

## THE EFFECTS OF CULTURE ON FOREIGN LANGUAGE ACQUISITION: INTERCULTURAL ASPECT

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**Introduction:** The mainstay of public life is the interaction of people with each other. Hence, the role of language is immense and significant. It can bring together groups of people with different worldviews and be a major tool of information exchange. Today, people are eager to learn foreign languages. In the age of globalization, this process can be explained by the desire of people to seek new knowledge and experience outside the borders of their countries. If we consider language as the main means of human communication, then learning foreign languages leads to the intersection of different civilizations and cultures. In this case, it is important to study foreign language the specifics and diversity of each culture, since it might influence foreign language acquisition. A person who has grown up mastering different aspects of his native environment, social mentality, and culture, passes it through the prism of personal thinking, and eventually perceives it with a certain level of change. Another influence of culture on learning a foreign language is the opposite of the first case. For example, when learning a foreign language, one should not only master the language itself, but also consider the culture of that country. This is because language is a mirror of culture, a reflection of the traditions, rules and values of a particular society, attitudes to the world around it, a collection of information about the past. To speak a foreign language fluently we must perceive and understand its culture. Therefore, acquiring the grammatical rules and vocabulary of foreign language, and also its intercultural scope is of paramount importance in teaching and learning a second or foreign language

**Research question:** The article attempts to investigate the following questions:

1. How does culture influence foreign language acquisition?
2. What problems might occur in terms of cultural difference in learning a foreign language?
3. What are the views of young people aged 16-20 on the impact of culture on learning a foreign language?

**1.** Prior to discussing the impact of culture on language learning, we must dwell on the definition of “culture”. The American sociologist Neil Smelzer writes in his book "Sociology" that "culture shapes the personality of members of society and thus regulates their behavior" [1]. In fact, a set of customs, prohibitions, and rules that are an integral part of culture ensure that people behave appropriately in society. From this we can learn the regulatory function of culture in human life.

Culture has a great place in the life of society, in the history of a country as a whole. Therefore, each generation tried to respect, preserve, develop and pass on to future generations the symbols of culture inherited from their ancestors. Culture tells the story of an entire nation. That is why it has a great influence in any sphere of human life. And what is its impact on learning a foreign language? Language is a communication tool in our social lives, and it has an inalienable relationship with culture. Kramsch suggests that “Culture and language are inseparable and constitute a single universe or domain of experience” [2, p.6]. Language is a symbolic system of human interaction. Culture and language influence each other, since every language is part of a culture and every culture is part of a language [3]. Thus, the study of language should be closely linked with the study of the culture and customs of the

country where the language is studied. Indeed, knowledge of grammar and vocabulary is not enough to overcome language barriers and language communication. It is necessary to know the history, literature, political situation of the country, to understand the worldview and mentality of the native speakers. As such, an important aspect of the relationship is mutual understanding.

Conflicts with other cultures are an inevitable part of our daily lives. Today, one of the reasons for learning foreign languages is the development of intercultural associations, tolerance of other cultural centers, the perception of their differences from other sources of culture as a positive factor, thereby developing the spiritual world of their country and other countries. Culture is transmitted through language, the ability to distinguish a person from other living beings. Due to the richness of the language, we can collect our culture and spread it to other countries. Therefore, the main difference between humans and animals is that they do not resume their development, conveying their culture through language for centuries. That is why language and culture always go hand in hand and try not to disappear in any case.

2. Currently, learning a foreign language has become a trend or even a must, it is not enough to study its grammar or vocabulary. To be fluent in a new language and to feel confident in a new environment, you need to have sufficient knowledge of the history and culture of that country. By understanding the culture of a country, you can better understand the peculiarities of communication, behavior, principles, history of the people living in that country. Knowing this amount of information will make the language learning process easier and may even save the learning time. You will get acquainted with the culture of a new country, expand your horizons and open up many opportunities for the future. However, just as there are the two sides of the same coin, this case also has its drawbacks. And it is the danger of a person who wants to learn a foreign language getting too close to the culture of another country and forgetting the culture of his own country. As mentioned above, language is a means of disseminating cultures. A person who actively learns another language assimilates a culture close to that language, receives most of the information in a foreign language and begins to adapt to the environment of the country where the language is widely spoken. He watches songs, movies, and reads books in that language. And all these are forms of culture. A person replaces the traditional cultural values of his country with the culture of a foreign language. As a result, a person moves away from his roots. An example is the widespread Western views among young people in our country. In many cases, these "intrusive" views contradict local cultural views and cause controversy in society. Another example is the migration of young people or middle-aged people who speak one or more foreign languages. They see most of the opportunities for the future abroad, not at home. In our opinion, this is the result of their desire to learn a foreign language which led them to be closer to Western culture. The consequences for our country are very serious. After all, so many young, qualified specialists who build the future of our country are going abroad.

3. What are the views of young people aged 16-20 about the impact of culture on learning a foreign language?

In the meantime, to find out the role of culture in language acquisition, we conducted an online survey of students between the ages of 16 and 20 who were interested in the language, entitled "The Role of Culture in Foreign Language Learning". The number of respondents: 51. The survey questions were aimed at identifying the following criteria: how many foreign languages students speak; how many foreign languages they have mastered; interest in the culture of the country in foreign language learning; the influence of the culture on the respondents' language skills; Google Survey Link – [www.shorturl.at/cnD23](http://www.shorturl.at/cnD23)

### **Analysis and results:**

**Diagram 1:**

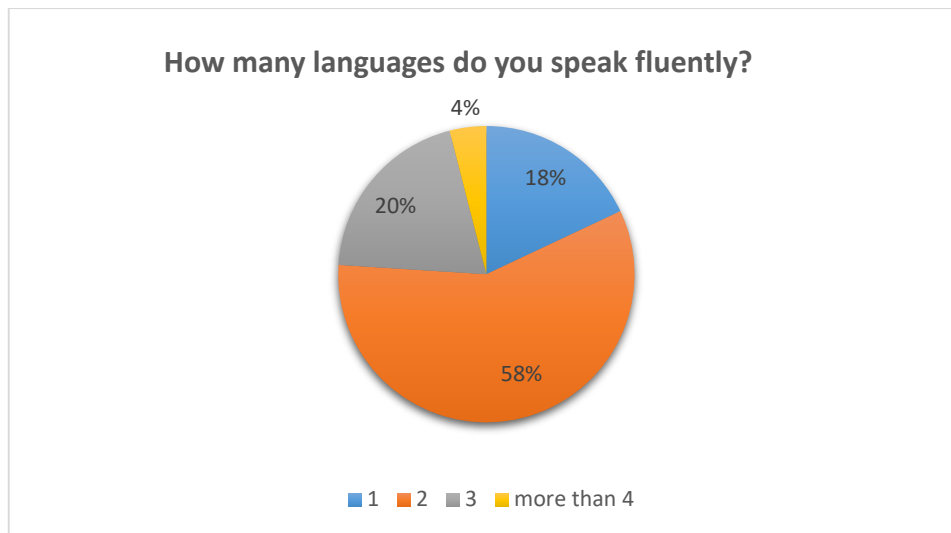


**Diagram 2:**

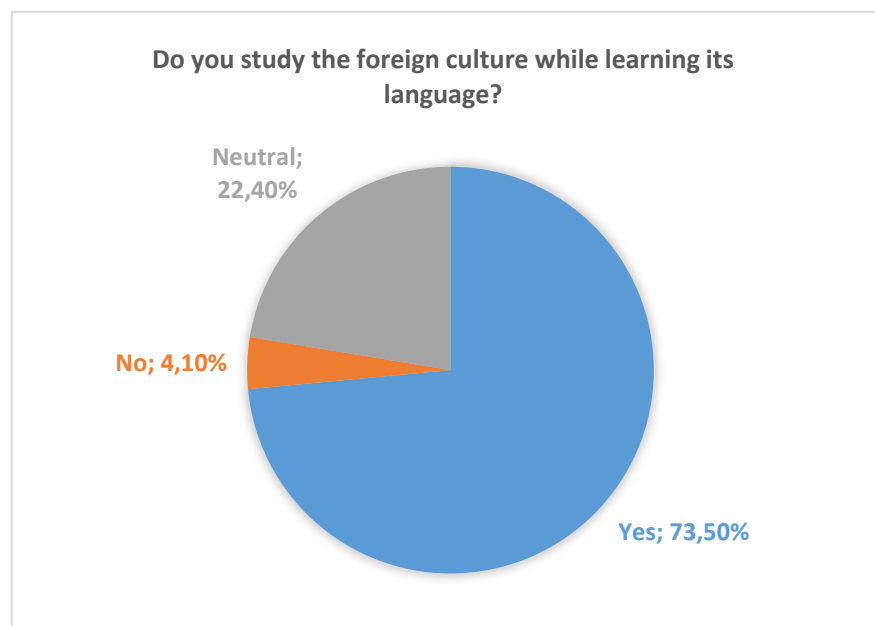


According to the results of the survey, the vast majority of respondents (76 %) speak English, and the second highest score is obtained by Turkish speakers - 8 people. A mere 2 % was received by German speakers. According to the results of the second diagram, the majority of respondents (64%) want to learn French. Over a half of the respondents would like to study English (52%). Although the majority of respondents from the previous question know English, it means that the share of those who want to learn is still high. Among the languages with average scores are Turkish, Chinese, German (21, 13, 13). Japanese and Spanish languages got the lowest number of votes, 2% each. This survey shows the level of foreign language preference among a certain segment of young people in the country.

**Diagram 3:**

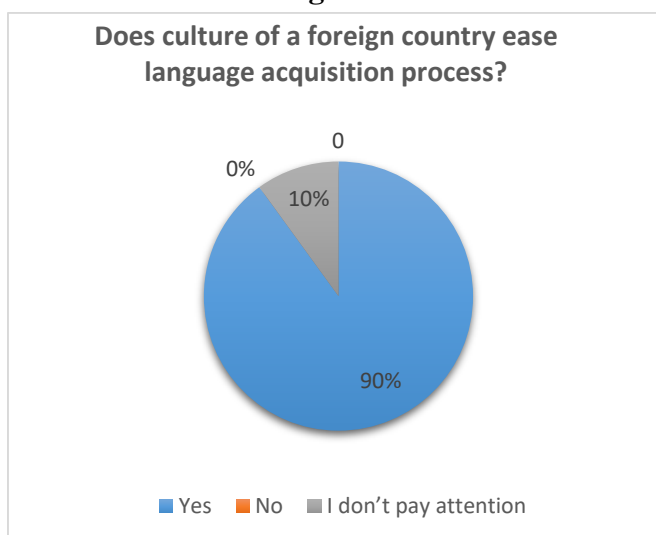


**Diagram 4:**



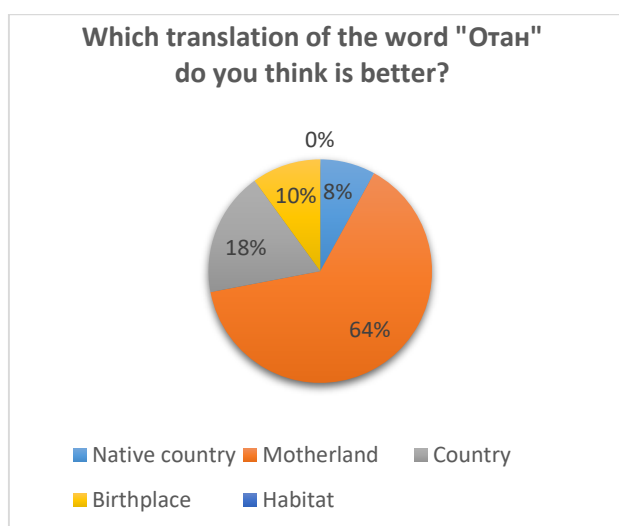
Based to Chart 3, the vast majority of respondents (58%) are bilingual. The percentage of those who speak 3 languages is 20%, the lowest percentage (4%) of respondents speak 4 languages. Diagram 4 shows that the overwhelming majority of respondents (73.5%) study the foreign culture while learning its language. 22.4% of the respondents remain neutral on this issue and a mere 4 % have no intend to study the foreign. In summary, we can see that the culture of a foreign country is important for many when learning a language.

**Diagram 5:**



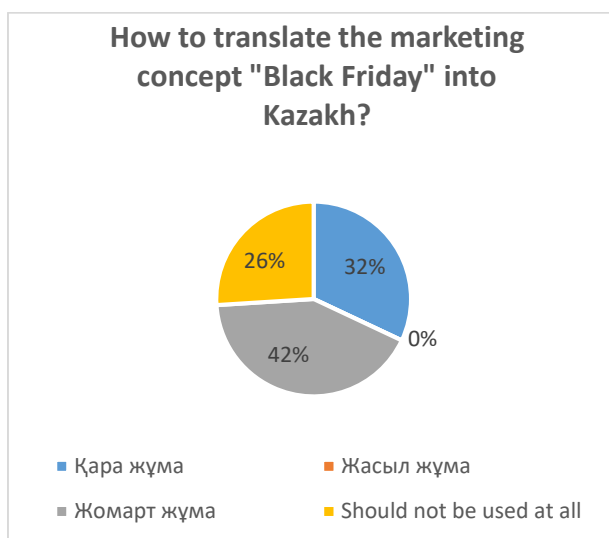
When respondents were asked about the influence of the culture of the country on their further language learning, almost all of them (90%) answered positively - “Yes”. The remaining percentage (10%) responded neutrally – “I do not pay attention”, but none of the respondents answered negatively - “No”. The results indicate how important culture is for the learner in learning a foreign language.

**Diagram 6:**



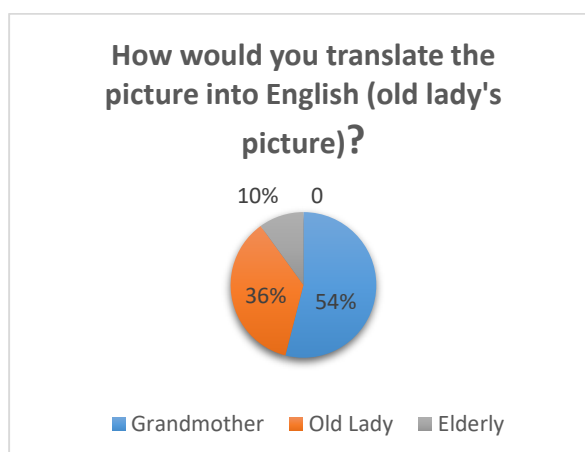
When the respondents were asked to translate the Kazakh word “Отан” into English language, more than a half (64%) chose “Motherland”. In the other options, i.e. “Native country”, “Country”, “Birthplace”, the respondents marked relatively low, and no one chose the option “Habitat”. It might be the example of foreign language perception through the prism of Kazakh language. There is a stable word combination “Отан-Ана” in Kazakh that is why there is an assumption that the majority of the respondents have chosen “Motherland”, its English equivalent.

**Diagram 7:**



When the students were offered to translate the Western marketing concept “Black Friday” into Kazakh language, they chose different versions. However, the majority (42%) chose the “Жомарт Жұма” option. The findings show that the majority of young people are familiar with the concept and chose the closest meaning. However, there are many people who translated this word literally – “Қара Жұма” (32%). The percentage of those who chose the option “should not be used at all” was 26%. It could be explained with the fact that this marketing scheme is applied in the US aftermath of the public holiday - Thanksgiving Day, which is not celebrated in Kazakhstan. Moreover, in our country the majority of the population is Muslim, the notion of “Friday” has a sacred meaning, so it is not appropriate to combine it with the word “black” – “қара”. It could be an example of the influence of religion on language acquisition.

**Diagram 8:**



In the last diagram, we asked the respondents to translate the picture of the elderly. As a result, more than half of the respondents (54%) chose the option “Grandmother”. This is because in our Kazakh society it is customary to call an old woman “әже”, not depending whether they have relationship connection. The English translation of this word is

“Grandmother” which means your relative or a family member. In English culture you call the elderly “grandmother” in case if she is your grandmother from father’s or mother’s side. The research findings show that more than half of the respondents are unaware of the fact and translate the word under the influence of their own culture.

**Conclusion:** We can conclude from the empirical research that all the respondents who took the survey have a positive attitude towards learning the culture of different countries while learning a foreign language. Thus, it should be emphasized that culture has a certain influence on the language of its native speakers. Culture shapes the linguistic picture of the world, which is manifested in the very structure of the language, in its vocabulary, grammar and discourse, in general. Thus, by learning a foreign language and engaging in intercultural communication, students gain a deeper understanding of their native language and culture. But, there are also many problems that some students might face when learning a foreign language, such as those mentioned above: confusing some concepts and notions by perceiving them in the prism of their culture and customs or at the other extreme total assimilation into foreign culture, losing their own national identity. Overall, a learner has to study foreign culture to master its language fluently. However, on the other hand, foreign language acquisition should not erase our own native culture. An advanced learner should be able to easily switch between different languages and their culture.

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## **FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING: CULTURAL CHALLENGE**

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The acquisition of a language begins at birth and continues through elementary school and beyond. The youngster has a lot of vocal support when he or she goes to school. This is accomplished not in a structured learning or teaching setting, but in the ordinary social context of the home, with the child's stimulation and stimulating involvement being the most significant quality. Language acquisition is intrinsically tied to a growing understanding of the world. As a result, language plays an important role in broadening the conceptual framework and span of a child's knowledge. A child's ability to read well is a must for them to completely benefit from the educational process, develop their potential, and participate appropriately in society as citizens. This is the most crucial aspect of a child's language acquisition. One of the key goals of the English language curriculum is literacy acquisition, which is in line with national policy. Reading, comprehension, and writing abilities must be developed in a methodical manner, and children with particular learning needs must be recognized early and provided appropriate remedial help. Writing aids in the development of a child's speech as well. His or her ability to