

## 06. Language and Culture Acquisition: A Theoretical Framework <sup>1</sup>

Dilek BAZ BOLLUK<sup>2</sup> & Zekerya BATUR<sup>3</sup>

**APA:** Baz Bolluk, D. & Batur, Z. (2026). Language and Culture Acquisition: A Theoretical Framework. *RumeliDE Dil ve Edebiyat Arařtırmaları Dergisi*, (52), 99-125. **DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.20513372>

### Abstract

This study explores the multi-layered relationship between culture acquisition and language from a comprehensive theoretical perspective. Culture is conceptualized not as a static entity but as a dynamic and evolving process that shapes individuals' social identities, value systems, and everyday practices. In this context, culture is continuously reconstructed through interaction within diverse social environments, including digital platforms, which have become increasingly influential in contemporary society. Language is positioned as the primary medium through which cultural meanings, norms, and symbolic systems are transmitted, negotiated, and transformed. The study is grounded in a qualitative literature review that examines key theoretical contributions related to culture acquisition, language learning, social interaction, and cultural identity. These perspectives are analyzed within a historical and comparative framework to highlight their similarities, differences, and evolving assumptions. Major theoretical approaches, including behaviorist, social learning, cognitive developmental, social constructivist, and sociocultural theories, are critically re-evaluated in terms of their explanatory power regarding the interaction between language and culture. Based on this synthesis, the study proposes the Interactive Culture and Language Acquisition Model (ICLAM). This model emphasizes that language and culture acquisition are not separate or sequential processes but occur simultaneously through continuous interaction. It integrates cognitive, social, and cultural dimensions into a holistic framework, offering a more comprehensive understanding of how individuals develop linguistic and cultural competence. The model also underscores the importance of context, interaction, and meaning-making in shaping both language learning and cultural acquisition processes.

<sup>1</sup> **Statement (Thesis / Paper):** It is declared that scientific and ethical principles were followed during the preparation process of this study and all the studies utilised are indicated in the bibliography. This article has been produced within the scope of the doctora thesis titled "The Effect of Culturethemed Activities on Culture Acquisition and Writing Skill Self-Efficiency IN Teaching Turkish to Foreigners".

**Conflict of Interest:** No conflict of interest is declared.

**Funding:** No external funding was used to support this research.

**Copyright & Licence:** The authors own the copyright of their work published in the journal and their work is published under the CC BY-NC 4.0 licence.

**Ethics Statement:** This study does not require ethics committee approval as it does not require data collection from human participants / is based solely on document review / uses secondary data.

**Source:** It is declared that scientific and ethical principles were followed during the preparation of this study and all the studies used are stated in the bibliography

**Similarity Report:** Received – Turnitin / iThenticate Rate: %2

**Ethics Complaint:** [editor@rumelide.com](mailto:editor@rumelide.com)

**Article Type:** Research article, **Article Registration Date:** 30.03.2026-**Acceptance Date:** 02.06.2026-**Publication Date:** 03.06.2026; **DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.20513372>

**Peer Review:** Two External Referees / Double Blind

<sup>2</sup> Öğr. Gör., Burdur Mehmet Akif Ersoy Üniversitesi, Rektörlük / Lect., Burdur Mehmet Akif Ersoy Üniversitesi, Rectorate (Burdur, Türkiye) **e-posta:** [bazdilek4@gmail.com](mailto:bazdilek4@gmail.com), **ORCID ID:** <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8021-0432> **ROR ID:** <https://ror.org/04xk0dc21> **ISNI:** 0000 0004 0386 420X, **Crossreff Funder ID:** 501100016210

<sup>3</sup> Prof. Dr., Uşak Üniversitesi, Eğitim Fakültesi, Türkçe ve Sosyal Bilgiler Eğitimi Bölümü, Türkçe Eğitimi / Uşak Üniversitesi, Eğitim Fakültesi, Türkçe ve Sosyal Bilgiler Eğitimi Bölümü, Türkçe Eğitimi (Uşak, Türkiye) **e-posta:** [zekerya.batur@usak.edu.tr](mailto:zekerya.batur@usak.edu.tr), **ORCID ID:** <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7918-5305> **ROR ID:** <https://ror.org/05es91y67> **ISNI:** 0000 0004 0386 4242, **Crossreff Funder ID:** 100010723

**Keywords:** Cultural acquisition, language–culture relationship, ICLAM

## Dil ve Kültür Edinimi: Kuramsal Bir Çerçeve 4

### Öz

Bu çalışma, kültür edinimi ile dil arasındaki çok katmanlı ilişkiyi kapsamlı bir kuramsal perspektiften incelemektedir. Kültür, statik bir yapıdan ziyade bireylerin toplumsal kimliklerini, değer sistemlerini ve gündelik pratiklerini şekillendiren dinamik ve sürekli değişen bir süreç olarak ele alınmaktadır. Bu bağlamda kültür, özellikle günümüz toplumunda giderek daha etkili hâle gelen dijital platformlar da dâhil olmak üzere farklı sosyal ortamlardaki etkileşimler yoluyla sürekli yeniden inşa edilmektedir. Dil ise kültürel anlamların, normların ve sembolik sistemlerin aktarılması, müzakere edilmesi ve dönüştürülmesinde temel bir araç olarak konumlandırılmaktadır. Araştırma, kültür edinimi, dil öğrenimi, sosyal etkileşim ve kültürel kimlik konularına ilişkin temel kuramsal çalışmaları inceleyen nitel bir literatür taramasına dayanmaktadır. Bu kuramsal yaklaşımlar, tarihsel ve karşılaştırmalı bir çerçevede analiz edilerek benzerlikleri, farklılıkları ve zaman içindeki dönüşümleri ortaya konulmuştur. Davranışçı, sosyal öğrenme, bilişsel gelişim, sosyal yapılandırmacı ve sosyokültürel yaklaşımlar, dil ve kültür etkileşimini açıklama güçleri açısından yeniden değerlendirilmiştir. Bu kuramsal sentez doğrultusunda, Etkileşimli Kültür ve Dil Edinimi Modeli (ICLAM) önerilmektedir. Bu model, dil ve kültür ediniminin birbirinden bağımsız ya da ardışık süreçler olmadığını, aksine sürekli etkileşim içinde eş zamanlı olarak gerçekleştiğini vurgulamaktadır. Model, bilişsel, sosyal ve kültürel boyutları bütüncül bir çerçevede birleştirerek bireylerin dilsel ve kültürel yeterliklerinin nasıl geliştiğine dair daha kapsamlı bir açıklama sunmaktadır. Ayrıca bağlamın, etkileşimin ve anlam oluşturma süreçlerinin belirleyici rolüne dikkat çekmektedir.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** kültür edinimi, dil–kültür ilişkisi, EKDEM

<sup>4</sup> **Beyan (Tez/ Bildiri):** Bu çalışmanın hazırlanma sürecinde bilimsel ve etik ilkelere uyulduğu ve yararlanılan tüm çalışmaların kaynakçada belirtildiği beyan olunur. Bu makale “Yabancılara Türkçe Öğretiminde Kültür Temalı Etkinliklerin Kültür Edinimi ve Yazma Becerisi Öz Yeterliliklerine Etkisi” isimli doktora tezi çalışması kapsamında üretilmiştir.

**Finansman:** Bu araştırmayı desteklemek için dış fon kullanılmamıştır.

**Telif Hakkı & Lisans:** Yazarlar dergide yayınlanan çalışmalarının telif hakkına sahiptirler ve çalışmalarını CC BY-NC 4.0 lisansı altında yayımlanmaktadır.

**Etik İzni:** Bu çalışma, insan katılımcılardan veri toplanmasını gerektirmediği / yalnızca doküman incelemesine dayandığı / ikincil veriler kullanıldığı için etik kurul izni gerektirmemektedir.

**Kaynak:** Bu çalışmanın hazırlanma sürecinde bilimsel ve etik ilkelere uyulduğu ve yararlanılan tüm çalışmaların kaynakçada belirtildiği beyan olunur.

**Benzerlik Raporu:** Alındı – Turnitin /iThenticate Oran: %2

**Etik Şikayeti:** [editor@rumelide.com](mailto:editor@rumelide.com)

**Makale Türü:** Araştırma makalesi, **Makale Kayıt Tarihi:** 30.03.2026-**Kabul Tarihi:** 02.06.2026-**Yayın Tarihi:** 03.06.2026; **DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.20513372>

**Hakem Değerlendirmesi:** İki Dış Hakem / Çift Taraflı Körleme

## 1. Introduction

The relationship between language and culture has long been a fundamental topic of discussion in applied linguistics, cultural studies, and language education. Contemporary approaches view culture not as a fixed and transferable body of knowledge, but as a dynamic process through which individuals produce meaning, negotiate their identities, and reconstruct themselves through social interactions (Kramsch, 2014; Holliday, 2020). In this context, language is not merely a carrier of cultural meanings but also a fundamental tool through which these meanings are created and transformed.

Cultural acquisition is not limited to a socialisation process that occurs solely during childhood; it is a multidimensional process that continues throughout an individual's life through interactions experienced in different social contexts (Arnett, 2020; Illeris, 2021). The family, educational environments, peer groups, media and digital platforms play a decisive role in the acquisition of cultural norms and discourses (Buckingham, 2020; Livingstone, 2021). In this process, language is a fundamental cognitive and social tool that enables the individual to internalise, interpret, and reproduce cultural meanings.

Although the reciprocal relationship between language and culture is widely accepted in the literature, studies explaining cultural acquisition are mostly limited to fragmented theoretical approaches (Lantolf et al., 2020; Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2020). Behaviourist, cognitive, social learning, and sociocultural theories are often considered independently; a comprehensive assessment of how these approaches conceptualise the culture–language relationship is not presented (Duff, 2020; Gao, 2021). Furthermore, the effects of contemporary phenomena such as digitalisation, online interaction, and global mobility on cultural acquisition are not sufficiently represented in existing theoretical models.

This theoretical fragmentation is particularly evident in the field of language education. Culture is often treated as an additional content or an implicit background element in language teaching; it is not systematically discussed as a component that directly shapes language learning processes (Kramsch, 2020). However, recent studies show that cultural norms, discourse practices, and identity negotiations directly affect language learning success (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2021).

The aim of this study is to theoretically examine cultural acquisition in the context of its relationship with language and to analyse the fundamental approaches explaining this relationship within a holistic framework. Accordingly, the study comparatively examines behaviourist approaches, social learning theory, cognitive development approaches, social constructivist approaches, psycho-social approaches, and eclectic models. The study aims to reveal how these approaches define cultural acquisition and how they position the role of language in this process.

Current theoretical approaches often address the relationship between language and culture in a one-dimensional, hierarchical manner or through limited variables; they fall short of explaining the reciprocal and dynamic interaction between these two structures within a holistic framework. Based on this theoretical analysis, the study proposes the Interactive Culture and Language Acquisition Model (ICLAM). ICLAM offers an integrative conceptual framework that treats language and culture not as hierarchically related, but as mutually interactive, dynamic processes that continuously shape each other. The model is designed as an analytical and explanatory structure that brings together existing theoretical approaches rather than claiming to be a new learning theory.

This study serves as a theoretical reference source for researchers in applied linguistics and cultural studies, language teachers, and curriculum designers. The article is structured as follows: the second section addresses the concept of cultural acquisition and its current dimensions; the third section examines the main theoretical approaches comparatively. The theoretical analysis and synthesis section is followed by the presentation and discussion of the ICLAM model.

Cultural acquisition is the process by which individuals acquire knowledge, values, behaviours, and norms from their immediate environment and the society with which they interact. Vygotsky (1978) defines cultural acquisition as the process by which individuals interact with values, norms, beliefs, and behavioural structures and internalise them. This process is not merely passive learning, but also one of active participation and reproduction. Cultural acquisition is necessary for people to become members of a society and to conform to its norms. This process occurs both through direct observation and through intermediaries such as language, education, traditions, family, and the media.

This definition aligns with socio-cultural approaches that do not view cultural acquisition as limited to individual learning processes, but rather emphasise the role of social interaction, symbolic meaning production, and social structures (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Bourdieu, 1977).

Cultural acquisition occurs through the following channels:

1. **Family:** The first and most powerful area of cultural education. The family is the first environment where children learn basic values, language, behaviour patterns, and beliefs. The family is considered a fundamental socialisation institution in the transmission of cultural norms and linguistic practices from one generation to the next (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Harris, 1995).
2. **Education:** Schools impart cultural knowledge, values, and skills to individuals from a broader segment of society. Formal educational institutions play a decisive role in cultural acquisition as structures where dominant cultural values, ideologies, and linguistic norms are systematically transmitted (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990).
3. **Peer Groups:** Social groups contribute to cultural acquisition by influencing individuals' behaviours and values. Peer groups are important social spaces, particularly during adolescence and young adulthood, where cultural norms are renegotiated and identity is shaped (Harris, 1995).
4. **Media:** Films, television, the internet, and social media provide access to a wide range of cultural information and knowledge about societal norms. Media is considered one of the most effective tools of modern cultural acquisition in terms of circulating cultural representations and reproducing norms (Bandura, 1977; Livingstone, 2009).
5. **Work Environment:** Through interaction with different people, individuals can learn new cultural values and norms (Bandura, 1977; Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Harris, 1995; Vygotsky, 1978).

Cultural acquisition also plays an important role in an individual's cognitive development. For example, Bruner (1990) argues that cultural tools shape an individual's ways of thinking. In this context, language, as a carrier of culture, is not only a means of communication but also a mechanism for transmitting

cultural meanings and values.

At this point, the relationship between language and culture is approached not as a one-way causality but as a reciprocal and dynamic interaction. While language serves as a central tool in the production and transmission of cultural meanings, cultural acquisition processes also shape the individual's linguistic practices, discourse forms, and communication strategies. Therefore, language is considered both a carrier of culture and a structure shaped by cultural acquisition (Kramsch, 1993; Norton, 2013).

Cultural acquisition both helps individuals construct their social identity and creates a common cultural infrastructure by preserving the integrity of society. Over time, various approaches have addressed the concepts of language and culture from different perspectives and offered views on cultural acquisition.

Among these approaches, structuralist, interpretive, socio-cultural and critical theories stand out, each explaining the relationship between language and culture based on different theoretical assumptions (Byram, 1997; Geertz, 1973; Kramsch, 1993).

Cultural acquisition approaches refer to different methods of explaining how individuals learn the language, values, and cultural characteristics of a society. These approaches support cultural knowledge acquisition in a multifaceted way.

Recent studies show that cultural acquisition has transformed into a multi-layered structure shaped not only by face-to-face socialisation processes but also by digital environments, online communities, and migration movements.

Current research in the context of digitalisation and global mobility reveals that cultural acquisition is no longer confined to specific geographical settings and is increasingly shaped by digitally mediated forms of interaction. The expansion of online communication technologies, social media platforms, and virtual communities has created new opportunities for intercultural contact and cultural learning (Baker, 2022; Holliday, 2021; Wei, 2020).

Current research defines cultural acquisition as a hybrid process that encompasses both traditional social interactions and forms of cultural transmission occurring through digital media. Digital tools such as online social networks, digital games, virtual communities, and cultural content platforms enable individuals to engage with diverse cultural perspectives and practices. These interactions allow individuals to encounter cultural meanings through visual, auditory, and discursive experiences, thereby facilitating the understanding and internalisation of cultural codes and intercultural awareness (Baker, 2022; Holliday, 2020; Wei, 2020).

Research conducted on immigrants and international students has made the dimensions of identity, belonging, and psychosocial adjustment in cultural acquisition more visible. These studies suggest that cultural acquisition extends beyond the learning of social norms and values and involves a dynamic process in which individuals continuously negotiate between their existing cultural backgrounds and the new cultural environments to which they are exposed. In this context, cultural acquisition is closely intertwined with language learning, as cultural norms, discourse patterns, and social roles shape the ways in which learners participate in communication and construct meaning within social contexts. Accordingly, cultural acquisition is not merely a complementary element in language teaching; it plays a decisive role in learners' development of communicative competence, discourse awareness, and intercultural competence, and is therefore an important component of success in language teaching

(Byram, 1997; Kramsch, 1993; Liddicoat & Scarino, 2021).

Post-pandemic literature suggests that cultural acquisition has become increasingly complex due to the expansion of digital communication technologies and online social environments. Individuals are now exposed to diverse cultural values, practices, and perspectives without the need for direct physical contact. In this context, cultural learning increasingly takes place through social media, online communities, virtual networks, and platform-based communication, creating new opportunities for intercultural interaction and identity development (Baker, 2022; Holliday, 2021; Wei, 2020).

Finally, Tan & Fang (2023) re-emphasise the determinative role of factors such as social capital, economic conditions, and family cultural heritage in cultural acquisition. This study reveals that cultural acquisition is not merely an individual process but a social phenomenon shaped by social context, power relations, and structural conditions.

When these recent studies are considered together, it is evident that cultural acquisition has evolved into a multidimensional structure shaped by the intersection of various factors, including digitalisation processes, global mobility, forms of intercultural interaction, social inequalities, identity negotiations, and linguistic practices. Digital technologies and online communication environments have increased both the speed and accessibility of cultural interaction, enabling individuals to engage with diverse cultural perspectives beyond geographical boundaries. At the same time, increasing global mobility has expanded opportunities for participation in multiple cultural contexts and facilitated more complex forms of intercultural exchange. However, social inequalities and individuals' cultural capital remain among the fundamental structural factors influencing the quality and outcomes of cultural acquisition (Tan & Fang, 2023). Identity negotiations and linguistic practices directly affect how individuals position themselves within these multilayered cultural environments (Norton, 2013; Kramsch, 1993).

This theoretical synthesis suggests that cultural acquisition is no longer a linear and single-centred transmission process; rather, it has become a dynamic process in which individuals continuously reproduce cultural meanings through interactions with multiple cultural sources across both offline and online social spaces. Therefore, cultural acquisition today is not merely a social learning process; it is approached as a dynamic process of cultural participation that is continuously reproduced through the interactions individuals engage in both offline and online.

## 1. 2. Theoretical Approaches

Theoretical approaches to explaining cultural acquisition address how individuals learn cultural knowledge and practices through different ontological and epistemological assumptions. These approaches conceptualise culture sometimes as externally transmitted behavioural patterns, sometimes as a product of cognitive structures, and sometimes as a dynamic process constructed through social interaction. The main theoretical approaches to cultural acquisition, along with their fundamental assumptions, contributions, and limitations, are discussed below.

### Behaviourist Approach

According to the behaviourist approach, cultural acquisition occurs through the reinforcement of an individual's responses to environmental stimuli. Based on Skinner's (1953) stimulus–response–reinforcement model, this approach explains cultural behaviours through observable behaviours rather

than internal cognitive processes. Cultural practices such as forms of greeting, etiquette, and social rituals are learned through reward and punishment mechanisms and become permanent through repetition (Bijou & Baer, 1961).

While this approach is functional in explaining how culture is acquired in early childhood, it has been criticised for failing to adequately explain the individual's process of cultural meaning production and symbolic dimensions. Its treatment of culture solely at the behavioural level leads it to overlook the deep structure of cultural knowledge.

### **Social Learning Approach**

Bandura's (1977) social learning theory explains cultural acquisition through the processes of observation, imitation, and modelling. According to this approach, individuals learn cultural norms and values by observing meaningful others in their social environment. Family members, peer groups, and teachers serve as fundamental role models in the acquisition of cultural behaviours.

The social learning approach differs from the behaviourist approach in that it emphasises the importance of the environmental context and social interaction in cultural acquisition. However, this approach also addresses the linguistic and cognitive dimensions of cultural knowledge to a limited extent; it is based on the assumption that culture is acquired solely through observable behaviours.

### **Cognitive Development Approach**

The cognitive development approach links cultural acquisition to the maturation of an individual's mental structures. According to Piaget's (1980) theory, children organize cultural knowledge through schemata formation, assimilation, and accommodation while interacting with their environment. Cultural concepts gradually acquire meaning in parallel with successive stages of cognitive development.

This approach makes an important contribution in that it treats cultural acquisition as an active process of meaning-making. However, its relegation of the social and historical context of culture to a secondary position and its limited consideration of the mediating role of language in cultural acquisition are among the fundamental points of criticism of the approach.

### **Social Constructivist Approach**

Vygotsky's (1998) social constructivist approach defines culture as a structure jointly produced through interpersonal interaction. In this approach, culture is not a body of knowledge acquired by the individual alone; it is a dynamic process that is constantly reconstructed through social practices, language, and interaction. Language is positioned as a central tool in the transmission and reproduction of cultural meanings.

While social constructivism powerfully highlights the contextual and interactive nature of cultural acquisition, it may be limited in explaining individual cognitive differences. Nevertheless, it offers an important theoretical framework for contemporary cultural studies in terms of its holistic approach to the culture–language relationship.

### **Psycho-Social Approach**

Erikson's psycho-social development theory addresses cultural acquisition in the context of the social tasks and identity development that individuals encounter throughout their lives. In this approach, culture is an integral part of the process of understanding one's social roles and constructing one's identity (Boeree, 2006). Cultural norms play a decisive role in the formation of identity, particularly during adolescence and young adulthood.

While the psycho-social approach contributes by addressing cultural acquisition from a developmental perspective, it is criticised for relegating the linguistic and interactive dimensions of cultural learning to a secondary position.

### **Eclectic Approach**

The eclectic approach argues that explaining cultural acquisition through a single theoretical framework is insufficient and advocates the combined use of different theoretical approaches. This approach aims to address the behavioural, cognitive, social, and experiential dimensions of cultural acquisition in a holistic manner.

While the eclectic approach is strong in reflecting the multidimensional nature of cultural acquisition, it is open to criticism in terms of theoretical consistency and conceptual clarity.

### **The Cultural Approach in Language Teaching**

The cultural approach in language teaching is based on the assumption that language cannot be taught independently of culture. Effective between 1920 and 1960, this approach integrated language teaching with history, literature, traditions, and cultural texts (Güneş, 2014).

### **Multicultural Education Approach**

The multicultural education approach aims to enable individuals to both preserve their own cultural identity and interact with different cultures. This approach particularly supports cultural adaptation and social integration among immigrant and minority groups.

### **Grammar-Based Approach**

In the traditional grammar-based approach, culture is not a direct teaching objective, but cultural awareness is indirectly developed through literary texts and linguistic examples. Language teaching supported by cultural context has been found to strengthen learners' meaning-making processes.

### **Action-Oriented Approach to Culture**

The action-oriented approach, based on the work of CEFR (2018) and Beacco (2007), positions learners as social actors. Culture is acquired experientially through real-life tasks and interactions. This approach aligns with contemporary theories in that it treats cultural acquisition as a dynamic practice rather than static knowledge transfer (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2021).

Generally, when these approaches are considered together, it is evident that cultural acquisition is a

multi-layered process involving cognitive, social, linguistic, and contextual dimensions that cannot be explained by a single theoretical framework. While behavioural and cognitive approaches contribute to explaining certain aspects of cultural learning, they fall short of comprehensively addressing the interactive, linguistic, and context-sensitive nature of culture. Social and constructivist approaches, while emphasising the interactive dimension of cultural acquisition, do not always clearly articulate its relationship with individual cognitive processes. This situation highlights the need for more holistic and interaction-based theoretical frameworks that can explain how cultural acquisition occurs, particularly through language. In this context, the theoretical discussion presented here provides a conceptual basis for the research focusing on the culture-language relationship, which will be addressed in the next section.

### 1. 3. Research Objectives

The objectives of this research are as follows:

1. To examine cultural acquisition processes comparatively within the contexts of behaviourist, social learning, cognitive development, social constructionism, and psycho-social approaches.
2. To explain the role of language in the production, transmission, and internalisation of cultural meanings.
3. To present a multidimensional and holistic perspective by combining classical and contemporary theoretical approaches.
4. To propose the Interactive Culture and Language Acquisition Model (ICLAM) as an integrative conceptual framework for explaining the reciprocal relationship between language and culture acquisition.

### 1. 4. Significance of the Research

This study contributes to the literature by demonstrating that cultural acquisition cannot be understood solely as a behavioural or cognitive process; rather, the relationship between language and culture constitutes a multilayered phenomenon embedded within social, historical, and symbolic contexts. By bringing together diverse theoretical perspectives, the study provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how language, culture, identity, and social interaction are interconnected in cultural acquisition processes. The significance of the study can be highlighted in several respects.

**Theoretical coherence and interdisciplinary synthesis:** While cultural acquisition in the social sciences is generally approached from a single theoretical perspective (e. g. , only cognitive development theory or social learning theory), this study brings together behavioural, social learning, cognitive development, social constructionism, psycho-social, and eclectic approaches under one roof, offering a comparative analysis (Bandura, 1977; Ormrod, 2020). In this respect, it broadens the narrow perspectives of previous studies on cultural acquisition and establishes a more comprehensive, holistic theoretical framework.

**The symbolic and social nature of language–culture interaction:** Geertz (1973) defines culture as "the webs of meaning spun by people" and emphasises that culture consists of shared symbolic systems and structures of meaning beyond behaviour. This perspective demonstrates that language is

not merely a means of communication but a central tool for the production and reproduction of cultural meaning (Geertz, 1973; Vygotsky, 1978). Taking this symbolic and interpretive perspective into account, the research reveals how the culture–language relationship is established and sustained through social practices.

**Guiding educational and intercultural communication practices:** Globalisation and cultural diversity have made cultural acquisition and intercultural interaction critical issues today (Kramsch, 1993). Vygotsky's socio-cultural approach emphasises the role of language and culture in learning processes, offering a perspective that should be considered in the design of educational environments and pedagogical practices (Lantolf, 2011; Vygotsky, 1978). This study contributes to the development of practical recommendations by providing a theoretical foundation in the context of language-based education and intercultural communication.

**Theoretical contribution to the international literature:** Studies on cultural acquisition and the language–culture relationship are generally limited to a single disciplinary perspective (Byram, 1997). This research aims to fill this gap in the literature with a synthesis approach encompassing theories from multiple disciplines, deepening theoretical discussions at both national and international levels.

In conclusion, this study makes a significant contribution to the existing literature by comprehensively examining, from a theoretical perspective, how cultural acquisition is produced, transmitted, and reconstructed in different social contexts through language. The central role of language in the formation and transmission of cultural meanings is comprehensively evaluated in line with the theoretical frameworks of researchers such as Bandura (1977), Byram (1997), Geertz (1973), Kramsch (1993), Lantolf (2011), Ormrod (2020), and Vygotsky (1978). It develops a multi-layered approach to culture-language interaction and proposes ICLAM (Interactive Culture and Language Acquisition Model) as a significant outcome of the research. ICLAM argues that language and culture shape each other through mutual interaction, providing a new conceptual basis for both theoretical discussions and culture-based language teaching practices.

## 2. Method

### 2. 1. Research Design

This study is a qualitative research aimed at understanding the process of cultural acquisition and the decisive role of language in this process. The existing literature on the relationship between culture and language was systematically reviewed, and a theoretical framework was established. The qualitative research approach focuses on understanding the cultural processes of individuals and societies and offers the opportunity to examine complex social phenomena in depth (Creswell, 2014). In this context, the literature review method was adopted as the primary data collection method in this study.

### 2. 2. Conceptual Focus and Guiding Questions

This study is a qualitative research aiming to examine the role of language in the process of cultural acquisition and language–culture interaction from a holistic perspective (Okoli & Schabram, 2010; Okoli, 2015). The study thematically and conceptually analyses the existing literature to reveal how cultural acquisition is defined within different theoretical approaches and how language is positioned at the individual and societal levels in this process.

In this regard, the study is structured around the following guiding questions:

How is cultural acquisition defined in the literature, and to what extent is language considered a central tool in this process?

How does the reciprocal interaction between language and culture shape the individual's cultural acquisition process?

Through these questions, the behaviourist approach, social learning theory, cognitive development approach, social constructivist approach, psycho-social approaches, and eclectic models are examined comparatively; how these approaches conceptualise cultural acquisition and how they define the role of language in this process are analysed.

### **2. 3. Data**

The primary data source for the research consists of academic articles, books, book chapters, and compilation studies published on cultural acquisition and the relationship between language and culture. The study also examines the works of thinkers such as Tylor, Malinowski, Vygotsky, Geertz, and Bourdieu, who have made significant contributions to cultural acquisition and social processes. The works of Tahsin Banguođlu, Muharrem Ergin, and Dođan Aksan, who have conducted studies on the Turkish language and culture, have also been included in the literature. In this way, the process of cultural acquisition has been addressed in both its universal and local dimensions.

### **2. 4. Data Collection Methods**

Data was collected through a literature review (scanning method). A literature review is the process of systematically collecting, evaluating, comparing, and synthesising previous studies related to the research topic (Okoli & Schabram, 2010). In this process, sources that could answer the research questions were selected, and current and reliable academic publications were prioritised.

### **2. 6. Data Analysis and Synthesis Method**

The collected literature was evaluated using thematic content analysis. In this analysis process, themes such as cultural acquisition, social identity development, social adaptation, the role of language in the transmission of cultural meanings, and the internalisation of cultural values through rituals and symbols were identified (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Furthermore, theoretical models such as behavioural, social learning, cognitive development, social constructionism, and psychosocial approaches were examined comparatively, and the contribution of each approach to the cultural acquisition process was systematically explained.

### **2. 7. Reliability, Transparency, and Ethical Considerations**

The reliability of this study is ensured by its reliance on sources that are accepted in the field of cultural acquisition and language-culture relations, theoretically effective, and of high academic quality. The studies examined were systematically evaluated within a thematic and conceptual framework; similarities and differences between theoretical approaches were addressed through a consistent analytical approach.

As the study is a theoretical review not based on empirical data production, the principles of reliability and transparency have been ensured not so much by detailed reporting of methodological details, but rather by justifying the selection of literature, clearly defining the theoretical framework used, and ensuring that the analysis process is traceable within the text. All sources have been used in accordance with ethical academic principles, and scientific integrity has been the basis for the citation and referencing processes.

### 3. Theoretical Analysis and Synthesis

#### 3. 1. Classical Approaches to the Structure and Function of Culture

Tylor (1871) defines culture as a "complex whole" encompassing knowledge, beliefs, arts, and traditions, and explains cultural acquisition as a learned process that progresses through evolutionary stages. In contrast, Malinowski (1992) argues that cultural elements are a functional system that meets social needs. Examples such as the Kula ritual demonstrate that cultural practices strengthen social cohesion and intra-community relations.

#### Comparison:

While Tylor positions culture as an *evolutionary development* process, Malinowski emphasises that culture is a *functional system that meets social needs*. Both approaches accept that culture is a learned structure, but their explanations are based on different foundations. However, both approaches largely treat cultural acquisition as a **homogeneous and stable structure**; cultural change, power relations, and individual subjective experiences are discussed only to a limited extent. Particularly in today's rapidly changing, multicultural, and digital contexts, the explanatory power of these approaches remains partial.

#### 3. 2. The Acquisition of Culture through Meaning, Symbols and Interpretation

Geertz (1973) defines culture as a system of symbols that organises individuals' worlds of meaning and relates cultural acquisition to symbolic interpretation processes described as "thick description. " Culture is seen as networks of meaning that guide individual behaviour.

Sfard (1998), on the other hand, explains cultural acquisition through two metaphors: acquisition and participation. The acquisition metaphor refers to the mental accumulation of cultural knowledge, while the participation metaphor refers to the individual learning culture by participating in social practices.

#### Comparison:

While Geertz focuses on meaning production, Sfard argues that learning occurs through both mental acquisition and social participation. These two approaches demonstrate that the cognitive and social dimensions of cultural acquisition must be evaluated together. However, these approaches do not address in detail how cultural acquisition is shaped by **linguistic practices, institutional contexts, and power relations**. This situation demonstrates that cultural acquisition must be evaluated not only through processes of meaning and participation, but also within broader social contexts.

### 3. 3. Social Interaction, Language, and Cultural Learning

Vygotsky (1978) argues that cultural knowledge is acquired through social interaction and language. The concepts of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and the "more knowledgeable other" emphasise that culture is transmitted through guided interactions. Current research (Tan & Fang, 2023) also confirms the decisive effect of social interaction on learning.

Masgoret and Ward (2006) view cultural acquisition as a dynamic adaptation process shaped by factors such as individual characteristics, motivation, and duration of cultural contact. This approach demonstrates that cultural adaptation is related to social interactions and psychosocial variables.

#### Comparison:

While Vygotsky emphasises the interactive nature of cultural learning, Masgoret and Ward focus on individuals' adaptive capacities and motivational factors. Taken together, these perspectives suggest that cultural acquisition develops through the combined influence of social learning processes and individual adaptation mechanisms. Although both approaches provide valuable insights into the interactive and individual dimensions of cultural acquisition, they pay comparatively less attention to the role of macro-social structures and social inequalities. This limitation indicates the importance of examining cultural acquisition not only at the level of interaction but also within broader structural and socio-economic contexts.

### 3. 4. Culture, Power Relations, and Social Structure

Bourdieu (1986) approaches cultural acquisition as a process related to social inequalities and defines cultural capital (embodied, objectified, institutionalised) as a position-determining factor in social fields. Cultural capital is a powerful indicator that influences individuals' educational and social success.

#### Comparison:

While Vygotsky focuses on *interaction and learning* processes in cultural acquisition, Bourdieu emphasises the dimensions of *power, class, and capital*. This difference reveals that cultural acquisition must be evaluated at both the micro level (interaction) and the macro level (social structure). However, Bourdieu's structural emphasis relatively overshadows the individual's role as **an active learner** and **meaning-producing subject**, while Vygotsky's approach only addresses the decisive impact of inequalities on cultural acquisition to a limited extent.

### 3. 5. Language Proficiency, Cultural Transmission, and Multilingualism

Beacco et al. (2010) argue that cultural acquisition progresses in tandem with language learning and position multilingual/intercultural education as a fundamental component of language teaching. Puren (2013) emphasises participation in cultural practices, arguing that students must play an active role as social actors in language learning.

Chomsky (2012), on the other hand, bases language acquisition on an innate universal biological faculty; culture is seen as an environmental factor that influences the development of this biological structure.

**Comparison:**

While Beacco and Puren explain the language-culture relationship through *social use* and *participation*, Chomsky focuses on *the interaction between biological language ability and culture*. This difference shows that both innate cognitive mechanisms and social contexts are effective in cultural acquisition. However, Chomsky's biologically based approach explains the transformative effect of culture and social context on language acquisition only to a limited extent, while Beacco and Puren's approaches treat the role of cognitive mechanisms as secondary. This situation demonstrates that language and cultural acquisition cannot be explained solely by biological or social processes.

**3. 6. The Role of Cultural Transmission in Turkish Linguistics**

Banguoğlu (1957) emphasises that language is the fundamental element that carries culture, stating that language is a tool that preserves social memory. Ergin (1989) defines language as the memory and value transmitter of the nation; cultural continuity can only be achieved through language. Aksan (2003) demonstrates that Turkish culture is transmitted across generations through linguistic elements (proverbs, idioms, vocabulary).

**Comparison:**

Banguoğlu focuses on the transmission of culture through language, Ergin on the social memory function of language, and Aksan on the concrete linguistic indicators of language-culture interaction. Common conclusion: language is the main carrier of cultural continuity. However, these approaches are largely based on **a national and homogeneous understanding of culture**. Considering that cultural transmission has become more complex and multifaceted in today's multilingual, multicultural, and digital communication environments, it can be said that these approaches are open to updating.

**3. 7. Holistic Assessment**

This thematic synthesis reveals that cultural acquisition is a multi-layered process encompassing evolutionary, functional, symbolic, interactive, psychosocial, structural, biological, and linguistic dimensions. Each of the approaches examined explains a specific aspect of cultural acquisition; however, none of them alone can adequately explain the holistic structure of this process. In particular, linguistic practices, power relations, identity negotiations, and changing social contexts are addressed in a fragmented manner in most theories.

Existing theories offer valuable insights into specific aspects of cultural acquisition. Behaviourist and social learning approaches emphasise observable behaviour, modelling, and reinforcement processes, whereas cognitive approaches focus on mental development and meaning-making. Sociocultural and social constructivist perspectives highlight interaction, participation, and the co-construction of meaning, while cultural capital approaches draw attention to social inequality and access to symbolic resources. However, these perspectives tend to treat language, culture, identity, social interaction, and cultural capital as distinct analytical domains. Consequently, the dynamic and reciprocal relationships among these dimensions are not fully accounted for.

This theoretical fragmentation highlights the need for an integrative framework capable of explaining how linguistic competence, cultural connection, identity construction, cultural capital, and social interaction continuously influence one another within contemporary cultural acquisition processes.

This need forms the theoretical rationale for the Interactive Culture and Language Acquisition Model (ICLAM) proposed in this study.

#### 4. Discussion

##### 4. 1. General Evaluation and Holistic Interpretation

In this study, cultural acquisition has been examined through different theoretical perspectives, and the role of language in cultural transmission has been discussed from a multidimensional perspective within the contexts of social adaptation, identity construction, and social interaction. The theoretical analysis suggests that cultural acquisition is a multilayered, dynamic, and interactive process that cannot be adequately explained by a single theoretical framework. The theories and scholars reviewed collectively emphasise that culture is continuously reproduced at both individual and societal levels.

For example, Tylor (1871) and Malinowski (1992) approach culture as a structure integrated with the functioning of society, while Geertz (1973) positions culture as a symbolic system in which meanings are produced. Vygotsky (1998) explains cultural acquisition through social interaction and internalisation processes; Bourdieu (1986) reveals that this process differs in the context of social inequality. Sford's (1998) metaphors of acquisition and participation concretise the dual nature of the process, while Beacco (2007) and Puren (2013) emphasise the inseparable relationship between linguistic performance and cultural competence.

When these theoretical frameworks are considered together, it becomes apparent that cultural acquisition is not merely a cognitive or behavioural process; rather, social context, power relations, symbolic structures, and linguistic practices are simultaneously determinative. Language emerges in all theories as both the agent and determinant of cultural acquisition; it is not merely a medium through which cultural codes are transmitted, but a structure where social roles are negotiated and cultural meanings are produced. From this perspective, individuals encounter cultural symbols through language, interpret them, and reproduce community norms; language becomes a fundamental mental-social tool that performs the functions of internalisation and externalisation.

When evaluated holistically, cultural acquisition is a decisive process in terms of individual development, social integration, identity formation, social belonging, and intercultural communication. However, existing theories generally prioritise the cognitive or social dimension, thus failing to comprehensively address the dynamic and reciprocal nature of the language–culture relationship. This highlights that cultural acquisition cannot be explained by a single theoretical framework and underscores the need for integrative models such as ICLAM.

##### 4. 2. Comparison with the Literature

This study examines the multidimensional structure of cultural acquisition and the decisive role of language in this process within the context of different theoretical approaches. It reveals that language is at the centre of cultural transmission and functions as a fundamental element in the individual's integration into the social structure, internalisation of values, and identity construction (Geertz, 1973; Kramsch, 2014; Risager, 2018). Recent research also demonstrates that learning language alongside culture supports learners' identity construction processes (Wei, 2020; Galante, 2021).

Cultural acquisition takes place in multiple social domains such as family, school, social environment,

media, and work life; in this process, individuals not only acquire knowledge but also internalise cultural codes through symbols, rituals, and social patterns (Cole & Scribner, 1974; Rogoff, 2003). This interpretation is consistent with current research suggesting that culture is a multi-layered structure (Holliday, 2021; Baker, 2018; Jackson, 2022). The behavioural, social learning, cognitive development, and social constructionist approaches discussed in the study explain different dimensions of cultural acquisition. However, these approaches alone are insufficient to explain the entirety of the process. In particular, the relationship between Bourdieu's (1986) cultural capital approach and linguistic competence is also emphasised in recent studies (Shi, 2021; Tran & Pham, 2022). Studies conducted in the context of the Turkish language also reveal the culture-language relationship in a manner consistent with the universal literature (Banguoğlu, 1957; Ergin, 1989; Aksan, 2003; Lakoff & Johnson, 2003; Wierzbicka, 2010).

In conclusion, although culture and language acquisition are explained at a theoretical level, empirical studies are still limited. The increase in interdisciplinary, ethnographic, and multicultural classroom-based research in recent years has paved the way for integrated approaches such as ICLAM in cultural acquisition studies (Byram, 2021; Deardorff, 2016).

#### 4. 3. Educational Implications

Theoretical approaches offer important implications for supporting cultural learning in educational settings. Considering the reciprocal interaction between language and culture, merely transmitting culture at the knowledge level is insufficient; environments must be designed where learners can interact with cultural practices. Behaviourist and social learning approaches emphasise that learners can acquire cultural norms and values through observation and repetition; cognitive and social constructivist approaches highlight the production of shared meanings and the practical experience of cultural knowledge by learners.

Presenting cultural content in natural contexts in language lessons takes students beyond a superficial level of knowledge of cultural norms and values. For example, idioms, metaphors, literary texts and media content enable learners to both understand the target culture and evaluate their own cultural identity. Teachers' pedagogical roles are critical in creating a learning environment that is sensitive to cultural diversity, inclusive and supportive.

Activities based on cultural practices enable learners to connect with real life; drama, storytelling, community studies and digital cultural platforms increase cultural awareness and intercultural sensitivity. Thus, the applicability of cultural acquisition theories within an educational context provides a framework that both enhances teachers' pedagogical practices and contributes to learners' development as open-minded, critical, and conscious individuals in the face of cultural diversity.

#### 5. Interactive Culture and Language Acquisition Model (ICLAM)

##### 5. 1. Theoretical Framework

The ICLAM model draws on various theoretical perspectives to explain the multidimensional and dynamic nature of language and culture acquisition. The model highlights how culture is reproduced at the individual and societal levels, emphasising the central role of language in this process. Behaviourist and social learning approaches demonstrate that individuals learn cultural norms and values through observation, imitation, and repetition, while the cognitive development perspective sheds light on the

mental foundations of the learning process and explains how individuals internalise cultural meanings as they acquire linguistic competence. The social constructionism perspective highlights that knowledge and culture are constructed through language within social interaction and emphasises the co-production of cultural meanings. The psycho-social approach reveals that the processes of identity formation and social adaptation are related to language and culture. By bringing these theoretical foundations together, ICLAM offers a holistic framework that links the concepts of linguistic competence, cultural capital and identity construction. Language is approached not only as a means of communication but also as a dynamic tool through which social roles are negotiated, cultural codes are transmitted, and the individual's identity is shaped. Cultural capital explains the individual's access to social and cultural resources and their ability to use them meaningfully, while identity construction explains the processes through which the individual positions themselves in social and cultural contexts through language and culture. Within this framework, ICLAM presents the mutual interaction of language and culture as a cyclical process that is continuously reproduced in multiple social contexts and positions itself as a guiding model in both theoretical and practical fields.

Unlike previous approaches that primarily focus on a single dimension of cultural acquisition, such as social interaction, cultural capital, identity formation, or language learning, ICLAM conceptualises these dimensions as mutually reinforcing components operating within a recursive cycle. Existing theories provide valuable insights into specific aspects of culture and language acquisition; however, they often address these dimensions separately. ICLAM integrates linguistic competence, cultural connection, identity construction, cultural capital, and social interaction into a single analytical framework, proposing that these components continuously influence and reproduce one another across multiple social contexts. In this respect, the model does not seek to replace existing theories but rather to connect their complementary contributions within a holistic explanatory structure.

## 5. 2. Core Constructs of ICLAM

The Interactive Culture and Language Acquisition Model (ICLAM) is built upon five interrelated constructs that collectively explain the reciprocal relationship between language and culture acquisition. These constructs provide the conceptual foundation of the model and clarify the mechanisms through which language and culture are jointly developed in different social contexts.

### 5.2. 1. Linguistic Competence

Within ICLAM, linguistic competence extends beyond the acquisition of grammatical knowledge and vocabulary. It refers to the individual's ability to use language appropriately and effectively in social and cultural contexts. Linguistic competence encompasses communicative, sociolinguistic, and intercultural dimensions that enable individuals to interpret cultural meanings, participate in social interactions, and negotiate identities through language. As language proficiency develops, individuals gain greater access to cultural practices, symbolic systems, and social participation opportunities.

### 5.2. 2. Cultural Capital

Drawing on Bourdieu's (1986) conceptualisation, cultural capital refers to the knowledge, skills, dispositions, and cultural resources that individuals acquire through family, education, and participation in social life. In the context of ICLAM, cultural capital functions as both an outcome and a facilitator of language and culture acquisition. Individuals with greater cultural capital can access

cultural meanings more effectively, while continued participation in linguistic and cultural practices contributes to the accumulation of additional cultural capital.

### 5.2. 3. Cultural Connection

Cultural connection refers to the degree to which individuals establish meaningful relationships with the values, norms, beliefs, symbols, and practices of a cultural community. Unlike cultural capital, which emphasises resources and competencies, cultural connection focuses on individuals' engagement with cultural meanings and their sense of belonging within a cultural environment. Through language-mediated interaction, individuals gradually develop stronger cultural connections, enabling them to interpret and participate more effectively in cultural practices.

### 5.2. 4. Identity Construction

Identity construction refers to the dynamic process through which individuals position themselves within social and cultural contexts. Identity is not viewed as a fixed characteristic but as a continuously evolving outcome of participation in linguistic and cultural practices. Through interaction with others, individuals negotiate social roles, develop a sense of belonging, and reconstruct their identities in response to changing cultural experiences. In ICLAM, identity construction both influences and is influenced by linguistic competence, cultural connection, and cultural capital.

### 5.2. 5. Social Interaction

Social interaction constitutes the primary mechanism through which language and culture are jointly acquired. Family environments, educational institutions, peer groups, media, workplaces, and digital platforms provide opportunities for individuals to engage with cultural meanings and linguistic practices. Through these interactions, individuals internalise cultural norms, develop communicative competence, and construct social identities. Consequently, social interaction serves as the driving force that sustains the cyclical relationship among all components of the ICLAM framework.

Together, these five constructs form an interconnected system in which language and culture continuously shape and reproduce one another. Linguistic competence facilitates cultural connection; cultural connection contributes to identity construction; identity construction influences the development of cultural capital; and social interaction continuously mediates and reinforces these processes. This reciprocal structure constitutes the conceptual foundation of the ICLAM model.

Although these constructs are presented separately for analytical purposes, they are not independent dimensions. Within ICLAM, linguistic competence, cultural connection, identity construction, cultural capital, and social interaction are conceptualised as interrelated processes that continuously influence one another. The analytical distinction among these constructs is intended to facilitate theoretical understanding; however, in real-life cultural acquisition contexts, they operate simultaneously and dynamically. This interconnected structure forms the conceptual foundation of the model and explains how language and culture acquisition emerge through ongoing social participation and cultural engagement.

## 5. 3. How the Model Works

The Interactive Culture and Language Acquisition Model (ICLAM) conceptualises language and culture

acquisition as a cyclical and mutually reinforcing process. The process begins with social interaction, which provides individuals with opportunities to engage in meaningful linguistic and cultural experiences through family, education, peer groups, media, workplaces, and digital environments. Through repeated participation in these contexts, individuals develop linguistic competence, enabling them to interpret cultural meanings and participate more effectively in communicative practices.

As linguistic competence develops, individuals establish stronger cultural connections by gaining access to the values, norms, beliefs, and symbolic systems of the cultural communities with which they interact. These cultural connections contribute to identity construction, as individuals continuously negotiate social roles, develop a sense of belonging, and position themselves within cultural contexts. Through this process, individuals accumulate cultural capital, which expands their access to social and cultural resources and increases their ability to participate in diverse cultural environments. The accumulation of cultural capital subsequently creates new opportunities for social interaction, thereby restarting and reinforcing the cycle.

The relationships among these components are not merely sequential but also mutually reinforcing. Linguistic competence enables individuals to understand cultural references, interpret social meanings, and participate more effectively in communicative practices. As individuals become more capable of engaging in culturally meaningful interactions, they develop stronger cultural connections and a deeper sense of belonging to particular cultural communities. These cultural connections, in turn, contribute to identity construction by allowing individuals to negotiate social roles, values, and group memberships through language-mediated experiences.

Identity construction also affects the development of cultural capital. As individuals increasingly identify with particular cultural communities, they gain access to new cultural resources, social networks, and symbolic knowledge. These resources expand their cultural capital and enhance their ability to participate in diverse social environments. In turn, greater cultural capital facilitates further participation in social interaction by increasing access to educational, professional, and intercultural opportunities. Through this recursive process, each component simultaneously functions as both an outcome of previous experiences and a catalyst for future development.

The cyclical nature of ICLAM is particularly relevant in contemporary societies characterised by digital communication, global mobility, and multicultural interaction. Individuals continuously encounter new cultural meanings through both face-to-face and digitally mediated environments. Consequently, language and culture acquisition are conceptualised not as finite achievements but as ongoing processes of participation, negotiation, adaptation, and reconstruction across multiple social contexts.

Accordingly, the interaction among these components operates as a recursive and mutually reinforcing cycle. Rather than representing a linear progression, social interaction, linguistic competence, cultural connection, identity construction, and cultural capital continuously shape and reproduce one another across multiple social contexts. This dynamic structure constitutes the central explanatory mechanism of ICLAM.

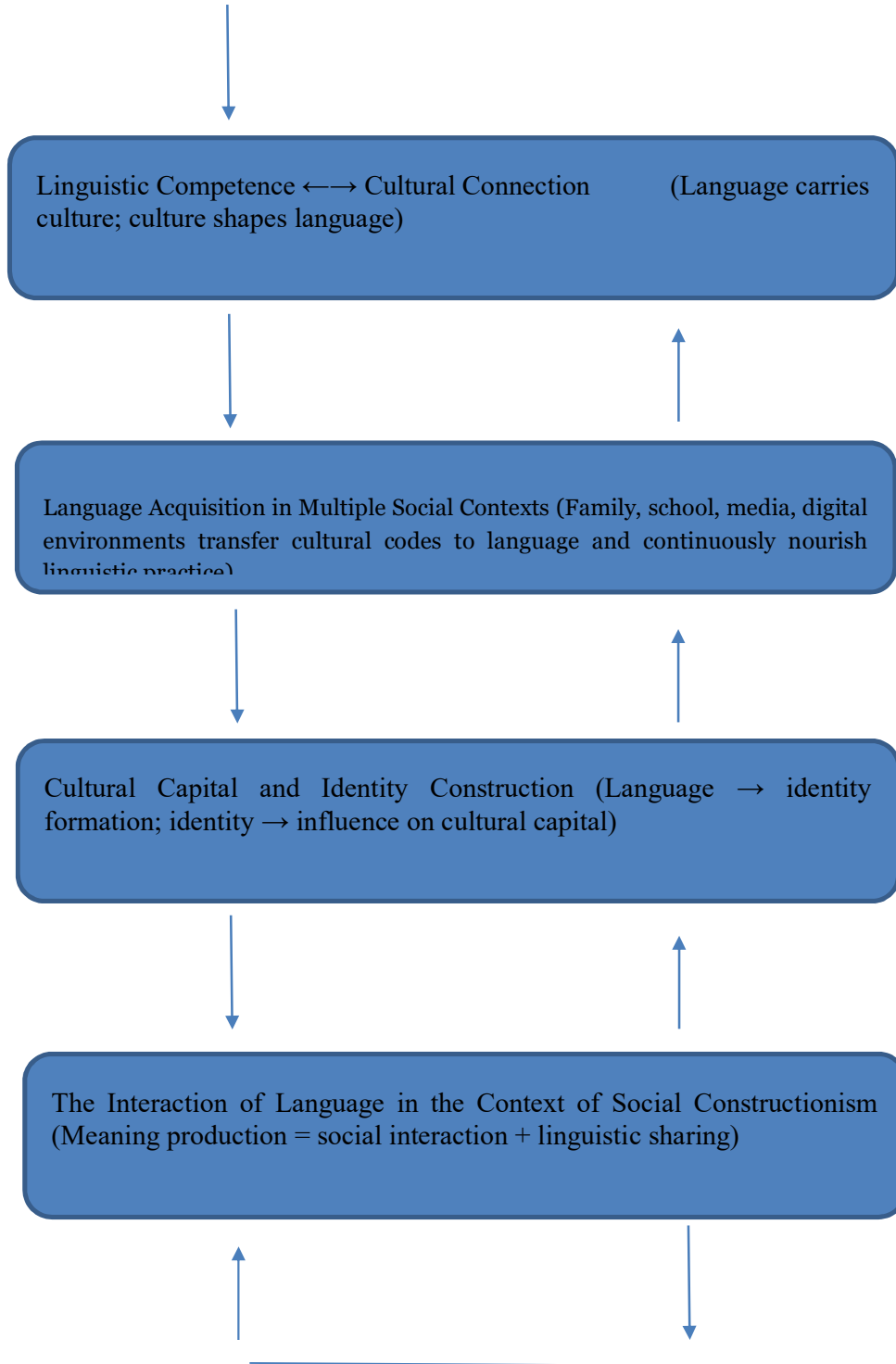
The proposed Interactive Culture and Language Acquisition Model (ICLAM) aims to integrate the insights offered by existing theories explaining the relationship between language and culture into a single analytical framework. By bringing together dimensions that have often been examined separately within the literature, the model provides a more comprehensive explanation of how language and

culture acquisition operate as interconnected processes.

The primary contribution of ICLAM lies in demonstrating how linguistic competence, cultural connection, identity construction, cultural capital, and social interaction function as interdependent components within a dynamic and recursive system. This approach emphasises that language acquisition is not limited to individual cognitive processes; rather, it must be understood in relation to social interactions, cultural practices, identity negotiation, and access to cultural resources. In this way, ICLAM provides an explanatory mechanism that links these dimensions within a single conceptual structure rather than treating them as separate processes. ICLAM therefore offers three integrative features that extend existing theoretical discussions on language and culture acquisition.

1. **Holistic Framework:** By integrating various theoretical approaches into a single model, it enables an explanation of the multidimensional nature of language and cultural acquisition.
2. **Mutual Interaction:** It systematically models a cyclical process in which language and culture continuously shape each other and are reproduced in different social contexts.
3. **Application Potential:** The model can be concretely tested in classroom applications, digital platforms, and intercultural interaction areas, and can guide instructional design. The functioning of the ICLAM Model is presented in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1. ICLAM MODEL



### MUTUAL INTERACTION CYCLE

Figure 1, the visual representation of the ICLAM Model, illustrates the model's fundamental cyclical structure and the continuity of language–culture interaction across multiple social contexts. The "Mutual Interaction Cycle" presented in the figure demonstrates how linguistic competence, cultural connection, identity construction, cultural capital, and social interaction continuously influence and reproduce one another within a dynamic system. This visualisation concretises the model's theoretical framework, enabling researchers and educators to better understand the interconnected and recursive nature of language and culture acquisition while reinforcing the analytical coherence of ICLAM.

The arrows in the model should not be interpreted as strictly one-way causal relationships. Rather, they represent dominant pathways of influence within a dynamic system in which each construct may simultaneously function as both a cause and a consequence of the others. This assumption reflects the recursive nature of language and culture acquisition proposed by ICLAM.

From a theoretical perspective, ICLAM generates a set of relational propositions concerning the interaction of language and culture acquisition. The model proposes that increases in linguistic competence strengthen cultural connection; stronger cultural connections contribute to identity construction; identity construction facilitates the accumulation of cultural capital; and cultural capital creates new opportunities for social interaction. These propositions provide a basis for future empirical studies designed to test the explanatory power of the model in educational, intercultural, and digitally mediated contexts.

#### 5. 4. Key Components of the Model

1. **Linguistic Proficiency and Cultural Connection:** Language learning involves not only acquiring vocabulary and grammar, but also becoming part of a cultural universe of meaning and producing meaning in social contexts.
2. **Language Acquisition in Multiple Social Spaces:** Language and cultural acquisition occurs beyond traditional environments such as family and school; it takes place in various social spaces such as the media, digital platforms, and online communities.
3. **Cultural Capital and Identity Construction:** Language is closely related to an individual's identity formation and cultural capital accumulation; ICLAM explains how this process is negotiated in social contexts.
4. **Social Constructionism Perspective:** Knowledge and culture are constructed through language and social interaction; therefore, language teaching cannot be considered independently of its cultural context.

#### 5. 5. Basic Assumptions of the Model

1. Language and culture are inseparable, and learning always occurs through mutual interaction.
2. Language acquisition is not an individual process but a social, cultural, and societal one.
3. Multiple social contexts (face-to-face and digital) jointly shape language learning and cultural

acquisition.

4. Identity, cultural capital, and linguistic practices constantly reproduce each other.
5. Language is a dynamic system that organises social relationships and structures cultural meanings.

## 5. 6. Contributions of the Model

ICLAM offers the following contributions from both theoretical and practical perspectives:

1. **Theoretical:** It integrates language–culture interaction into a single holistic model, systematically incorporating the contributions of different theories.
2. **Practical:** Guides the concrete testing of the model and educational design through classroom applications and digital environments.
3. **Research:** The model provides a foundation for future empirical studies, case analyses, and culture-based language teaching research.

## 5. 7. Application Areas of the Model

ICLAM not only provides a theoretical framework but also offers opportunities for application:

1. In-class applications: Lesson plans and activities enable students to experience cultural content (e. g. story analysis, drama, group discussions).
2. Teaching materials: Resources containing cultural norms and values can be used alongside language proficiency acquisition.
3. Digital and online platforms: Students can experience intercultural interaction through forums, social networks, and digital cultural communities.
4. Case studies: Observing students or classes within a model framework provides concrete examples of language and culture acquisition.

Through these applications, ICLAM can concretely demonstrate that language and culture acquisition is a reciprocal, cyclical and multi-layered process.

## 6. Conclusion

This study has demonstrated that culture and language acquisition should be approached not as separate processes, but as an integrated structure that develops through mutual interaction. It has been observed that language is the fundamental carrier of cultural meanings, social practices and social identity; while learning a language, individuals also acquire cultural values, ways of thinking and social codes. This interpretation is consistent with discussions in the international literature that conceptualise language as both a cultural practice and a tool for identity construction (Kramsch, 2014; Duff & Doherty, 2015; Wei, 2020).

The theoretical framework of the study has shown that cultural acquisition can be explained within a broad theoretical spectrum ranging from behaviourist learning to social constructivism. This reveals that cultural learning occurs simultaneously through cognitive, social, and societal processes. Furthermore, Bourdieu's cultural capital approach has strongly demonstrated that language proficiency is also related to social positioning and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986; Shi, 2021).

It has been concluded that future research needs to be supported by empirical data. In particular, it is important to comparatively examine the processes of cultural acquisition in different contexts, such as the family environment, the school system, digital media, immigrant communities, and multicultural classrooms. Furthermore, supporting topics such as the transmission of cultural elements in the teaching of Turkish as a foreign language, students' levels of cultural awareness, and the impact of cultural misunderstandings on learning with field data will contribute more strongly to the literature.

This research has revealed the integrated structure between culture and language, offering an assessment that is both consistent with international theoretical approaches and unique in the context of the Turkish language. Addressing how cultural acquisition is produced, transmitted, and reconstructed through language, this study has established an important theoretical basis for culture-focused language teaching and cultural awareness-based practices.

## 7. Recommendations

This study has examined the relationship between culture and language acquisition within a theoretical framework; however, it highlights several areas for further development in future research. Firstly, considering that cultural acquisition is a dynamic and context-sensitive process, comparative field studies conducted across different age groups, socio-economic levels, and cultural communities are expected to make significant contributions to the field. The use of qualitative methods such as ethnographic observations, longitudinal studies, and in-depth interviews will reveal in greater detail how culture is constructed in everyday practices and reproduced through language.

Furthermore, as the impact of digitalisation on cultural acquisition and language use is increasing, it is recommended that studies be conducted on the role of digital platforms, social media environments, and online language learning applications in cultural transmission processes. Such research is particularly important in assessing how new communication technologies function in the formation of cultural identity among younger generations.

In the context of teaching Turkish as a foreign language, empirical data should support which methods and materials are used to convey cultural content and how these conveyances contribute to students' cultural awareness and intercultural communication skills. Experimental studies examining the impact of cultural misunderstandings on the language learning process will contribute to the development of teaching programmes and course materials. Furthermore, comparative analyses conducted on students learning Turkish in different countries will make the changes in the culture-language relationship in an international context more visible.

Finally, the integration of theoretical approaches into practical teaching processes should be strengthened; teacher training programmes should include more comprehensive content on cultural pedagogy, intercultural communication, and the cultural dimensions of language. In this way, it will be possible to develop teaching models that address culture and language as a holistic structure.

## References

- Aksan, D. (2003). *History and culture of the Turkish language*. Ankara: Turkish Language Association Publications.
- Aksan, D. (2011). *Turkish culture reflected in the Turkish language*. Ankara: Information.
- Arnett, J. J. (2020). *Adolescence and emerging adulthood: A cultural approach* (6th ed.). Pearson.
- Baker, W. (2018). *Researching intercultural competence: Perspectives, practices, and prospects*. Routledge.
- Baker, W. (2022). *Culture and identity in intercultural communication*. Routledge.
- Bandura, A. (1977). *Social learning theory*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Banguođlu, T. (1957). *Research on Turkish language and culture*. Istanbul University Publications.
- Banks, J. A., & Banks, C. A. M. (Eds.). (2019). *Multicultural education: Issues and perspectives*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Bayyurt, Y., & Akbař, E. (2021). Turkish as a pluricentric language and cultural identity. *Journal of Language and Intercultural Communication*, 21(5), 569–585.
- Beacco, J. C., Byram, M., Cavalli, M., Coste, D., Cuenat, M. E., Goullier, F., & Panthier, J. (2010). *Guide for the development and implementation of curricula for multilingual and intercultural education*. Council of Europe.
- Beacco, J.-C. (2007). *The role of language in intercultural communication*. Council of Europe Publishing.
- Berger, P. L., & Luckmann, T. (1966). *The social construction of reality*. Anchor Books.
- Bijou, S. W., & Baer, D. M. (1961). *Child development, Vol. 1: A systematic and empirical theory*. Appleton-Century-Crofts. <https://doi.org/10.1037/11139-000>
- Boeree, C. G. (2006). Erik Erikson. Retrieved October 10, 2008, from <https://www.ship.edu/~cgboeree/erikson.html>
- Bourdieu, P. (1977). *Outline of a theory of practice*. Cambridge University Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (1986). *Distinction: A social critique of the judgement of taste*. Routledge.
- Bourdieu, P., & Passeron, J.-C. (1990). *Reproduction in education, society and culture*. Sage.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101.
- Brown, D. E. (2020). *Human universals and cultural variation: Foundations for interdisciplinary cultural studies*. Oxford University Press.
- Bruner, J. (1990). *Acts of meaning*. Harvard University Press.
- Buckingham, D. (2020). *The media education manifesto*. Polity Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv10kmf3d>
- Byram, M. (1997). *Teaching and assessing intercultural communicative competence*. Multilingual Matters.
- Byram, M. (2021). *Teaching and assessing intercultural communicative competence*. Multilingual Matters.
- Chomsky, N. (2012). *On nature and language* (A. B. Karadađ, Trans.). Istanbul: Sözcükler.
- Cole, M., & Scribner, S. (1974). *Culture and thought: A psychological introduction*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Council of Europe. (2018). *Common European framework of reference for languages: Learning, teaching, assessment*. Cambridge University Press.
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (4th

- ed.). Sage.
- Deardorff, D. K. (2016). *The SAGE handbook of intercultural competence* (2nd ed.). Sage.
- Duff, A., & Doherty, C. (2015). *Language as a cultural practice: Teaching and learning in multilingual classrooms*. Routledge.
- Duff, P. A. (2020). Language socialisation. In S. L. McKay & N. H. Hornberger (Eds.), *Sociolinguistics and language education* (pp. 84–104). Multilingual Matters.
- Ergin, M. (1989). *History of the Turkish language*. Ankara: Akçağ Yayınları.
- Galante, A. (2021). Plurilingual and pluricultural competence in language education. *Language Teaching Research*, 25(1), 118–138.
- Gao, X. (2021). Language learning theories and the changing role of culture. *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, 34(2), 117–130. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07908318.2020.1798120>
- Geertz, C. (1973). *The interpretation of cultures: Selected essays*. Basic Books.
- Güneş, F. (2014). Language teaching approaches and their applications in Turkish language teaching. *Journal of the Institute of Social Sciences, Mustafa Kemal University*, 8(15), 123–148. <https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/download/article-file/183308>
- Hall, E. T. (1959). *The silent language*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday.
- Harris, J. R. (1995). Where is the child's environment? A group socialisation theory of development. *Psychological Review*, 102(3), 458–489. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0033-295X.102.3.458>
- Haviland, W. A., Prins, H. E. L., Walrath, D., & McBride, B. (2021). *Cultural anthropology: The human challenge* (16th ed.). Cengage Learning.
- Holliday, A. (2020). *Understanding intercultural communication: Negotiating a mobile world* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- Holliday, A. (2021). *Understanding intercultural communication: Negotiating a grammar of culture*. Routledge.
- Illeris, K. (2021). *A comprehensive understanding of human learning*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003018834>
- Jackson, J. (2022). *Interculturality in education: Critical perspectives*. Routledge.
- Kramsch, C. (1993). *Context and culture in language teaching*. Oxford University Press.
- Kramsch, C. (2014). *Language and culture*. Oxford University Press.
- Kramsch, C. (2020). *Language as symbolic power*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108874899>
- Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (2003). *Metaphors we live by* (2nd ed.). University of Chicago Press.
- Lantolf, J. P. (2011). *Sociocultural theory: A dialectical approach to L2 research*. Oxford University Press.
- Lantolf, J. P., Thorne, S. L., & Poehner, M. E. (2020). *Sociocultural theory and the pedagogical imperative in L2 education*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203841398>
- Larsen-Freeman, D., & Anderson, M. (2020). *Techniques and principles in language teaching* (4th ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Liddicoat, A. J., & Scarino, A. (2021). Intercultural language teaching and learning in action-oriented frameworks. *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, 34(2), 123–139.
- Livingstone, S. (2009). *Children and the internet*. Polity Press.
- Livingstone, S. (2021). *Digital media and children's rights*. Polity Press.
- Malinowski, B. (1992). *A scientific theory of culture* (S. Özkal Kabalcı, Trans.). Istanbul: İletişim.

- Masgoret, A. M., & Ward, C. (2006). A culture learning approach to acculturation. In D. L. Sam & J. W. Berry (Eds.), *The Cambridge handbook of acculturation psychology* (pp. 58–77). Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511489891.008>
- Norton, B. (2013). *Identity and language learning*. Multilingual Matters.
- Okoli, C. (2015). A guide to conducting a standalone systematic literature review. *Communications of the Association for Information Systems*, 37(1), 879–910. <https://aisel.aisnet.org/cais/vol37/iss1/43/>
- Okoli, C., & Schabram, K. (2010). A guide to conducting a systematic literature review of information systems research. *SSRN Electronic Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.1954824>
- Ormrod, J. E. (2020). *Human learning* (8th ed.). Pearson.
- Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods* (4th ed.). Sage.
- Piaget, J. (1980). *Epistemology and psychology* (S. Cılızođlu, Trans.). Istanbul: Havass.
- Puren, C. (2013). Action-oriented perspective and project pedagogy, historical contributions of two pedagogical movements: ICEM-Freinet pedagogy, GFEN.
- Risager, K. (2018). *Language and culture: Global flows and local complexity*. Multilingual Matters.
- Rogoff, B. (2003). *The cultural nature of human development*. Oxford University Press.
- Sfard, A. (1998). On two metaphors for learning and dangers of choosing just one. *Educational Researcher*, 27(2), 4–13. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1176193>
- Shi, X. (2021). Language proficiency and cultural capital: The intersection in education. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 40(3), 352–370.
- Skinner, B. F. (1953). *Science and human behaviour*. Macmillan.
- Spencer-Oatey, H., & Jiang, X. (2021). *What is culture? A compilation of quotations*. University of Warwick.
- Tan, G. L. C., & Fang, Z. (2023). Family social and cultural capital: An analysis of effects on adolescents' educational outcomes in China. *The Journal of Chinese Sociology*, 10, Article 21. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40711-023-00200-w>
- Tran, T., & Pham, H. (2022). Cultural capital and language learning in global contexts. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 32(4), 512–528.
- Tylor, E. B. (1871). *Primitive culture: Researches into the development of mythology, philosophy, religion, language, art, and custom*. John Murray.
- Vygotsky, L. (1998). *Thought and language* (S. Koray, Trans.). Istanbul: Toplumsal Dönüşüm.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Harvard University Press.
- Wei, L. (2020). Translanguaging as a theory of cultural learning. *Applied Linguistics*, 41(3), 299–317.
- Wierzbicka, A. (2010). *Experience, evidence, and sense: The hidden cultural legacy of English*. Oxford University Press.