

Efficient Methods to Becoming Multilingual: Increasing Cultural Awareness

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Abstract

The need for cultural competency has increased with the expansion of globalization, the increased interaction through technology, and breakdowns in communication, inequities, and prejudice (Mareno & Hart, 2014). Cultural awareness in both multicultural (Lew & Siffrin, 2019) and monocultural (De La Forest, 2018; Fuller & Ahler, 2012) classrooms is essential to ensure students learn the necessary attitudes, skills, and knowledge to form authentic relationships and become equitable leaders in a diverse world (Binger & Hassan, 2021; Mareno & Hart, 2014). Foreign language learning improves students' cultural awareness (Cakir, 2006; Jin-feng, 2007; Ortuno, 1991), second language learning promotes cultural awareness in preservice teachers (Larke, 1990; Ward & Ward, 2003), and multilingualism deepens cross-cultural empathy and global ethics (Krajewski, 2011; Rolbin & Chiesa, 2010) yet foreign language learning can be difficult for students (Dickinson & Carver, 1980; Ganschow, Sparks, & Javorsky, 1998; Nation, 2014). The complexity and the difficulty in learning foreign languages can shy students away from learning a new language. Research shows theories, classroom methods, and individual traits to why there are struggles to language learning but there is a gap in the literature of helpful techniques of language learning through multilinguals' perspectives. In this qualitative study, we sought to find efficient methods of learning foreign languages through interviewing and analyzing polyglots' perspectives of their techniques to learning multiple languages. We compared multilinguals' language learning methods to find commonalities that assisted in unraveling the complexities in foreign language learning and reduced the difficulties in learning new languages.

Purpose

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore multilingual educators' experiences of learning more than one language and their perceptions of what in their learning of many languages helped them learn it efficiently. Pragmatic theory was selected as the framework for inquiry. This study explored multilingual educators' perspectives as they have a deeper understanding of language learning through their experience and knowledge of learning more than three languages.

Design/methodology

The research questions that guided this research was influenced by my and my colleagues experience of learning multiple languages. The difficulties we found were many and after years studying multiple languages we both felt we should be more fluent than we are. Both of our awareness's of language learning difficulties, our recognition of the deep cultural understanding learning another language brings, and the need for cultural awareness for others spurred us to question if there were practical methods to language learning that we were not aware of in hopes to ease language learning struggles. This study is qualitative in nature.

Findings

Analyzing findings now.

Originality

This research explores efficient methods of learning foreign language. We found that foreign language learning increased cultural awareness. We also know from our own experiences as well as through our research efforts the difficulties that arise in foreign language learning. We were unable to find research that provided efficient language learning techniques for learning multiple languages. Our research builds on improving cultural awareness through foreign language learning by understanding multilinguals' perceptions of language of how to learn foreign languages in an efficient manner.

Need for Cultural Awareness

Increasing cultural competency is a key issue in education and highly sought-after knowledge for graduates (Krajewski, 2011). Cultural awareness for students is an essential part of learning an equitable mindset and forming effective relationships with people of different belief systems (Mareno & Hart, 2014). Raising awareness of cultural sensitivity in multicultural classrooms reduces fear, ignorance, and personal detachment (Wilson, 2012). In monocultural classrooms, teaching multicultural education has a positive impact on students understanding of cultural diversity, increases awareness of racism and inequity, and provides students with interpersonal relationships (Hasslen, 1993). Students who develop cultural competencies form deeper, more genuine relationships with people unlike themselves. The acceptance of difference allows for positive relationships to form creating a more symbiotic, peaceful world that thrives.

Foreign Language Learning Increases Cultural Awareness

Foreign language is one means of increasing cultural competency. Learning foreign languages increases cultural awareness and provides a means for students to become more sensitive in their cultural understanding (Jin-feng, 2007). Multilingualism increases tolerance and assists in creating comfort with the unknown (Middlebury Language Schools, 2021). Becoming multilingual is an essential step in increasing metacultural awareness (Rolbin & Chiesa, 2010). Metacultural awareness develops empathy in the brain and also maximizes the potential to cultivate a new positive local-global understanding. Although the benefits of learning a foreign language are clear, learning a new language can be difficult. Issues that arise are due to perceptions about learning a foreign language and difficulties in native language learning creating difficulties in learning a foreign language (Ganschow, Sparks, & Javorsky, 1998). This study analyzed

multilingual individuals and their successful techniques to learning multiple languages to assist those in easing the difficulties in learning foreign languages.

Methods of Learning Foreign Languages

The current research shows creating a friendly environment assists in teaching English as a second language (Slowik, 2019). A thorough review of what constructs foreign language aptitude prior to the 1990s and through the 1990s including affective variables to language learning, strategies, learning styles, and individual differences in language learning was conducted (Sparks & Ganschow, 2001). Group dynamics and group processes contribute to the success or failure of foreign language learning assisting language teachers with understanding the importance of group dynamics (Dörnyei & Malderez, 1997). Although these research articles are an important part of understanding language learning there is a gap in understanding efficient methods to learning more than one language.

Keywords

cultural awareness, cultural competency, cultural understanding, foreign language learning techniques, metacultural awareness, multilingualism, polyglot

Polyglots' Foreign Language Learning Techniques and Qualitative Findings

Currently analyzing data

Conclusion

Will complete after analysis of qualitative findings

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