

Culture Acquisition Self-Efficacy Scale for Turkish as a Foreign Language Learners

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Abstract

The main purpose of this study is to design a culture acquisition self-efficacy scale for learners of Turkish as a foreign language. For this purpose, the field has been framed with the literature. The study group the research was 411 B2 level students who learn Turkish in different Turkish language teaching centers. Firstly, exploratory factor analysis was applied for construct validity and a structure consisting of 21 items under four factors (daily life, social relations, values, and behaviors) was obtained. The scale is a five-point Likert scale. In the five-point scale, (1 point) Strongly Disagree, (2 points) Disagree, (3 points) Partially Agree, (4 points) Agree, (5 points) Strongly Agree values were used. Confirmatory factor analysis was then applied and determined that the obtained structure showed a good fit. Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient calculated for the reliability studies of the scale was found to be .886. The overall reliability of the Culture Acquisition Self-Efficacy Scale is good. As a result of the analyses, the scale was found to be valid and reliable. As a result of the research, various suggestions were made. From a practical perspective, cultural content should be enriched in Turkish language teaching programs and the use of digital tools should be increased. This can support students' development of awareness and competence in the target culture. The scale can be used as an effective tool to understand and develop the role of cultural acquisition in the language learning process.

Keywords: Culture acquisition self-efficacy scale, self-efficacy scale, teaching Turkish to foreigners, language teaching, culture teaching.

1. Introduction

Culture directly affects many activities of people in daily life such as perception, thinking, questioning, communicating, learning, and using technology. Many definitions have been made in the literature on the concept of culture, which is so important in people's lives, and the boundaries and framework of the concept of culture have been drawn. One of the oldest definitions of culture belongs to Tylor (1871). Tylor (1871) defines culture as the sum of knowledge, belief, art, law, law, tradition, habits, and skills acquired by the individual as a member of society.

Culture is everything a society creates over time. For this reason, culture is one of the most basic elements that distinguish nations from each other. Culture is generally a relatively stable set of internal values and beliefs adopted by groups of people in countries or regions; the outward behavior of these values and beliefs and their significant impact on the environment (Peterson, 2004, p.17). In general, culture is the totality of all the things made by people and all kinds of touches to the things that exist around them.

With globalization and the increasing desire of people to interact with other nations in general, the demand for learning a foreign language and accordingly the desire to learn new cultures is increasing day by day. Target culture is one of the factors that directly affect the meaning of the foreign language that individuals aim to learn. In his research, Widdowson (1990) states that it is important to develop systemic and schematic knowledge simultaneously in both the mother tongue and foreign language learning process. Here, while systemic knowledge represents the formal elements of language, schematic knowledge represents socio-culturally acquired and non-linguistic elements. For language teaching to be effective, the acquisition of the target culture that will form new schemata should be given within the

language teaching process. Culture, which is an integral part of second/foreign language teaching, is a concept at the center of discussions in this field with its complex and different dimensions. As early as the 1960s, Brooks stated that culture should be taught in language teaching classes, that teachers wanted to teach culture, and that textbooks had cultural dimensions, but that there was uncertainty about what should be understood from the concept of culture (1968, p. 205).

Second/foreign language teaching is also the teaching of culture or cultures. Cultural teaching should not be perceived as a direct transfer of knowledge about the people of the target language community and country or as an isolated teaching process independent of language. As Paige et al. state, culture teaching/learning is the process of acquiring general culture-specific knowledge, skills, and attitudes that mobilize the learner cognitively, affective, and behaviourally, which are necessary for effective communication and interaction with individuals from different cultures (2000, p. 6). Kramsch, the pioneer of cultural research in second/foreign language teaching, has shown with his studies (Kramsch, 2013; 2016) that without including culture in second/foreign language teaching, the process cannot be carried out successfully and language teaching cannot achieve its main goals.

Sfard (1998) states that discourses about learning are identified with acquisition and participation metaphors. The acquisition metaphor explains learning as the acquisition, structuring, and development of many abstracted and generalized elements such as knowledge, concepts, ideas, schema, meaning, representation, content, etc. On the other hand, the participation metaphor states that learning involves the process of joining a community and that success in learning-specific activities will increase as one gradually becomes a member of the community. Foreign language learners' cultural acquisition is a part of the acculturation process. There is a mutually interactive relationship between the culture to which individuals belong and the target culture. Here, positive relationships or connections between both cultures are effective in the process of culture acquisition. Person-specific characteristics such as motivational drivers and expectations, personality and individual differences; situational characteristics such as previous experiences and duration of stay, intercultural communication, and cultural distance can be stated as the main factors affecting culture acquisition (Masgoret & Ward, 2006). In the process of culture acquisition, process and time are one of the important issues related to each other. The individual should experience a positive process while acquiring the culture of the society in the process of learning a foreign language and it is expected that there will be positive progress in culture acquisition as time progresses. Language learning and culture learning are two inseparable processes. Foreign language learners need to acquire the target culture whether they are aware of it or not. Individuals will be able to analyze some codes of the language they learn or the values of the society better as their cultural acquisition progresses. In addition to all these, making use of various mass media such as television, radio, newspapers, magazines, and the internet will both increase the exposure of individuals to the language and help them interpret the cultural environment they are in during the process of learning culture. In this context, culture acquisition can be defined as the process in which individuals who establish intercultural contact progress toward sociocultural harmony (Masgoret & Ward, 2006).

LaFromboise, Coleman, and Gerton (1993) explain the models for culture acquisition as follows; assimilation model, acculturation model, exchange model, multicultural model, and integration model. In the assimilation model, the individual is assimilated into the dominant culture and detached from his/her own culture, while in the acculturation model, the individual is always defined as a member of the minority culture, even if he/she is competent in the dominant culture. In the exchange model, depending on the situation, he/she can operate back and forth between his/her own culture and the host culture. In the multicultural model, he/she is competent in a culture where all cultures are considered equal. In the integration model, different cultures form a new culture within a monocultural social structure and become indistinguishable and fuse.

For students to acquire the four basic skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) in foreign language teaching, the culture, which is the integration of all these, should also be acquired by the foreign language learner. For this reason, the concept of culture acquisition is among the prioritized concepts in the research. Language is regarded as the most important tool for the transfer of culture from ear to ear and its recognition by different societies. In the studies conducted by Jiang (2000), it is stated that language is intertwined with culture and it is not possible to separate it from culture. When most of the studies conducted after the XXth century are analyzed, different definitions of culture written from different perspectives are encountered. However, the common view in almost all definitions is that culture can survive through language and language through culture. Culture is an important concept that directs people living in society, plays an important role in decision-making mechanisms, determines behavior and attitudes, and in a sense, forms people by combining them with the past and associating them with the future. Therefore, a culture without a language is unthinkable, and likewise, a language without culture is unthinkable, because 'foreign language education would be defective and incomplete without the study of culture' (Peck 1998:1).

Individuals' beliefs about their ability to successfully complete a given task directly influence the quality and outcome of their learning process. In this context, the concept of self-efficacy stands out as a fundamental construct frequently addressed in foreign language learning. Bandura (1997) defined self-efficacy as one of the variables in social cognitive theory, a key determinant of human behavior. He defined self-efficacy as "a person's personal assessment of how well they can exhibit coping behaviors in various situations." Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001) define self-efficacy as individuals' expectations about their level of success in a given situation. Individuals with high self-efficacy tend to approach challenging tasks and situations with a calmer and more constructive attitude (Pajares, 2008, p. 113). While these individuals approach challenging tasks with interest and energy, individuals with low self-efficacy perceive these tasks as more complex and challenging than they actually are (Migray, 2002, p. 14). This allows individuals with high self-efficacy to be more successful in their respective fields. Similarly, for individuals learning a foreign language, high self-efficacy will both make the learning process more effective and motivating.

Although the concept of culture includes various universal concepts, its sociality is also predominant in terms of its national characteristics. The student who learns a new language carries every concept he/she learns outside of the classroom environment. In parallel with this situation, new learning will bring about some changes both in the daily life of the student and in his/her behavior in the classroom. Students who encounter a new culture will both gain new perspectives and make comparisons between their own culture and the culture they have learned. Therefore, culture is at the center of the language teaching process. In short, language teaching and culture are inseparable parts of each other. To master the language spoken by a community, it is necessary to know the culture of that community. It is quite difficult to speak the language of a nation whose culture you do not know. Language is the mirror of culture (İşçi, 2012: 31). For this reason, individuals should learn the culture of the language they learn simultaneously while learning the language. For a foreign language learner to reach the level of cultural competence in the target language; he/she should know the geographical characteristics of the country where that language is spoken, know of historical events that are important for that society, recognize music, literature and other arts in the target culture, use cultural patterns used in situations such as food shopping, acquaintance, birthday, act appropriately in daily events and know the gestures and mimics common in that society. (Memiş, 2016: 611). Here, it is clearly stated that individuals who learn a language should know about the culture of the language they learn. The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR, 2018) is taken as a basis for teaching many languages both as a foreign language and as a second language. Similarly, the Common European Framework of

Reference for Languages (CEFR, 2018) is an important basis in the preparation of the Turkish as a Foreign Language Teaching Programme (TMV, 2019) prepared by the Turkish Maarif Foundation. The measurement tool to be developed in this study was also developed based on both the literature and the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR, 2018).

1.2.The objective of the Research

The research aims to design a culture acquisition self-efficacy scale for learners of Turkish as a foreign language.

2. Materials and Methods

Methods

In this part of the study, information about the study group, development of the items, and data analysis are given.

2.1. Study Group

The study group was conducted in the autumn semester of 2024-2025 at the B2 level Turkish language learning institutions at the state university. The data were collected by the researcher. In addition, the participants were included in the study on a voluntary basis. In this study, three different study groups were included. Information about this is given in detail in the tables below.

2.1.1. Study Group Formed for Expert Opinion on the Items of the Culture Acquisition Self-Efficacy Scale

For the Culture Acquisition Self-Efficacy Scale, which forms the basis of the research, 9 field experts who evaluated the item pool created were worked with. The information of the field experts is given in Table 1.

Table 1. Information on the Study Group Formed for Expert Opinion on the Items of the Culture Acquisition Self-Efficacy Scale

Number of Experts	9
Education	PhD
Experience	5 years and over
Gender	Male 4 Female 5
Department	Turkish Education for Foreigners: 7 Measurement and Assessment in Education:1 Turkish Language Education:1

Looking at Table 1, it can be seen that the participants of the above study group are 9 people in total, 5 of whom are female and 4 of whom are male. Each of them is an expert with five years or more experience. Seven of these experts are Turkish Language Educators for Foreigners, one of them is a specialist in Measurement and Evaluation in Education, and one of them is a Turkish Language Educator. All of these experts are PhD graduates.

2.1.2. Study Group Formed for the Pilot Application of the Culture Acquisition Self-Efficacy Scale

The study group formed for the pilot application of the scale, which was finalised after the evaluation of the item pool created for the Culture Acquisition Self-Efficacy Scale in the research, was 17 students who learn Turkish as a foreign language at B2 level at the Turkish Language Teaching

Application and Research Centre of a state university located in the Mediterranean region. Detailed information about the study group is given in Table 4.

Table 2. Information on the Study Group Formed for the Pilot Application of the Culture Acquisition Self-Efficacy Scale

Variable	Category	N	%
Gender	Male	9	53
	Female	8	47
Nationality	Kazakhstan	7	41
	Arabia	4	24
	Syria	6	35
Age	18-20	12	70
	20-24	5	30
Total		17	100

Table 2 shows that 53% of the participants of the study group formed for the pilot application of the culture acquisition self-efficacy scale were male and 47% were female. Their age ranges were 70% between 18-20 years and 30% between 20-24 years. The nationalities of the participants are as follows: 41% Kazakhstan, 24% Arabia and 35% Syria.

2.1.3. Working Group Formed for the Application of Culture Acquisition Self-Efficacy Scale

The study group formed for the culture acquisition self-efficacy scale in the research is 411 students in total. Information about the students is given in Table 3.

Table 3. Information on the Study Group Formed for the Culture Acquisition Self-Efficacy Scale

Variable	Category	N	%
Gender	Male	219	53
	Female	192	47
Nationality	Countries of Turkish Origin	182	45

	Arabia	63	15
	Syria	88	21
	African Countries	78	19
Age	18-20	284	69
	20-24	127	31
Total		411	100

Table 3 shows that 53% of the participants of the study group formed for the application of the culture acquisition self-efficacy scale in the study were male and 47% were female. The age range of the participants was 69% between 18-20 years and 31% between 20-24 years. The nationalities of the participants were 45% Turkish, 15% Arabia, 21% Syria, and 19% African countries.

2.1.4. Informed consent statements of the study group

Written consent was obtained from all participants within the scope of this research, by providing detailed information about the purpose of the study, its scope, confidentiality principles and that they could withdraw from the study at any time. The privacy and confidentiality of the participants were protected throughout the research, and the data obtained were used only for scientific purposes. The research protocol was approved by [Uşak University Rectorate Social and Human Sciences Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Board] on [13.11.2024].

2.1.5. Developing Items

For the 'Culture Acquisition Self-Efficacy Scale', a conceptual framework was drawn by evaluating studies and research dealing with concepts such as culture, culture acquisition, culture in teaching Turkish to foreigners, culture environment, and examining the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR, 2018). Based on the concepts that are important for students learning Turkish as a foreign language to acquire in Turkish culture, a measurement tool was prepared and thus a self-efficacy measurement tool was developed in which students think about how much they can acquire Turkish culture.

To create the item pool, a comprehensive literature review was conducted. To assess the content validity of the 106-item draft scale, opinions were obtained from nine field experts. The literature generally recommends a number of experts between 5 and 10 to ensure content validity; it is particularly noted that consulting experts in both the subject matter and measurement and evaluation strengthens the validity process (Lawshe, 1975; Polit & Beck, 2006; Boateng et al., 2018).The evaluation form sent to the experts included options for "completely appropriate," "appropriate," "partially appropriate," "not appropriate," and "not appropriate at all," as well as "explanation/suggestion" sections. Necessary revisions were made based on the experts' opinions and suggestions, and the scale reached its final 35-item form. This process aimed to increase the validity of the scale in terms of content. While removing the items from the item pool, the opinions of the reviewers about the content and expression of the items were taken as basis. The comments made by the examiners as 'it causes confusion of meaning' or 'this item has the same meaning as the other item' caused some items to be eliminated and edited. Thus, the

draft scale became a five-point scale consisting of 35 items. In the five-point scale, (1 point) Strongly Disagree, (2 points) Disagree, (3 points) Partially Agree, (4 points) Agree, (5 points) Strongly Agree values were used. 'Culture Acquisition Self-Efficacy Scale' does not contain a negative judgment. In this way, the scale was made suitable for data collection for pre-application.

A pilot study was conducted with 17 B2-level students learning Turkish as a foreign language at the Turkish Language Teaching Application and Research Center of a state university located in the Mediterranean region, using a 35-item scale. The aim was to determine whether there was any positive or negative feedback regarding the scale items. Based on the feedback from the students after the pilot study, no items were added or removed; only two items were revised to clarify words that caused ambiguity.

After the revisions made in the pilot study, the scale was administered to 411 B2-level students learning Turkish at the Turkish Language Teaching Application and Research Centers of seven state universities located in different regions of Turkey to further develop the scale.

2.1.6. Analysing the Data

In the process of creating the item pool for content and face validity in the analysis of the data, expert opinions were consulted and a pilot application was made with a small group. Pretesting, one of the first stages in the scale development process, aims to determine whether the developed items are clear, understandable, and appropriate for the target audience. The primary goal in such applications is to evaluate the linguistic expression of the scale items and identify potential problems early on. DeVellis (2016) emphasizes that a pilot study conducted with a small and representative group (e.g., 10–30 people) rather than a large sample size may be sufficient for this process. This allows for item reorganization, increasing the content and face validity of the scale. In this context, the pilot study conducted with 17 people is deemed appropriate and sufficient for testing the understandability of the items. After the scale was finalized, the researcher collected data from 411 students in Turkish language teaching centers.

The developed 35-item scale was administered to a total of 411 participants, with careful attention paid to an appropriate sample size for validity and reliability analyses. Scale development literature recommends a sample size between 5 and 10 times the number of items (DeVellis, 2016; Comrey & Lee, 1992; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007), and the sample size selected for this study meets these criteria. For the analysis of the data, firstly, the suitability of the data for the analyses was examined. Firstly, missing data were checked, and since the missing data were not more than 5% of any participant, the missing data were replaced with the series average (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2012). Then, to determine the extreme values, z scores were calculated over the total scores of the scale and it was determined that there were no individuals in the ± 3 range of the standard deviation and no data were discarded from the scale. To examine the normal distribution of the data, kurtosis, and skewness coefficients were examined over the total score, the skewness coefficient was found to be $-.471$, and the kurtosis coefficient was found to be $-.152$. Since the kurtosis and skewness coefficients are within the ± 1 confidence interval, it can be stated that the data are normally distributed (Liu, Marchewka, Lu, & Yu, 2005). For the validity studies in the study, first exploratory factor analysis was performed and then confirmatory factor analysis was performed to verify the obtained structure. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett Sphericity tests were conducted to examine the sampling adequacy for factor analyses and to determine the suitability of the data for factor analysis. If the KMO sampling adequacy index is higher than $.60$ and the result of Bartlett's sphericity test is significant at $.05$ level, the data are considered suitable for factor analysis (Büyüköztürk, 2007). KMO and Bartlett's sphericity test results obtained from the research are given below.

Table 4: KMO and Bartlett sphericity test results

KMO Sampling Proficiency Test		.903
Bartlett's Sphericity Test	Ki Square	2485,804
	sd	210
	Sig.	.000

As seen in Table 4, the KMO value was found to be .903, which indicates that the sampling adequacy is quite good. While the KMO value was found to be .90, the result of Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant ($\chi^2=2485.804$ $df=210$ $p<.005$). These results show that the data are suitable for factor analysis. As a result of the exploratory factor analysis, it was seen that the factor loadings of 8 items were less than 0.4 and the difference between the factor loadings of 6 items to more than one factor was less than 0.1. These items were removed from the scale (8,14,15,16,17,17,18,19,20,25,26,27,28,29,30).

2.2. Findings

2.2.1.Validity Studies

2.2.1.1.Exploratory Factor Analysis Results

Exploratory factor analysis was performed for the remaining 21 items on the scale. As a result of the exploratory factor analysis, it was seen that the scale items were grouped under 4 factors with eigenvalues greater than 1. The distribution of each item according to the factors and factor loadings are given in Table 5.

Table 5: Factor values as a result of exploratory factor analysis

Factors	Item	1	2	3	4
Daily Life	M1			.483	
	M2			.516	
	M3			.453	
	M4			.419	
	M5			.449	
	M6			.384	
	M7			.519	
ValuesSocial Relatio	M8				.666
	M9				.607
	M10				.407
	M11				.499
	M12				.408
	M13		.570		
	M14		.759		
	M15		.482		
	M16		.474		

Behaviors	M17	.468
	M18	.533
	M19	.559
	M20	.637
	M21	.653

As can be seen from Table 5, the factor loadings of all items are above 0.3. There were 7 items in the first factor, 4 items in the second factor, 5 items in the third factor, and 5 items in the fourth factor. The nomenclature of the factors formed by the items was formed in line with the common opinion taken by 9 field experts. The factor loadings of the items were generally above 0.4. Only M6 was determined as .384. That item was retained because it was an important item for the scale. Except for M6, the factor loadings of the other items ranged between .407 and .666.

2.2.1.2. Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results

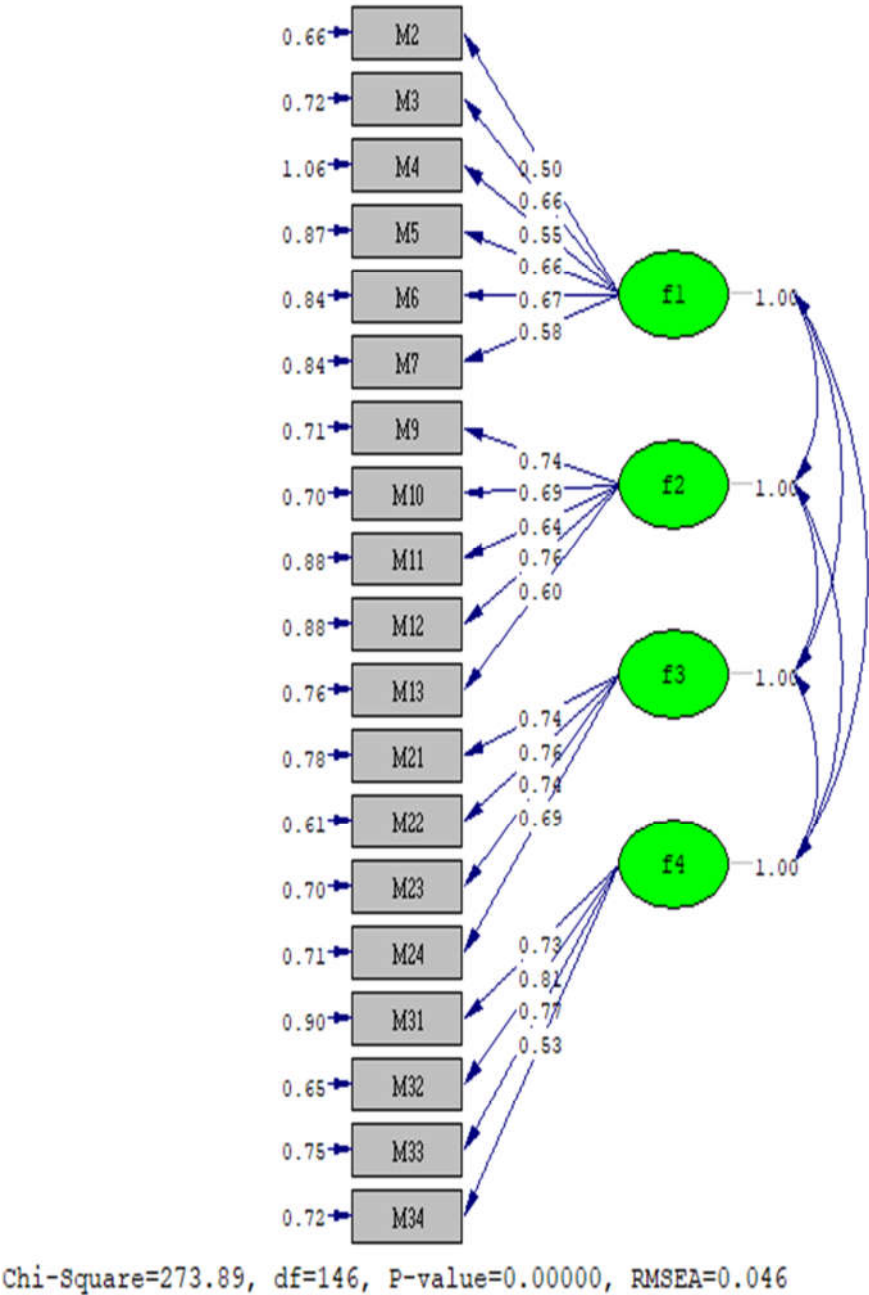
Confirmatory factor analysis was conducted to test the structure consisting of 21 items under four factors obtained by exploratory factor analysis. In the interpretation of the confirmatory factor analysis results, χ^2 (chi-square) value, AGFI, GFI, NFI, CFI, RMSEA, and S-RMR, which are frequently used in the evaluation of the results of the confirmatory factor analysis of structural equation models, were used. These values are recommended to be in the range of $\chi^2/sd \leq 5$, $GFI \geq 0.95$, $AGFI > 0.90$, $NFI > 0.95$, $CFI > 0.90$, $RMSEA < 0.08$ and $S-RMR < 0.08$ (Kline, 2010). The measurement results of the study are given in Table 6.

Table 6: Confirmatory factor analysis fit values of measurement models

Concordance Index	Acceptable Value	Model Value
χ^2/sd	≤ 5	268.47
AGFI	$\geq .80$	0.91
GFI	$\geq .90$	0.93
NFI	$\geq .90$	0.95
CFI	$\geq .90$	0.98
RMSEA	< 0.08	0.046
S-RMR	< 0.08	0.045

As seen in Table 6, all goodness of fit indices obtained as a result of confirmatory factor analysis are within the recommended range. These results reveal that the items of the 21-item measurement tool show a good fit. The path diagram obtained as a result of confirmatory factor analysis is given in

Figure 1. Path diagram



Alt Text: In this graph, there is a lisrel output showing the standardized coefficients of the CFA results for the scale.

As can be seen in Figure 1, the path coefficients showing the factor loadings of all items of the 21-item four-factor measurement tool with the factor to which they belonged were above 0.4 and all of the item-factor relationships were found to be significant ($p<.001$).

2.2.1.3 Reliability Studies

For the reliability analyses of the scale, the internal consistency coefficient (Cronbach alpha), average variance explained (AVE), structural reliability, and item-total correlations were examined. The internal consistency coefficient of the whole scale was found to be .88. Reliability information and item-total correlations for the general and sub-dimensions of the scale are shown in Table 7.

Table 7: Reliability coefficient of culture acquisition self-efficacy scale

Variable	Reliability Coefficient (Cronbach α)
Daily Life	.747
Social Relationships	.746
Values	.752
Behaviors	.771
Total	.886

As seen in Table 7, the Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient calculated for the whole Culture Acquisition Self-Efficacy scale is .886, and the Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients calculated for the daily life, social relations, values, and behaviors sub-dimensions of the scale are .747, .746, .752 and .771 respectively. Considering these values ($>.70$), it can be said that the reliability of the scale is at an acceptable level (Büyüköztürk, 2007). The overall reliability of the Culture Acquisition Self-Efficacy Scale was found to be good.

Research findings confirm that culture acquisition plays a central role in language learning processes. It has been observed that culture acquisition enables individuals to better adapt to the target language and society. In particular, the use of television, the Internet, and other mass media is suggested as an effective method to increase the cultural awareness of individuals. The scale development process included the following stages:

Creating the Item Pool: Based on the literature review and CEFR principles, a draft scale item pool of 106 items was created.

1. Expert Opinions and Edits: After the evaluations of 9 field experts, the scale was reduced to 35 items.

2. Pilot Application: The 35-item scale was tested with a small group (17 students) and then the main application was carried out with 411 students.

3. Results and Discussion

This study aimed to develop a 'Culture Acquisition Self-Efficacy Scale' for individuals who learn Turkish as a foreign language and addressed the validity and reliability of studies comprehensively. Firstly, a comprehensive literature review was conducted and then an item pool was created. Expert opinion was taken on the suitability of the item pool and pilot application was carried out after the necessary arrangements. The pilot application was carried out with a 35-item scale. After the pilot application, the final process of the scale before the analysis was completed by applying to 411 students.

Exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses were conducted for validity studies. As a result of the exploratory factor analysis, a total of 14 items were removed from the scale with factor loadings below 0.4 and one item in the scale loading close to each other under both factors. 21 items were categorized under four factors. These factors were named 'daily life', 'social relations', 'values', and 'behaviors'. Confirmatory factor analysis was applied to test the structure obtained by exploratory factor analysis and it was found that the model established for the two related factors showed a good fit [$\chi^2/sd = 268.47$ GFI=0.93, AGFI=0.91, NFI=0.95, CFI=0.98, RMSEA=0.046 and S RMR=0.045]. Within the scope of reliability analyses of the scale, internal consistency coefficient, structural reliability value, average explained variance value of the factors, and item-total correlations were examined. The results of the research showed that the developed measurement tool presented a high reliability (Cronbach's alpha = .886) and construct validity. At

the end of the analyses, all values were found to be acceptable and the reliability of the scale was confirmed. As a result, the validity and reliability of the 'Culture Acquisition Self-Efficacy Scale', which consists of 21 items under four factors, were established. This proves that the scale is an appropriate tool for measuring culture acquisition self-efficacy. In addition, the results of the confirmatory factor analysis revealed that the four-factor structure of the measurement tool was supported by the proposed fit indices.

After the analyses, the findings of the study reveal that the scale is a valid and reliable measurement tool based on both theoretical foundations and statistical methods. In the context of the literature, the results show that culture acquisition plays a central role in language learning processes. In the research, it was emphasized that culture acquisition forms an inseparable whole with language learning. About Sfar's (1998) learning metaphors, it can be stated that the language learning process can be considered in two dimensions a process of knowledge acquisition and social participation. Students gaining awareness and competence towards the culture of the target language enables this process to function effectively. Peck (1998) emphasized that language learning gains meaning in a cultural context and that students' deficiencies in such dimensions may have a limiting effect on language learning processes. Similarly, Jiang (2000) emphasized that language and culture are inseparable. In this context, the results of this study support Jiang's (2000) views on the integrated structure of language and culture.

The findings of the study revealed that in the context of culture acquisition, individuals develop competence in four basic dimensions such as social relations, values, daily life, and behaviors. This finding is in line with LaFromboise et al.'s (1993) culture acquisition models and suggests that multicultural and inclusive approaches can be effective in language teaching. The parallelism between the culture acquisition models of LaFromboise et al. (1993) and the findings obtained also supports the theoretical validity of the study. In this context, the role of culture acquisition in an individual's language learning process is directly related to his/her ability to decode the social and pragmatic codes of language. In particular, it has been stated that individuals who learn Turkish as a foreign language should be supported by the use of television, the internet, and similar tools in the process of learning the cultural codes and social norms of the language (Masgoret & Ward, 2006).

In particular, the use of television, the internet, and digital tools stands out as an effective tool for students to gain awareness of the target culture. In the future, integrating these tools more intensively into educational processes may increase the acquisition of cultural competence in language learning. It can be said that the research findings offer important contributions to practice. Especially enriching cultural content in Turkish language teaching programs and extending the use of technological tools will increase the effectiveness in this field. In addition, encouraging teachers to measure their cultural competence levels and to develop educational strategies appropriate to student needs can make learning processes more effective. In conclusion, this research has been an important step towards understanding the role of culture acquisition in the language learning processes of individuals who learn Turkish as a foreign language. As a result of the research, the following suggestions can be made.

4. Conclusion

This study completed the validity and reliability analyses of a 35-item scale developed to measure the cultural acquisition self-efficacy of individuals learning Turkish as a foreign language. The results showed that the scale consisted of 21 items and four factors ("daily life," "social relationships," "values," and "behaviors") and demonstrated high internal consistency and

construct validity. These findings support the central role of cultural acquisition in language learning processes and the close relationship between language and the socio-cultural context.

The study recommends administering the scale to students with diverse proficiency levels and cultural backgrounds and developing technology-based educational tools that support cultural acquisition. Furthermore, it is recommended that training programs aimed at increasing the cultural awareness of foreign language teachers be expanded and interdisciplinary approaches be adopted. Examining the impact of cultural acquisition on language skills through long-term follow-up studies has also been identified as an important area of research.

From a practical perspective, cultural content should be enriched in Turkish language teaching programs and the use of digital tools should be increased. This can support students' development of awareness and competence in the target culture. The scale can be used as an effective tool to understand and develop the role of cultural acquisition in the language learning process.

Limitations and Future Work

The biggest limitation of this study is that the cultural acquisition self-efficacy scale was made on a specific group and studied in Turkish language.

- Examining the Relationship between Culture Acquisition and Language Level: The study focussed only on students at level B2. Future studies can examine the effect of language level on culture acquisition by comparing the culture acquisition self-efficacy of students at different language levels (e.g. A1, C1).

- Application on Students from Different Cultures: The study is mostly limited to students who learn Turkish in Turkey. Applying the scale to students from different countries and with different cultural backgrounds can contribute to understanding the effect of cultural differences on culture acquisition.

- Development of Educational Tools Supporting the Culture Acquisition Process: Technology-based applications, digital platforms, or interactive materials can be developed to increase students' cultural acquisition. Especially innovative technologies such as virtual reality (VR) can enrich students' experiences of the target culture.

- Adding Cultural Content to Teacher Training Programmes: In-service training programs can be developed to improve foreign language teachers' cultural awareness and skills in teaching cultural content. In this way, teachers can play a more effective role in developing students' cultural competencies.

- Using Interdisciplinary Approach: An interdisciplinary approach can be adopted to support culture acquisition in language teaching. For example, language teaching programs that integrate fields such as history, art, literature, and sociology can help students develop a deeper understanding of the target culture.

- Analysing the Long-Term Effects of Culture Acquisition: Long-term follow-up studies can be conducted using the scale. Longitudinal studies are recommended to understand how students' culture acquisition levels change over time and how this process contributes to their language proficiency in the long term.

- Balance of Local and Global Cultures: The study focused on Turkish culture. However, it is suggested to integrate content to increase students' awareness of global cultures. In this way, students can have a broader cultural perspective at both local and global levels.

- Studies on the Practical Implications of Culture Acquisition: It is suggested to apply the scale in different contexts (e.g., work life, academic environment, social interaction). Thus, the effect of culture acquisition self-efficacy on students' ability to solve the problems they face in daily life can be understood more clearly.

- Adaptation of the Scale to Different Languages: The developed 'Culture Acquisition Self-Efficacy Scale' can be adapted to measure culture acquisition in other languages. In this way, the scale can be used to comparatively analyze the cultural competencies of individuals studying in different languages.

- Increasing Participant Diversity: The study focussed on the young age group. In the future, the age-related dynamics of the culture acquisition process can be analyzed by studying individuals with a wider age range (e.g. children or adults).

In conclusion, this study has taken an important step in developing the cultural competence levels of individuals who learn Turkish as a foreign language. In future studies, it is recommended to extend the scope of the measurement tool by applying it to different ages and language levels.

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