a comprehensive framework that integrates sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic dimensions with cultural understanding in language education.

However, language is dynamic, meaning that it changes in response to the social norms and the current cultural context. In order to create a pragmatic and practical point of view for the everyday use of the language while keeping in mind cultural norms and motivations, sociolinguistics now attempts to define the language from the perspectives of pragmatics and pragmalinguistics. It is crucial to comprehend the relationship between language and culture from a variety of angles because of this. Furthermore, the aspects that are of concern are strongly tied to the customs and routines of daily life. Dörnyei (2007) attempts to illustrate the individual's learning patterns by elucidating the culturally specific personal features on the periphery of this.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to explore the intersection of culture and language learning through a methodical narrative analysis that compares Hofstede's cultural layers with learner psychology theories from Dörnyei (2007, 2014) and Brown (2017). Despite the extensive research on culture, there is a noticeable gap in studies focusing on the interaction between culture and language acquisition. This study seeks to fill this gap by investigating how Hofstede's cultural dimensions relate to the language learning process in EFL contexts.

The rationale and originality of the current work are demonstrated by referencing the addressed gap in the literature. As a result, the current study's primary goal is to investigate how Hofstede's culture characteristics relate to language instruction. The following research question was created to direct the study based on the objectives of the investigation and the gap in the literature.

1. What is the reflection of culture on language learning process regarding Hofstede's culture dimensions?

Background information and related studies

Using a substantial database gathered by a multinational firm (IBM) between 1967 and 1973, Hofstede's (2004) cultural model was created. He categorized 40 countries along four characteristics of national cultures using a factor analysis at the country level. The four dimensions were uncertainty avoidance (UA), masculinity against femininity (MF), individualism vs collectivism (IC), and power distance (PD). Based on studies conducted in the Far East by Canadian psychologist Michael Bond, a fifth dimension—long-term versus short-

term orientation (LSO)—was added to the original four in the 1980s (Hofstede, 2001). Furthermore, in the 2000s, a sixth dimension—Indulgence against Restraint (IR)—was included as a consequence of study conducted by Bulgarian academic Michael Minkov (2007) utilizing data from the World Values Survey. Below is a brief explanation of these dimensions according to Hofstede (2011):

Human inequality is a fundamental problem with various remedies. PD is related to these solutions. Certain societies will always have power imbalances and inequality, while some will always have greater inequality than others. It is also possible to differentiate between countries based on how they typically address these disparities. (p.28)

Numerous research has looked into the cultural characteristics of Persian culture as described by Hofstede (2001). To quantify these six dimensions in the Iranian context, Saboori et al. (2015a) developed an emic scale (cultural dimensions scale), which allowed them to determine the norm for each cultural dimension for a significant Iranian subculture. Saboori et al. (2015b) investigated the relationship between these characteristics, and the three aspects of Iranian identity (national, religious, and modern) in a different study. In order to do this, a sample of university students was given the cultural dimensions and cultural attachment scales. The findings showed a strong correlation between the identity components and cultural factors. Similarly, similar cultural paradigm is used in the current study to investigate the reflections of the culture layers on the language learning process in EFL contexts.

The intersection of culture and language education can be understood through Hofstede's cultural dimensions, which offer a framework for analyzing how cultural values influence communication styles, learning preferences, and educational outcomes. Hofstede's model, encompassing dimensions such as power distance, individualism vs. collectivism, and uncertainty avoidance, provides insights into how cultural contexts shape language acquisition and teaching practices. Integrating these cultural dimensions into language education is crucial for developing culturally responsive pedagogies that acknowledge and address the diverse cultural backgrounds of learners. Hofstede's cultural dimensions model serves as a valuable tool in understanding the influence of cultural values on language education, emphasizing the need for culturally responsive teaching practices that align with learners' cultural backgrounds (Hofstede, 2001).

Literature Review

Sociocultural Theory in Line with the Sociopragmatics and Pragmalinguistics

When sociopragmatics (the interface of pragmatics and social organization) and pragmalinguistics (the confluence of pragmatics and linguistic forms) elements are combined, learning a second language becomes an extremely challenging endeavor. Subtle cross-cultural differences have made it difficult for such conventions to work, as shown by Kasper and Roever (2005), and Kasper (2002). Language use in a context is the focus of the intriguing topic of pragmatics. It includes two primary subfields of sociopragmatics and pragmatics, which are crucial to comprehend human communication.

The study of the interaction between language and context is known as pragmatics. It looks at the ways in which linguistic elements and structures are employed to communicate meaningfully in various contexts. This area of pragmatics examines the ways in which vocabulary, syntax, and grammar are employed to express social meaning. In contrast, sociopragmatics concentrates on the social dimensions of language use. It looks into how social constructs including power dynamics, cultural norms, and social context influence language use. This area of pragmatics examines how language usage is shaped by social circumstances

and how social interactions are shaped by language use (extremely culture-sensitive). Effective communication requires an understanding of pragmatics, which enables us to interpret meaning beyond the literal meaning of words and comprehend how language is employed in various settings.

Culture

A collection of people that share the same values, beliefs, and behaviors is referred to as a culture, according to a number of definitions (Spencer-Oatey & Franklin, 2012). Culture is a manner of being. It's the framework that surrounds our existence, thoughts, feelings, and interpersonal relationships. It serves as the "glue" holding a group of people collectively. Our continent, our shared identity, is culture. This concept also fits in nicely with scenarios when pupils are exposed to a foreign teaching culture and must become acclimated to it. It should come as no surprise that problems with speaking performance arise from exposure to a culture that may be unfamiliar to first-time language learners as well as from the discrepancies between the education facility's culture-specific rule learning environment and the actual world of speaking the language.

Gaining the viewpoint of the skill-based facilitator is crucial in order to comprehend foreign language performance problems in students or societies within Hofstede's cultural dimensions because it necessitates a significant amount of time from the target audience, including time spent evaluating the everyday performance. To investigate how culture influences language learning practices in EFL situations was the goal of this study.

Language and Culture

It is well-established by scholars like Hofstede (2001), Hofstede (2010), and House et al. (2004) that language significantly influences culture. Hofstede (2001) defines culture as the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one human group from another. This definition underlines how cultural values and norms are embedded in language, shaping communication patterns and behaviors across different groups. While Hofstede's model originally focused on national borders, this study explores how his cultural dimensions apply to the complex relationship between language learning and culture, expanding beyond national boundaries to address the cultural contexts within languages themselves.

Hofstede et al. (2002) later critiqued their own framework, acknowledging that "nations are not the best units for studying cultures," suggesting that linguistic communities might offer more nuanced insights into cultural dynamics. Blackledge and Creese (2010) further contextualize language practices within their social, historical, cultural, and political environments, reinforcing the idea that language is deeply intertwined with culture. Brannen et al. (2014) integrate language and management, illustrating how language functions as a cultural identifier and influences global business practices. This perspective is echoed by Schinzel (2014a, b), who also emphasizes the role of language as a cultural marker.

Lewis (2006) examines the cognitive aspects of language, highlighting how early cultural conditioning shapes thought processes and influences organizational practices, such as leadership and decision-making. Cummins (2000) contributes to this discussion by introducing the Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) theory, which distinguishes between Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS) and the more advanced language proficiency required for academic contexts. His work underscores the challenges faced by second language learners in mastering both BICS and CALP, further illustrating the deep connection between language and culture.

García's (2009, 2014) research on bilingual education and translanguaging adds another layer, demonstrating how language practices are not only influenced by but also shape cultural identities. Her work is particularly relevant in multilingual contexts, where language education must navigate the complexities of multiple cultural influences.

The citations in this discussion are crucial as they collectively provide a comprehensive understanding of the interplay between culture and language. Hofstede's foundational theories offer a framework for analyzing cultural dimensions, while subsequent critiques and extensions by other scholars broaden the scope to include linguistic communities and educational contexts. This integrated approach highlights the necessity of considering both cultural and linguistic factors in education and global communication.

Exposure to a foreign teaching culture can significantly impact speaking performance by influencing learners' ability to adapt to new linguistic and cultural norms. Hofstede's cultural dimensions provide a framework for understanding these impacts:

1. **Power Distance Index (PDI):** In cultures with high power distance, hierarchical relationships and authority are emphasized. This can affect how students interact with teachers and peers. In high PDI cultures, students might be less likely to challenge or question their instructors, potentially limiting their ability to practice speaking freely and engage in interactive learning. Conversely, in low PDI cultures where egalitarianism is valued, students may feel more comfortable participating actively in discussions and taking risks in their speech, which can enhance their speaking performance.
2. **Individualism vs. Collectivism (IDV):** In individualistic cultures, personal achievement and self-expression are prioritized. Students from individualistic backgrounds may be more likely to take initiative in speaking activities and assert their opinions. In contrast, students from collectivist cultures, which emphasize group harmony and conformity, might be more reserved in their speech to maintain group cohesion and avoid standing out. This cultural difference can affect how learners adapt to speaking practices in a foreign teaching environment.
3. **Uncertainty Avoidance (UA):** Cultures with high uncertainty avoidance prefer clear rules and structured environments. Students from these cultures might experience anxiety in less structured or unfamiliar speaking situations, affecting their performance. In contrast, learners from low uncertainty avoidance cultures may be more adaptable and comfortable with ambiguity, potentially making it easier for them to engage in diverse speaking contexts and practices.
4. **Masculinity vs. Femininity (MAS):** In masculine cultures, assertiveness and competitiveness are valued, which might encourage more proactive and confident speaking behaviors. In feminine cultures, where cooperation and modesty are emphasized, students might approach speaking tasks with more caution, which could affect their performance in environments that value assertiveness.
5. **Long-Term vs. Short-Term Orientation (LTO):** Cultures with a long-term orientation value perseverance and adaptability. Students from these cultures might be more resilient and open to the iterative process of language learning, including adapting their speaking practices to fit new cultural contexts. In contrast, students from short-term oriented cultures might focus more on immediate results and practical outcomes, which can influence their approach to speaking tasks.
6. **Indulgence vs. Restraint (IND):** Cultures high in indulgence emphasize enjoyment and gratification. Students from such cultures might be more willing to take risks in speaking and engage more freely in discussions. On the other hand, students from restrained

cultures might be more cautious and reserved in their speech, impacting their overall speaking performance.

Hofstede's dimensions offer insights into how cultural values shape learners' attitudes and behaviors in language learning contexts. Understanding these dimensions helps educators tailor their teaching strategies to accommodate the diverse needs of students from different cultural backgrounds, thereby improving their speaking performance in foreign teaching environments.

Background of the Hofstede's culture layers

Originally created to profile the country profiles for International Business Machines (IBMTM), it was subsequently expanded into a cultural framework that could characterize the traits and behaviors of a particular culture. ELT students are exposed to language learning culture from an early age, much like toddlers are unintentionally exposed to and acquire culture from a young age. This is distinct from organizational culture since these characteristics are typically acquired by employees through their work, and they might differ throughout organizations (Hofstede, 2001). Drawing a parallel between how English Language Teaching (ELT) students acquire language learning culture and how toddlers acquire culture provides valuable insights into the processes of cultural assimilation and adaptation in learning contexts.

Acquisition of Culture in ELT Students vs. Toddlers

1. Naturalistic Immersion:

- **Toddlers:** Young children acquire culture naturally through immersion in their immediate environment. They observe, imitate, and interact with their caregivers and peers, gradually internalizing cultural norms, values, and practices. This process is often unconscious and happens through everyday activities, such as language use, social interactions, and routine behaviors.
- **ELT Students:** Similarly, ELT students, especially those studying in a foreign context, absorb aspects of the target culture through immersion. They engage with native speakers, participate in cultural activities, and experience the social norms associated with the language. Just as toddlers pick up cultural nuances organically, students learn cultural subtleties through exposure and practice in authentic settings.

2. Social Interaction and Learning:

- **Toddlers:** Social interaction is crucial for toddlers as they learn cultural norms and language. Through conversations with adults and peers, children learn how to behave in socially acceptable ways, understand societal expectations, and use language effectively in various contexts. This social learning is essential for their cultural and linguistic development.
- **ELT Students:** For language learners, interaction with native speakers and participation in culturally relevant activities facilitate the acquisition of cultural norms and appropriate language use. Just as toddlers learn by interacting with their social environment, ELT students refine their language skills and cultural understanding through practical engagement and feedback from their interactions.

3. Contextual Learning and Adaptation:

- **Toddlers:** Children adapt to cultural norms by experiencing them in context. For example, toddlers learn appropriate behavior at mealtimes, in social gatherings, or during play through direct experience and observation. This contextual learning helps them navigate their social world effectively.
- **ELT Students:** Similarly, ELT students learn to navigate the target culture by understanding and adapting to specific contexts in which the language is used. They learn not only the linguistic aspects but also the cultural contexts that influence language use, such as politeness norms, social hierarchies, and communication styles.

4. Incremental Understanding:

- **Toddlers:** The acquisition of culture is gradual for toddlers. They build their understanding piece by piece, starting from simple behaviors and expanding to more complex cultural concepts as they grow older and gain more experience.
- **ELT Students:** Language learners also acquire cultural knowledge incrementally. They may start with basic cultural norms and language functions and progressively understand more nuanced aspects of the culture, such as idiomatic expressions, cultural references, and social etiquette, as their language proficiency and exposure increase.

5. Influence of Caregivers and Educators:

- **Toddlers:** The role of caregivers in guiding and shaping toddlers' cultural understanding is critical. Caregivers provide models of behavior, enforce cultural norms, and offer feedback that helps children learn and adapt to their cultural environment.
- **ELT Students:** In the same way, educators play a crucial role in guiding ELT students through the cultural learning process. Teachers provide context, explain cultural nuances, and facilitate interactions that help students assimilate cultural norms and improve their language skills.

The parallel between how toddlers and ELT students acquire culture highlights the importance of immersive and interactive learning environments. Just as toddlers learn culture naturally through social interaction and contextual experience, ELT students benefit from immersive language experiences and practical engagement with native speakers. Understanding this parallel can help educators design more effective language learning environments that foster cultural and linguistic assimilation in a manner similar to the natural cultural acquisition observed in early childhood. This comparison underscores how fundamental and experiential learning processes are similar across different stages of development, providing insights into optimizing language and cultural education for ELT students.

By stressing the value of comprehending the different facets of a community and its cultural legacy, Geert Hofstede goes beyond the sociopragmatic and pragmatic interpretations of cultural norms in societies. Hofstede outlines six distinct layers within a framework that corresponds to the organizational level: the cultural dimensions model developed by Geert Hofstede, which is based on quantitative research and offers scores for 75 nations, is frequently used in international cross-cultural studies. A country's culture is defined by its typical pattern of beliefs and values, according to Hofstede's (1984, p. 78) cultural aspects approach. Countries are then categorized into cultural areas based on how well they scored on the six criteria, and in certain instances, historical factors can be used to explain why the areas' cultures differ from one another. The Cultural Dimensions Model by Hofstede (2001) distinguishes cultures based on:

Avoiding Uncertainty (UAI): Adapting to the reality that none of us can foretell the future is something that we must all cope with. These are mediated by culture methods of handling uncertainty. Tolerance anxiety is brought on by extremely high uncertainty. Cultures impact uncertainty tolerance through laws, technologies, and religions. In many social circumstances, Hofstede distinguishes the extent of uncertainty avoidance. Human existence is fundamentally uncertain, thus we attempt to manage it by adhering to laws, regulations, and religious beliefs (Hofstede, 2001). The degree to which individuals within a society perceive uncertainty and/or unfamiliarity as a threat is known as uncertainty avoidance (Hofstede, 2001, p. 161). According to Hofstede (2001), risk avoidance and uncertainty avoidance are two different things. People in cultures with considerable uncertainty avoidance tend to think that social norms and formality influence how people live. Conversely, poor uncertainty avoidance cultures believe that the minimum number of rules is appropriate.

Masculinity/ Femininity, and (MAS): In a society that leans masculine, women should prioritize quality of life and be modest and gentle, while men should be tough and assertive and focused on financial prosperity. When these conventional emotional gender roles combine and both sexes take on the emotional female gender role, we have a feminine society.

Long Term Orientation versus Short Term Orientation (LTO): This dimension deals with things like being frugal, tenacious, following customs, protecting one's dignity, and ranking relationships according to status. Long-term orientation, thus, reflects attitudes toward future benefits, particularly tenacity and thrift. Fostering past-present virtues—particularly tradition, face-saving, and upholding societal obligations—is the short-term approach.

Indulgence versus Restraint (IND): Personal happiness and fun are the main components of indulgence, which is defined as enjoying comparatively unfettered satisfying of our desires. The antithesis of this is restraint, wherein one's own enjoyment is limited. In the first, the individual looks for the fun aspect in each individual work; in the second, however, the issue is with severe boundaries.

Individualism/Collectivism (Idv): The cultural dimension of individualism and collectivism pertains to the individual's value system in relation to the collective (Gregory and Munch, 1996). According to Hofstede (2001), the interaction between the individual and the collectivity in human society is closely related to societal norms, or the value systems of the majority population, and goes beyond simple questions of how people coexist. The "I" consciousness is crucial in individualistic cultures because it expresses personal viewpoint and self-actualization. In contrast, the phrase "we" in a collectivistic society refers to identity and harmony among members of the same group, and it is crucial to maintain one's "face" (Mooij, 2003).

Power Distance Index (PDI): Hofstede (2001) defined power distance as the degree to which members of the less powerful social group accept and anticipate that power is not allocated fairly. According to Hofstede, boss-subordinate relationships are where this disparity is typically formalized. The power distance index was calculated using the nation's mean score or percentage on three survey questions (Hofstede, 2001). These questions dealt with the following topics: subordinates' perceptions of their bosses, their fear of disagreeing with them and their actual decision-making style, and their preferred decision-making styles. The majority of a nation's middle class group adheres to the "power distance norm" as a value system, according to data from Hofstede's global survey. According to Hofstede (2001), a causal chain explaining the origins of national disparities is proposed as a result of the PDI's correlation with geographic, economic, and demographic country characteristics as well as historical considerations.

Inequality exists in any society: certain individuals are more wealthy, powerful, or have higher status than others. In certain cultures, this is more acceptable than in others. Therefore,

the degree to which less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a nation anticipate and accept that power is divided unequally is referred to as power gap.

Although Hofstede first introduced the four basic cultural dimensions, he later added two more dimensions that explain the time horizon and place more weight on the future: long-term vs. short-term orientation, originally known as Confucian dynamism. The second one is referred to as Indulgence versus Restraint (IND), and it measures how much a society's members attempt to restrain their urges and cravings.

In summary, the societal acceptance of hierarchy is known as power distance; the desire for sex-role differentiation is known as masculinity; the societal preference for individualism-collectivism is known as uncertainty; and the societal tolerance of ambiguity is known as ambiguity (Blackledge & Crees, 2010). Hofstede (2001, 2004) and others (Spolsky, 2004; Mooij, 2003) have corroborated and elaborated on his groundbreaking findings in a dynamic setting.

Individual Differences and Principles in Language Education.

Every individual approaches a topic, learns facts, or processes emotions from a unique perspective, even though we all share certain innate learning tendencies. This distinctive perspective helps differentiate the essential elements of language instruction from those of culture and society. Dörnyei (2006, 2014) and Brown (2017) have explored various aspects such as learning styles, psychological traits, sociocultural factors, and communicative abilities, each from different angles. They discussed these aspects in terms of context-specific traits such as motivation, social distance, pragmatics, extraversion versus introversion, risk-taking, ambiguity tolerance, and reflection versus impulsivity. These traits are crucial in determining how individuals approach language learning.

Ambiguity Tolerance refers to a person's cognitive willingness to accept concepts and ideas that challenge their existing worldview or knowledge base. People vary in their tolerance for ambiguity; some are open to considering and integrating opposing ideas, while others, who are less tolerant, tend to reject ideas that do not fit within their pre-existing framework.

Research on reflectivity and impulsivity has examined how individuals prefer to solve problems, either through a slow, deliberate (reflective) approach or through quick, impulsive decisions. Reflective individuals typically engage in thorough analysis before proposing solutions, whereas intuitive thinkers might rely on gut feelings and take multiple chances before arriving at an answer. Reflective children often show better reading accuracy compared to impulsive children (Kagan, 2012). However, impulsive readers may still achieve proficiency in reading through a "psycholinguistic guessing game" (Goodman, 2006), indicating that impulsivity does not always hinder comprehension.

Risk-taking is another crucial trait for successful language acquisition. Learners must be willing to test their assumptions about the language and embrace the possibility of making mistakes. Variations in risk-taking can influence second language learning and instruction. According to Shipman (2015), persistent error patterns, known as fossilization, may arise from a reluctance to take calculated risks. Learners may prefer to stick to familiar patterns, even if they are flawed, as long as they achieve the desired result.

Motivation is a fundamental affective element in language learning and has been extensively researched. It is crucial in shaping second language acquisition scenarios worldwide (Dörnyei, 2005; Dörnyei & Skehan, 2003; Spolsky, 2004). Despite its importance, generalizations about motivation can obscure a deeper understanding of its precise nature and components.

Social distance, a concept introduced to provide a framework for cultural learning in second language acquisition, refers to the cognitive and emotional closeness between

interacting cultures. The metaphorical use of "distance" highlights the differences between cultures and their impact on the learning process.

In summary, learner variability is a critical factor in second language acquisition (SLA), as outlined in Zoltán Dörnyei's individual differences hypothesis. Dörnyei (2007) categorizes these variations into psychological and cognitive elements such as learning styles, motivation, personality, language aptitude, and methods, emphasizing their importance in the language learning process.

Methodology

Design of the Study

In order to explore and analyze related material and provide a fresh understanding of Hofstede's culture dimensions based on earlier research, the current study undertakes a narrative literature review (Snyder, 2019). As the primary headline, sociocultural theory was reviewed throughout the process. The cultural characteristics proposed by Geert Hofstede were then examined, taking into account the relationship between language and culture in order to establish a procedural link and address the study issue. This link produces consequences for raising sociolinguistics in language education and illuminating a path for the dogmas in language education policy as a result of the narrative literature review.

Through a thorough narrative examination, the new concerns in sociolinguistics for foreign language instruction are investigated. To collect data for a narrative review, a particular research topic needs to be answered. This can be achieved by identifying all primary research relevant to the review issue, critically assessing the research, and synthesizing the results criteria (Gough et al., 2012). Narrative reviews can incorporate many forms of evidence to examine or explain important meaning, or they might mix data from multiple research initiatives to create a new integrated result or conclusion (Pollock & Berge, 2018). Thus, results from a narrative review and systematic analysis can supplement those from a single study (Hammersley, 2001).

A pair of primary inclusion criteria were established: the preliminary requirement was the publications be directly associated with the keywords found in the abstract, and the secondary was the articles' document type. The open-access publications were included in the narrative review process, while the remaining publications were excluded.

Data collection tools

Web-based libraries were used as the data-gathering tool because of the nature of the research design. In that context, the widely recognized, objective, and scientifically trustworthy data set, which is WoS was employed to collect the open-access related studies. The studies published in WoS have a high level of visibility, ranking, and categorization based on the impact factor characteristics, and the investigator reached 46 open-access research studies via WoS.

Data Analysis

Selecting the best data analysis technique is the second most important component of research projects, after selecting the research objectives. As such, finding the ideal fit for the type of data gathered is quite vital. The initial goal of the current study is to consider Hofstede's cultural dimensions through the studies found in the related literature. For this reason, a narrative literature review was selected as the research design with systematic and narrative reviews serving as the data examination.

Results

The results are presented in accordance with the research question via a thematic presentation. With the purpose of making the results visible and comprehensible, a basic-level preliminary systematic review was conducted, and the results were mapped via the Vosviewer, and the process was realized in three steps.

R.Q. 1. Reflections of Hofstede's culture dimensions on the language education process.

Web of Science (WoS) database was used to reach the related studies. The filtration criteria were set between the dates of 2000 and 2024 regarding all document types ranging from the journal articles to the conference proceedings, 142 studies were reached via Web of Science (WoS), and 46 of them were reviewed after employing the exclusion criteria.

Table 1. *Breakdown of the publications*

Document type	n
Proceeding paper	30
Journal Article	95
Book Chapter	1
Review Article	9
Total	142

Depending on the keywords and the abstracts of the studies, a homogenous map of the 142 studies, which were conducted round the world, was reached.

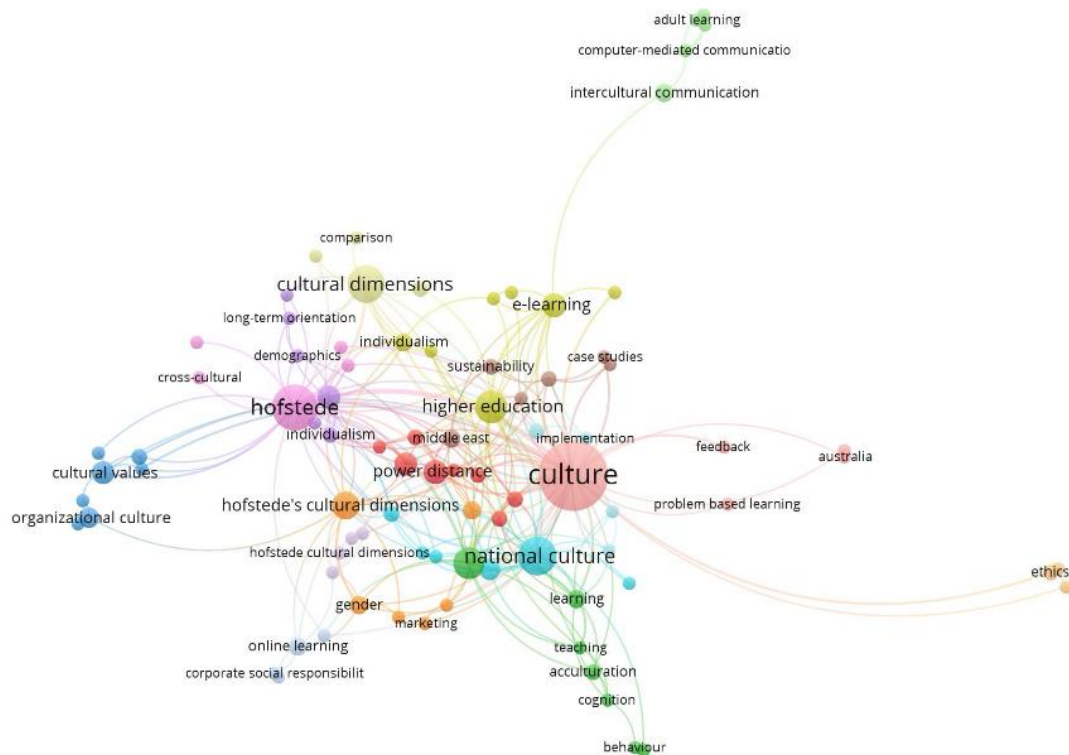


Figure 1. *First step of the data collection process.*

As can be seen from Figure 1, keywords were mainly related to culture and organizations apart from the learning and teaching process. While Figure 1 proves the abundance of studies related to the culture in different disciplines in accordance with Hofstede's culture dimensions, Figure 2 shows that the number of studies decreases when the examination lens is filtered to the field of education.

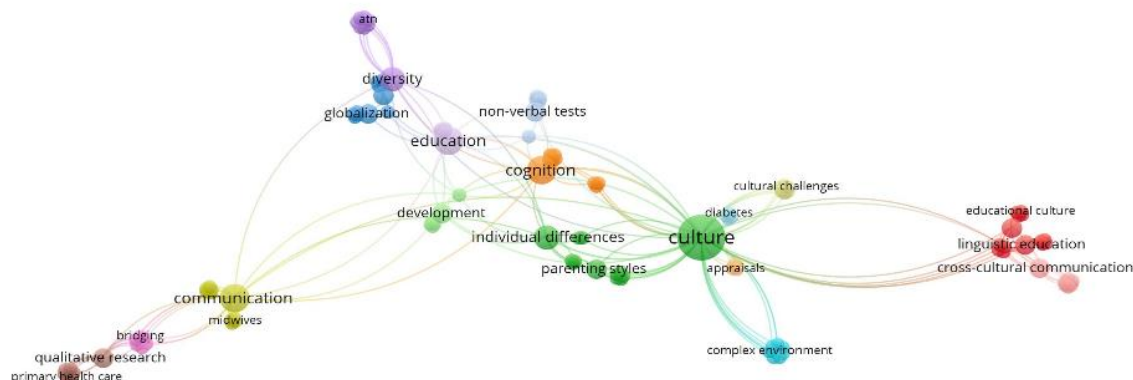


Figure 2. *Second step of the data collection process.*

Following the second step, the scope of the research was narrowed down to culture and second-language acquisition-related studies. In the third step, the VOSviewer clearly reveals that the number of studies ($n = 46$) in the field of language education specifically on individual differences and cultural relationships is nearly none when the filtration lenses were diminished to the related keywords, which proves the originality, and the significance of the study via the information retrieved from the numerical data.

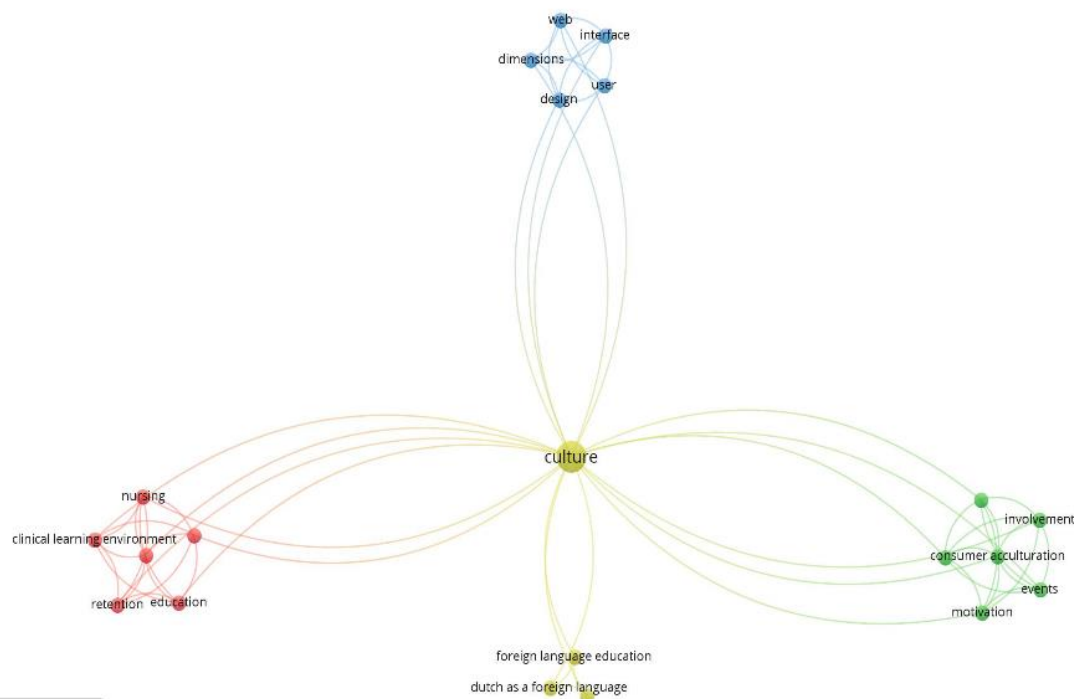


Figure 3. *Third step of the data collection process.*

Figure 3 clearly shows that the research links are not distributed among the disciplines homogeneously, the lines are mainly reciprocally linked, which identifies the gap in the

literature. Furthermore, the keywords of the studies shed light on the perception that the associations were made in one mutual ways rather than covering the multiple fields. This approach reports that researchers had a tendency to search about the reflections of the Hofstede's culture dimensions in the field of management and business rather than the foreign language education process. Although it is a known fact in the field of sociolinguistics and sociopragmatics that culture and language is closely associated, the narrative review has showed that the culture dimensions are reflected on the individuals learning habits and characteristics, which called by Dörnyei as the individual traits (Dörnyei, 2005).

Culture dimensions were shown to have strong ties to both Brown's language education principles and Dörnyei's individual differences theory, indicating that Hofstede's cultural dimensions have implications for language teaching procedures.

Table 2. Referencing Hofstede for sociocultural factors by Douglas Brown.

Collectivist	Individualist
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Favorable connotation in society of something having traditional roots. • Young people should learn; adults cannot assume the position of a pupil. • Pupils anticipate learning how to re-join. • Students will only speak out in class if the teacher specifically calls on them to do so. • People tend to speak up exclusively in small gatherings. • Based on particularist criteria, large classes are socially divided into smaller, more cohesive subgroups (e.g., ethnic identity). • In educational settings, formal harmony should always be upheld. • It should never be necessary to cause the teacher or any student to look foolish. • Getting an education is a means to rise in social standing and accept an open invitation from the instructor. • People tend to speak up only in huge gatherings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Superior class Diplomas are valuable documents that are hung on walls. • Obtaining certifications, even via questionable methods, is more significant than developing proficiency. • It is expected of teachers to treat some pupils better than others (for example, on the basis of a recommendation from a powerful person or ethnic affiliation). • favorable connotation in the society of anything that is "new". • "Permanent education" refers to the idea that learning never ends. • Pupils anticipate learning how to study. • Students will take turns speaking up in class. • Increasing one's economic value and sense of esteem for oneself via education is dependent on aptitude and competency. • Diplomas are very symbolic documents.

Table 2 illustrates how Hofstede's cultural aspects are examined by Brown (2017) in his book "The Principle of Language Learning and Teaching" in order to shed light on how culture affects language acquisition. The essence is this: Languages are more than just teaching four skills or grammar rules; they are entwined with culture, and audiences are expected to understand the pragmatic functions of the language, which encompass communicative competence, sociocultural factors, learning styles, and individual struggles (Brown, 2017; Dörnyei, 2014). It is important for audiences to understand these pragmatic functions.

Discussion

The teaching and learning process is devoid of any predetermined disciplines, thus it is imperative to be aware of the variables (Dörnyei, 2006, 2014; Brown, 2017, Kramersch, 2013). According to sociocultural theory, learning a second language entails learning a second culture to some extent, since learning a language is also a process of learning a new culture, (Brown, 2017). It is crucial to comprehend what we mean when we talk about the process of cultural learning. In this sense, Brown (2017) and Dörnyei (2014) shared similarities with Hofstede (2001, 2004, 2010) concerning the characteristics of unique language learning variations and ideals.

In terms of ambiguity tolerance, Hofstede's uncertainty avoidance index agrees with Brown's (2017) observations about learners' styles and tactics. According to Hofstede (2004, 2010), Brown contends that rather than demonstrating opposition to learning, students should embrace unclear situations or unusual rules. Ambiguous aspects of the language with relation to discourse, linguistics, grammatical rules, or practical structures are only included in the acquisition process in hospitable environments. A society's culture is viewed as the language's twin brother, therefore learning a language and adhering to customs while accepting ambiguity may facilitate the process. Additionally, Dörnyei's (2014) claims on individual differences in language learning in terms of extraversion versus introversion, impulsiveness against reflectivity, and motivation sub-categories are consistent with the dimension of indulgence versus restraint. The OCEAN (openness, conscientiousness, extraversion-introversion, agreeableness, neuroticism-emotional stability) model is another name for them. According to the assertion made by Kramersch (2013) that language and culture are intertwined, Brown (2017) illustrated how the cultural aspects of individualist versus collectivist societies differed in terms of social distance in language learning, which is a subcategory of sociocultural facts. Depending on the individualistic or collectivist aspects of the respective cultures, social distance aims to position the language appropriately within those cultures. However, a crucial aspect of learning a language is communicative competence, which has characteristics with the pragmatics of long-term orientation (LTO) versus short-term orientation. In language education, pragmatics (Brown, 2017; Dörnyei, 2014) refers to learning the language in line with the pragmatic aims, which are connected to either long-term or short-term motivation. Furthermore, Gül (2013) looked into the relationship between long-term thinking and ecologically conscious purchasing practices in Turkey. She came to the conclusion that a long-term perspective improves environmental consciousness. In two distinct cultures (Turkey and Canada), Sarigöllü (2009) investigated the relationship between cultural orientation, especially LTO, and environmental sentiments. According to research, people with LTO are more likely to grow to have favorable opinions on preserving the environment. Furthermore, future-focused societies tend to be long-term oriented and to conserve the environment, according to a study by Joreiman et al. (2004). Additionally, Samarasinghe (2012) examined the impact of LTO in a developing market called "Sri Lanka"; the findings showed that people's long-term orientation is a reliable indicator of the emergence of a favorable environmental attitude. In other words, cultures that prioritize the long term likely to provide sustainable outcomes, as demonstrated by the parallels between Brown (2017) and Dörnyei (2007).

However, there is the problem of gender equality in various disciplines. There is no denying that there are more female students than male students in second/foreign language programs. This is due to the fact that women are more motivated to learn a new language than men are, for both pragmatic and intrinsic reasons (Ülkümen, 2013; Şekerci, 2011). This issue is also acknowledged in Hofstede's research (2001, 2004, 2010), since the distinction between masculinity and femininity is a crucial indicator of a society's status and degree of development. Some other researches (Ateş & Altun, 2008; Barış, 2015; Birişçi, 2013; Gündüz, 2014;

Kocayiğit & Uşun, 2020; Tirnovalı, 2012) also address this gender link between culture and the process of learning English. Accordingly, Hofstede believes that in certain societies, masculinity is positioned at the front rows with respect to hierarchical ordering, parallel to highly regarded professional jobs. Males and females do not have equal access to job prospects (Tirnovalı, 2012), and language acquisition is hampered by comparable circumstances. But this time, the odds are on the women's side (Ülkümen, 2013).

Practical implications

In light of the study's findings, educators may find themselves with opportunities to work abroad for foreign language learning (FL) instructors, educators, or practitioners. In this instance, they should be aware of any cultural differences since, if they disregard the cultural motivations, rituals, or conventions during the practices, their instruction and classroom practices may result in an uncomfortable learning environment (Horwitz, 2001). For instance, communication interaction in the classroom is not a socioeducational norm of traditional Japanese education (Yashima et al., 2009). As a result, frequent interaction between teachers and students in the classroom may cause embarrassment or anxiety in Japanese students, as it is associated with the hierarchical situation and/or masculinity versus femininity dimension between teachers and students (Hofstede, 2001, 2004, 2010). Teachers from individualistic countries or regions should think about how to teach foreign languages (FL) in collectivist countries or regions, as cultural factors have shown that countries or areas leaning more toward collectivism may exhibit higher anxiety levels among language learners. Therefore, it is critical to understand the cultural group to which FL teachers and learners belong, as well as the distinctive characteristics exhibited by students.

Limitations

Every study has a number of restrictions over which the researcher has little to no control. Miller (2016) outlines the restrictions, which include sample size, sample kind, research design, and study duration, over which the researcher has little to no influence. The current study's narrative literature review research design was one of its main drawbacks. Since there are so few studies, the first step was to evaluate the earlier research and identify any connections between the language learning process and Hofstede's cultural dimensions. It does have a drawback, though, in that the findings must be supported by research studies using either mixed methods or qualitative approaches. Additionally, since it is the sole study in the field of language learning, the results cannot be generalized. Last but not least, a methodological triangulation would provide different viewpoints to elucidate the results and discuss the validity and dependability of the findings; in the absence of such triangulation, subjectivity can be a barrier to reaching higher audiences.

Conclusions

It is true to claim that culture cannot exist apart from society and language. As a result, culture's importance in the past century has been analyzed from a number of angles, and it has been found to be crucial to language instruction. Sociolinguistics is used to examine the relationship between language and culture in the current narrative study. While teaching grammatical rules

and the four fundamental abilities is the common understanding of language education, it is not the only thing that it teaches. It is emphasized that in addition to the language's grammatical components, pragmatics, and context-sensitive usage, language acquisition should encompass its culture. Geert Hofstede, the pioneer of the study of culture and institutions, established that crucial aspect of evaluating culture is to use diverse lenses. He created the first rigorous empirical model with quantifiable cultural values that could be measured. Kirkman et al. (2006) claim that the "tangibility" of his cultural dimensions led to hundreds of application and replication studies in a variety of sectors and enabled a more uniform operationalization of cultural values. Particularly, Hofstede's work has made it possible for a wide range of social scientists to carry out consistent comparative cross-country analyses, test a variety of hypotheses that would not have been investigated otherwise, and conduct various empirical studies on the role of culture (Beugelsdijk et al., 2015; Davis & Williamson, 2016; Kaasa et al., 2014). Nevertheless, scholars have utilized his values research to demonstrate how formal institutions are culturally rooted (Alesina & Giuliano, 2015; Gorodnichenko & Roland, 2017). Furthermore, acquiring a second or foreign language requires creating a second identity. The process of developing a new identity is important to the process of learning a culture, also known as acculturation. For this reason, sociolinguists are concerned with second-culture learning to frame a society's language and culture under one shared roof.

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