Home Cultural Attachment among Iranian Undergraduates of Foreign Languages

Mahdi Dahmardeh[1*], Fateme Hejazian[1]
[1]University of Tehran, Iran

Abstract This study explores the cultural orientations of Iranian foreign language learners using a descriptive survey design. The Home Cultural Attachment (HCA) Questionnaire was used for data collection. The HCA Questionnaire underwent a rigorous validation process involving expert review, a pilot study, and factor analysis to ensure its validity. The questionnaire was administered to 270 senior undergraduate students from various language programmes at state universities in Tehran. The questionnaire captured participants' cultural attachments across various dimensions (religious, Western, Iranian, cultural, and artistic). The findings revealed while there was a general openness to foreign languages and cultures, the respondents also expressed conservative views in certain areas. While there is a strong consensus that learning foreign languages is valuable, there are also some conservative views about the role of foreign languages and cultures in Iranian society. The implications of the findings suggest the need for language programmes to integrate comprehensive cultural education, promote cultural sensitivity, and encourage exposure to various cultures.

Keywords: *Home cultural attachment, Cross-cultural perspectives, Foreign languages, Cultural expectations, Cultural education*

1. Introduction

The attachment to one's home culture is rarely monolithic. Learning English, while offering global benefits, can spark internal debates about cultural identity and resistance to Western dominance (Mehdizadeh, 2022). Similarly, the historical connection with Russia might be intertwined with pragmatism, but it also raises complex questions about political alliances and historical interpretations (Shafihi et al., 2016). Therefore, Home Cultural Attachment (HCA) is not a static concept but rather a spectrum of individual experiences and motivations. Each learner weaves their unique tapestry, influenced by personal aspirations, historical echoes, and the desire to connect with their cultural heritage in diverse and often multifaceted ways. Understanding these individual strands within the broader tapestry of Iranian's language learning is crucial for appreciating the richness and complexity of this phenomenon.

[*]Corresponding Author:
Mahdi Dahmardeh
dahmardeh@ut.ac.ir

Received: April 2024
Revised: June 2024
Accepted: June 2024
Published: July 2024

© 2025 Dahmardeh and Hejazian.
This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (CC BY).

https://doi.org/10.22034/ijscl.2024.2031318.3520

HCA is a concept that refers to the emotional and psychological attachment that individuals have to their cultural or ethnic home. It is a multidimensional construct that encompasses different aspects of an individual's relationship with their cultural or ethnic home, including place identity, place dependence, and place affect (Lewicka, 2011; Williams & Vaske, 2003). For some Iranian learners, choosing a language that resonates with their heritage serves as a way to strengthen their cultural identity. For example, Gholami et al. (2023) highlight how Iranian learners of Arabic find it fosters a sense of belonging and connection to their Islamic faith and historical ties with the Arab world. Similarly, Hajir and Mohammadi (2020) suggest that learning Persian, the participants' mother tongue, strengthens cultural identity and self-esteem among Iranian diaspora communities. However, HCA can also lead to complex negotiations and tensions. Learners of English, for instance, may grapple with the internal conflict between embracing global opportunities and preserving their own cultural identity (Tavakoli & Farahani 2017). Similarly, Mehdipour and Safar (2022) note the challenges faced by Iranian learners of Western languages who encounter cultural stereotypes and prejudices that can clash with their values and beliefs.

Despite these challenges, language can also serve as a bridge between cultures, fostering understanding and appreciation. Learning Spanish, for example, allows Iranian learners to connect with the rich and diverse cultures of Latin America. Likewise, Hashemi and Pourmohammadi (2020) highlight how learning Chinese opens doors to cultural exchange and a deeper understanding of China's traditions and values, promoting mutual respect and intercultural dialogue. Rafati and Shojaei (2023) emphasise how globalisation and transnational experiences can reshape and re-imagine home cultures, influencing the choices and motivations of language learners. As Iranian learners navigate the global landscape, their understanding of their cultural heritage and its connection to other languages evolves and adapts.

HCA is a multifaceted and dynamic force shaping Iranian language learners' choices and experiences. Understanding this concept allows us to appreciate the complex interplay between personal aspirations, cultural values, and global opportunities that drive their linguistic journeys. By recognising the diverse threads woven into this tapestry, we can gain a deeper insight into the motivations and challenges faced by Iranian language learners as they navigate the world through the lens of multiple tongues.

For many Iranian language learners, a key driver is a sense of nostalgia for and connection to their cultural heritage. Languages like Arabic and Persian hold deep historical and religious significance, serving as a bridge to past generations and ancestral traditions (Azadpour & Alizadeh, 2022). Learning these languages allows them to reconnect with their roots, decipher ancient texts, and deepen their understanding of their cultural identity (Mohammadi, 2019). As Dahmardeh and Sung Do (2020) point out, this desire for cultural connection is further strengthened by the empowering benefits of language learning. Improved grammar knowledge provides Iranian learners with a stronger foundation for appreciating the nuances of cultural texts and historical documents. Language learning also expands their access to information and opportunities, potentially exposing them to a wealth of cultural resources or enriching experiences abroad. This newfound knowledge and broadened horizons ultimately boost their self-confidence, empowering them to take a more active role in engaging with their cultural heritage.

In a world where globalisation homogenises cultures, Iranian learners might see language learning as a way to preserve their unique identity and heritage. Learning languages like Persian or Kurdish, for example, allows them to express themselves authentically, connect with fellow Iranians, and resist the erosion of their cultural distinctiveness (Pourhosseini & Sholeh, 2018). Mastering these languages becomes a form of cultural resistance, protecting their heritage from being lost in the globalised linguistic landscape.

Beyond nostalgia, Iranian learners might be drawn to languages that reflect shared values and cultural connections. The allure of learning French and Italian, for instance, stems from their emphasis on aesthetics, art, and appreciation for the finer things in life – values resonating with Iranian cultural sensibilities (Ahmadi, 2021). Similarly, learning Spanish opens doors to the vibrant tapestry of Latin American cultures, fostering a sense of community and shared experiences beyond the Western world (Khalili & Farhadi, 2020).

The present study concentrates on the HCA of Iranian university students who study foreign languages. The knowledge of HCA is as important as humans living in a global village in which social interaction

in multicultural societies is inevitable (Senel, 2020). In addition, foreign language learners should be aware of their HCA knowledge since knowing a foreign language is not bound to knowledge of grammatical and syntactical points of that language but needs an expanding knowledge of foreign culture as well. It is believed that learning a new language improves HCA because language and culture are interdependent. Therefore, it is important to find out if learning different foreign languages (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Russian, and Spanish) can affect the language learners' HCA differently or not.

2. Theoretical Framework

HCA is an important concept because it has been found to influence a variety of outcomes, including psychological well-being, social connectedness, and cultural identity (Lewicka, 2011; Williams & Vaske, 2003). For example, individuals who have a strong attachment to their cultural or ethnic home are more likely to experience psychological well-being and have a positive sense of self (Lewicka, 2011). Additionally, individuals with a strong attachment to their cultural or ethnic home are more likely to engage in cultural activities and maintain their cultural identity (Williams & Vaske, 2003). This engagement in cultural activities and maintenance of cultural identity can have significant positive implications for individuals' psychological well-being. For example, participating in cultural events and traditions can provide individuals with a sense of belonging and connection to their community, which can enhance their self-esteem and life satisfaction. Additionally, maintaining a strong cultural identity can help individuals navigate challenges related to discrimination and prejudice by providing them with a sense of pride and resilience in their cultural heritage. Furthermore, research has shown that individuals who maintain a strong connection to their cultural heritage are more likely to experience positive outcomes in areas such as academic achievement, career success, and overall health and well-being (Phinney & Ong, 2007).

According to Scannell and Gifford (2017), one of the key factors influencing place attachment is the physical environment. The physical features of a place, such as its natural beauty, architectural design, and overall aesthetics, can contribute to an individual's emotional connection to that place. For example, individuals may feel a strong attachment to a place with beautiful landscapes or iconic landmarks. Social interactions also play a significant role in developing place attachment. Positive social interactions, such as forming friendships or participating in community activities, can enhance an individual's sense of belonging and connection to a place. On the other hand, negative social interactions, such as conflicts or social exclusion, can diminish an individual's attachment to a place. Cultural significance is another important factor influencing place attachment. The cultural heritage, traditions, and historical significance of a place can contribute to an individual's sense of identity and belonging. Places that are associated with important cultural events or have symbolic meaning for a particular group of people are more likely to evoke a strong sense of attachment.

Scannell and Gifford (2017) also highlighted the role of personal experiences and memories in shaping place attachment. Positive experiences and memories associated with a place, such as family gatherings or personal achievements, can strengthen an individual's emotional connection to that place. Similarly, negative experiences or traumatic events can weaken an individual's attachment. It is important to note that place attachment can vary across individuals and contexts. Factors such as age, gender, cultural background, and personal values can influence the strength and nature of an individual's attachment to a particular place. Additionally, the level of attachment may change over time as individuals' experiences and perceptions of a place evolve.

The ability to connect with different cultures is influenced by a sense of belonging within a cultural community. Research by Hauge et al. (2014) highlights the importance of social connections and a sense of community in fostering HCA. These connections provide individuals with a support system and a sense of identity, which contributes to the development of HCA. Feeling a sense of belonging within a cultural group leads to a deeper appreciation and engagement with its traditions, practices, and history. This sense of community strengthens the connection to one's cultural heritage, thus reinforcing HCA (Hauge et al., 2014). In essence, a supportive cultural community and a sense of belonging play a key role in shaping HCA by providing social connections and reinforcing the bond with one's cultural heritage.

HCA is also influenced by the emotional significance attached to cultural objects, symbols, and rituals. Research by Wu and Yao (2016) shows how these elements can evoke positive emotions and strengthen an individual's connection to their heritage. Surrounding oneself with cultural objects that hold personal meaning fosters a sense of belonging and reinforces cultural identity. These objects can be heirlooms, artwork, traditional artifacts, or symbols representing cultural traditions, history, or values. The positive emotions associated with these elements enhance feelings of pride, belonging, and affiliation with one's cultural heritage, leading to a deeper appreciation for the culture's practices, values, and traditions, ultimately strengthening HCA.

Family and socialisation practices play a crucial role in shaping HCA. As emphasised by Ferreira and Neto (2018), family members transmit cultural traditions and values, creating a sense of continuity and familiarity with one's cultural background. This familiarity contributes to the development of HCA by providing a foundation for understanding and adapting to different cultures. Cultural practices, rituals, and celebrations passed down within families provide individuals with a sense of belonging and identity within their cultural group. These practices establish a shared cultural framework that individuals can relate to and identify with. Family members act as role models and guide individuals, teaching them about the importance of cultural values, beliefs, and behaviours. The intergenerational transmission of cultural knowledge acts as a mechanism for preserving and reinforcing cultural heritage. As children observe and participate in cultural practices alongside their family members, they develop a sense of pride, appreciation, and attachment to their cultural heritage.

For communities with an Iranian diaspora, home can be a complex and multifaceted concept. Language learning can become a way to reconstruct and redefine home in a new context**.** Learning Arabic, for example, might allow Iranian diaspora communities to connect with their ancestral lands and communities in the Middle East, fostering a sense of belonging and cultural continuity (Ebrahimi & Hosseini, 2023). Similarly, mastering English can equip them with the tools to navigate their host societies and build new cultural connections in their adopted homes.

The study by Shahsavandi, et al.(2013) addressed a gap in research on home culture attachment (HCA) for foreign language learners in Iran. While the importance of culture and acculturation in language learning is widely recognised, the authors argue these aspects haven't received sufficient attention in Iranian contexts. They challenge the assumption that complete immersion in a foreign culture is necessary for language learning success. The researchers identified a lack of existing questionnaires to measure HCA in foreign language students. To address this gap, they designed and validated a Home Culture Attachment Questionnaire (HCAQ) specifically for this population. The development process likely involved consulting experts in the field and conducting pilot tests with a small student group to refine the questionnaire. Once validated, the HCAQ was applied in a larger study (potentially with 100 students or more) to investigate the relationship between HCA and self-reported foreign language learning success. This application exemplifies the potential of the HCAQ as a research tool.

Pishghadam, et al. (2013) aimed to identify and confirm the underlying factors measured by the Home Culture Attachment Scale (HCAS). The research was conducted in Mashhad, Iran, with 374 English language learners enrolled in private language institutes. To achieve this, the researchers employed a two-step approach. First, they performed Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) to explore the underlying constructs (factors) that the HCAS might be tapping into. The EFA results revealed five potential factors within the scale. Subsequently, they used Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to confirm the existence of these five factors and explore the relationships between them. The SEM analysis provided support for the five-factor model, suggesting that the HCAS measures distinct but interrelated aspects of home culture attachment.

Iranian undergraduates are drawn to a diverse range of foreign languages, each driven by a unique tapestry of motivations. Arabic connects them to their religious heritage, while Chinese offers access to economic opportunities. English, despite its complexities, holds immense practical value, while French and Italian allure with their cultural richness. German's precision aligns with Iranian pragmatism, and Italian's vibrancy resonates with their love for aesthetics. Japan attracts with its technological prowess and pop culture, while Russia fosters an understanding of the historical ties between the two nations. Finally, Spanish opens doors to the vibrant cultures of Latin America, offering a broader cultural perspective.

The intricate tapestry of Iranian language learners reflects a unique cultural motif, encompassing personal aspirations, historical echoes, and a yearning to connect with the world in diverse and meaningful ways. This complexity of Iranian identity and its dynamic relationship with language is further emphasised by scholars such as Asraf (1996), who highlighted the potential danger of cultural and linguistic erosion posed by the perception that learners' native cultures and languages are not useful or modern. Moreover, Davis and Elder (2004) suggested that a higher level of HCA can mitigate this danger. In this context, a study aims to compare the level of HCA of Iranian foreign language learners and explore the impact of studying foreign languages on their HCA. The research sought to investigate the differences in cultural intelligence among Iranian senior undergraduates studying Arabic, Chinese, English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Russian, and Spanish. Therefore, the following research question was posed to address the purpose of the study: Is there any significant difference among Iranian senior undergraduates of foreign languages (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Russian, and Spanish) in terms of their HCA?

3. Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey design, leveraging questionnaires as instruments to collect data from Iranian foreign language learners across multiple language domains.

3.1. Participants

The participants of this study included 270 Iranian male (n = 101) and female (n = 169) senior undergraduates of foreign languages. The selection of 270 participants from state universities in Tehran reflected a broad cross-section of students engaged in various language majors. This inclusive approach, encompassing disciplines such as Arabic, Chinese, English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Russian, and Spanish, offers a diverse perspective, reflecting the breadth of linguistic and cultural interests within this specific academic context. Table 1 shows the frequency and percentage of the participants in each field.

Table 1
Gender Distribution of the Participants

	Female	Male
Arabic	16 (53%)	14 (47%)
Chinese	20 (67%)	10 (33%)
English	18 (60%)	12 (40%)
French	19 (63%)	11 (37%)
German	17 (57%)	13 (43%)
Italian	21 (70%)	9 (30%)
Japanese	18 (60%)	12 (40%)
Russian	19 (63%)	11 (37%)
Spanish	21 (70%)	9 (30%)

3.2. Instrument

The development of the HCA questionnaire was a careful process designed to capture the various ways participants felt connected to their culture. Existing questionnaires were adapted, and new questions were incorporated to address the specific characteristics of the study's unique group of participants and the languages they were learning. Instead of using a single existing questionnaire, the best elements of two different questionnaires were combined. These questionnaires were developed by Shahsavandi et al. (2010) and Pishghadam et al. (2013). The combination of these strengths resulted in a new questionnaire, revised HCA, that considered the wider range of languages and cultures involved in the research.

To ensure the effectiveness of the revised HCA questionnaire, two experienced Iranian English language teachers assisted in their development. They verified the translations, checked the clarity of the questions, and refined the wording. Before the full administration, a smaller group of students completed the questionnaires to test their functionality. This pilot testing helped refine the questions and ensure they accurately captured the intended information. This questionnaire is a 5-point Likert

scale instrument designed to measure participants' feelings of connection to their Iranian culture. Participants respond to 43 statements using a scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree" (1) to "Strongly Agree" (5). The statements cover a variety of aspects related to cultural identity, preference for Iranian vs. foreign culture, importance of Iranian language and literature, views on foreign language learning, religious identity, and national pride

3.3. Procedure

The first step involved the development of the HCA questionnaire. This step began with a comprehensive analysis of existing questionnaires by Shahsavandi et al. (2010) and Pishghadam et al. (2013). Items aligned with cultural definitions by Craig and Douglas (2006) and Gull (1994) were carefully selected and integrated after rigorous evaluation against established indicators from the reviewed literature. Following the design, the validation process ensured the HCA questionnaire's content validity. Two esteemed Teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) faculty members reviewed the English and translated Persian versions, providing valuable insights. Their recommendations guided subsequent modifications and refinements.

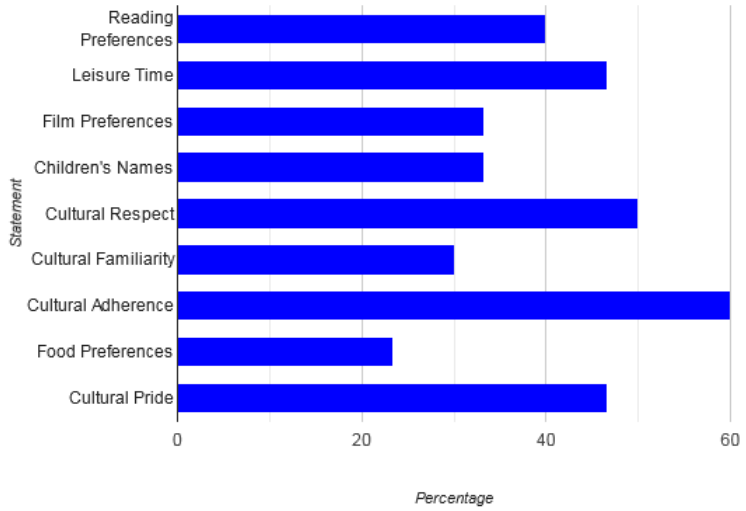
A pilot study with 15 participants (foreign language students of a language institute) assessed the questionnaire's content validity through a preliminary evaluation. The pilot study helped refine the questionnaire items to accurately reflect the intended content domains. The second stage involved administering the final HCA questionnaire to the target population - 270 senior undergraduate foreign language students. The questionnaire was translated into Persian to ensure accessibility and cultural relevance. This involved attending relevant lectures and securing permission from lecturers to distribute the questionnaires among participants. Questionnaires were collected on the same day, with participants assured of strict confidentiality to uphold ethical considerations and safeguard their privacy. The construct validity of the scale was substantiated using factor analysis. The results of factor analysis revealed nine distinct subconstructs that emerged from the participants' responses. These subconstructs include reading preferences, leisure time, film preferences, children's names, cultural respect, cultural familiarity, cultural adherence, food preferences, and cultural pride. The reliability of the HCA questionnaire was estimated through Cronbach alpha formula. The results indicated that the questionnaire was satisfactorily reliable (α = .74).

4. Results

The provided data includes responses from Iranian senior undergraduates (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Russian, and Spanish) regarding their cultural attachment. The responses of Arabic language students to the questionnaire are provided in Figure 2. Participants' responses to the subconstructs provide a clear picture of their perceptions.

Figure 2

The Responses of Arabic Language Students to the HCA Questionnaire

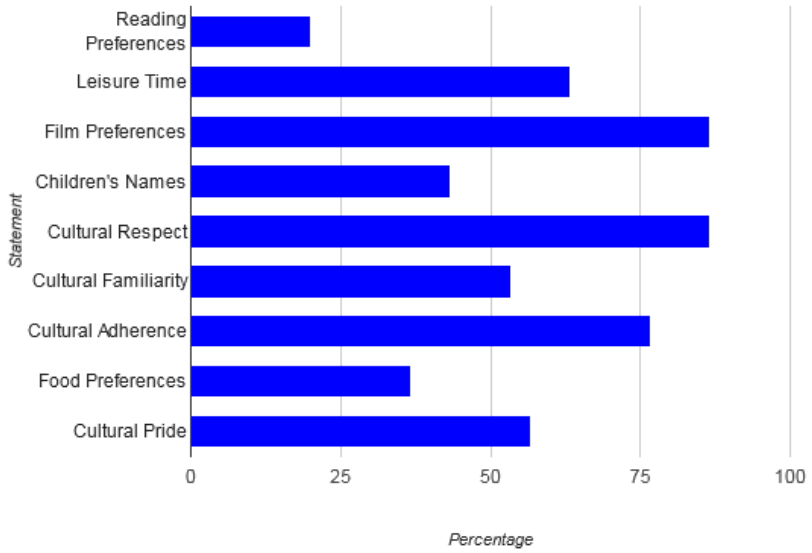


The responses of Arabic language students reveal a balanced perspective towards foreign cultures and their own. While there is some openness to foreign influences, a strong sense of cultural identity and respect for tradition is also evident. The majority of students (40%) show a preference for foreign storybooks, indicating a degree of curiosity and interest in exploring other cultures through literature. This is further supported by the high percentage (46.66%) who dedicate their leisure time to studying foreign languages and cultures. However, while there is openness to foreign media, the preference for undubbed foreign films (33.33%) is not overwhelming, suggesting a certain comfort and appreciation for their own language and cultural expressions. This is further reflected in the responses regarding children's names, where a significant portion (33.33%) still prioritise traditional Iranian names.

Interestingly, respect for Persian culture is clearly emphasised. A large majority (49.99%) strongly agree or agree that it is the duty of foreign language and literature professors to acknowledge and respect the cultural heritage of their students. Additionally, a substantial number (60%) strongly agree or agree that adhering to Iranian customs and traditions is important. The responses of Chinese language students to the questionnaire are provided in the same way in Figure 3.

Figure 3

The Responses of Chinese Language Students to the HCA Questionnaire



Over half express interest in foreign literature, and a remarkable 63.3% dedicate their leisure time to studying foreign languages and cultures. This highlights a strong drive for cultural exploration and engagement. This is further emphasised by the overwhelming preference for undubbed foreign films (nearly 90%), demonstrating a strong desire for immersion in foreign languages and cultural expressions.

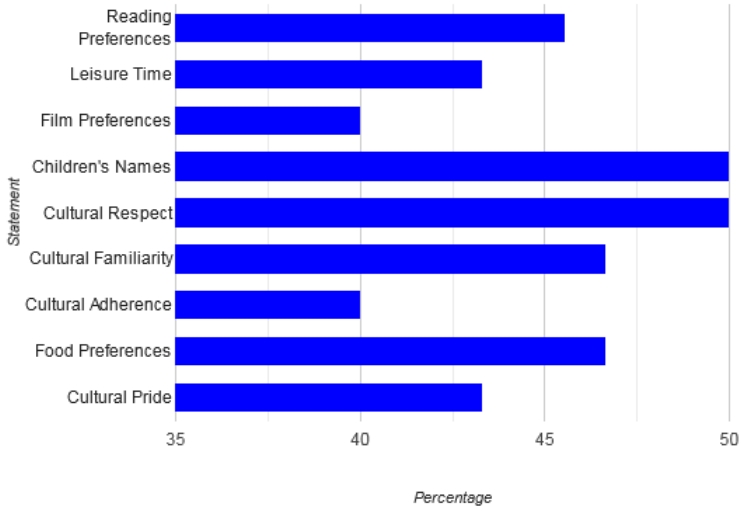
However, cultural respect is also highly emphasised. An overwhelming majority (over 85%) believe it's crucial for foreign language and literature professors to respect the mother tongue and culture of students. This demonstrates a strong sense of cultural sensitivity and awareness. Over half acknowledge the importance of familiarity with the Persian language, culture, and beliefs for language learners, suggesting a recognition of the value of cultural understanding in language learning.

While a significant portion prefers foreign names for their children, a substantial number still prioritises traditional Iranian names, indicating a balance between openness and cultural identity. The majority (over 75%) either strongly agree or agree that they adhere to Iranian customs and traditions, while a notable percentage (36.7%) finds foreign foods more appealing than traditional Iranian foods. These responses suggest a respect for and connection to their own culture while also acknowledging the appeal of foreign influences.

Overall, Chinese language students navigate a space of cultural engagement and respect. They demonstrate a strong desire for foreign cultural immersion and exploration while also maintaining a sense of cultural identity and valuing the importance of cultural sensitivity. The responses of English language students to the questionnaire are provided in Figure 4.

Figure 4

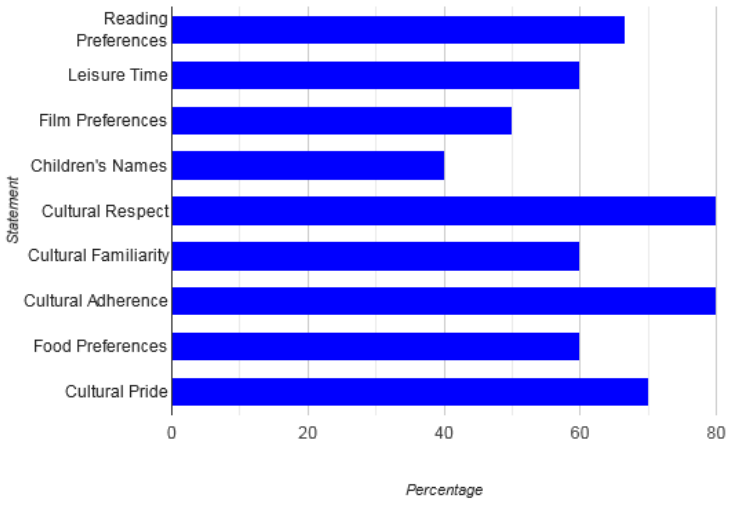
The Responses of English Language Students to the HCA Questionnaire



A majority (45.55%) prefer reading foreign storybooks, and nearly half (43.33%) dedicate their leisure time to studying foreign languages and cultures, indicating a significant interest in cultural exploration. However, the almost equal split regarding film preferences (40% each for undubbed foreign and dubbed Persian films) suggests a comfort with their own language and cultural expressions. This is further reflected in the equal preference for foreign and traditional Iranian names for children (50% each). Interestingly, respect for Persian culture is not a unanimous sentiment. While half the students agree it's the duty of professors to respect their cultural heritage, the other half disagrees. Similarly, there's a near-even split regarding adherence to Iranian customs and traditions (40% each agree and disagree). English language students navigate a space of cultural awareness and appreciation. They demonstrate a healthy balance between engaging with foreign cultures and maintaining a strong sense of their own cultural identity and values. The responses of French language students to the questionnaire are shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5

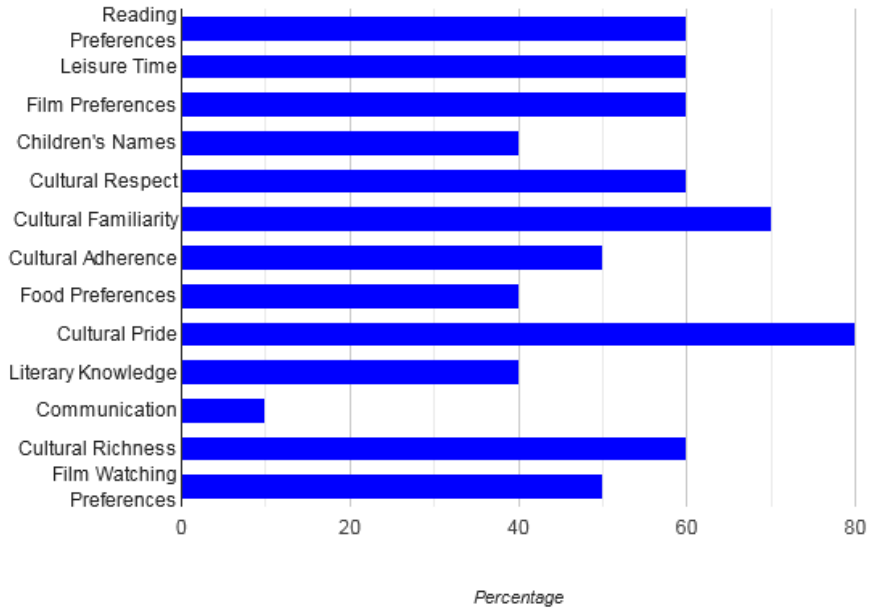
The Responses of French Language Students to the HCA Questionnaire



French language students exhibit a blend of openness to foreign cultures and respect for their own heritage. A strong majority (66.67%) strongly prefer foreign storybooks, and 60% agree with spending their leisure time studying foreign languages and cultures, indicating a significant interest in cultural exploration and language learning. However, the even split regarding film preferences (50% each for undubbed and dubbed) suggests a comfort with their own language and cultural expressions. The respect for Persian culture is not unanimous. While most students agree it's important for professors to respect their cultural heritage (80% combined), there's a near-even split regarding adherence to Iranian customs and traditions (40% each agree and disagree). French language students navigate a space of cultural awareness and appreciation. The responses from German language students to the questionnaire are presented in the following graph.

Figure 6

The Responses of German Language Students to the HCA Questionnaire

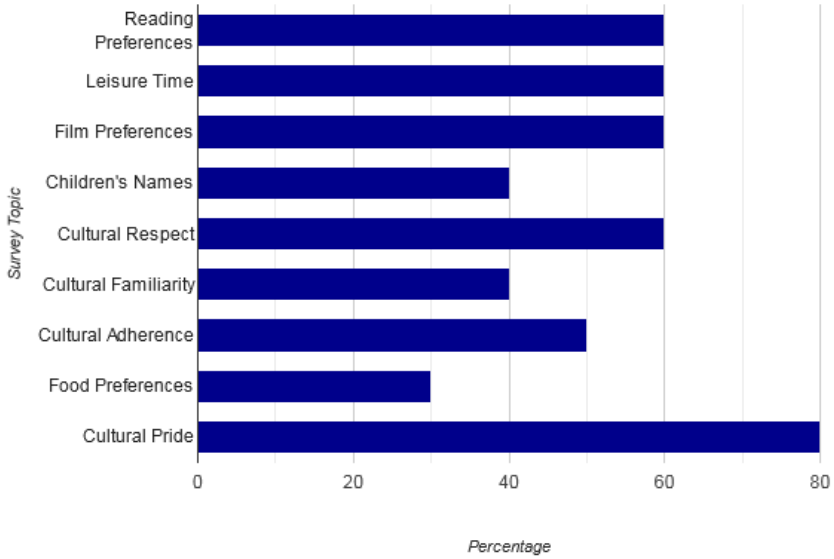


The survey results reveal a fascinating balance between cultural preservation and openness among German language learners. While a strong majority (80%) acknowledge the significance of Nowruz, a traditional Iranian celebration, and 60% disagree with prioritising foreign stories or food over Iranian ones, there's also a clear interest in foreign cultures. This is evident in the 60% who agree with spending leisure time on foreign language and cultural studies, the preference for watching foreign films in their original language (60%), and the near-unanimous belief (90%) that understanding foreign lifestyles is crucial for communication. It seems these students are interested in expanding their horizons without losing sight of their own cultural roots. Interestingly, the data shows a split on children's names (40% preferring foreign names) and film preference (50% for foreign films), suggesting some individual variation in the degree of cultural openness. Overall, the survey paints a picture of German language learners who are both proud of their heritage and eager to engage with the wider world. The responses of Italian language students to the questionnaire are shown in Figure 7.

The survey results for Italian language learners paint a picture of a group that values both their heritage and exposure to foreign cultures. A strong majority (80%) takes pride in Nowruz, a traditional Iranian celebration. Additionally, 60% prioritise films in their original language and disagree with favouring foreign stories over Iranian ones (60% disagree). This indicates a desire to engage with foreign cultures on their own terms. However, there's also a sense of neutrality towards actively studying foreign languages and cultures in their free time (60% neutral).

Figure 7

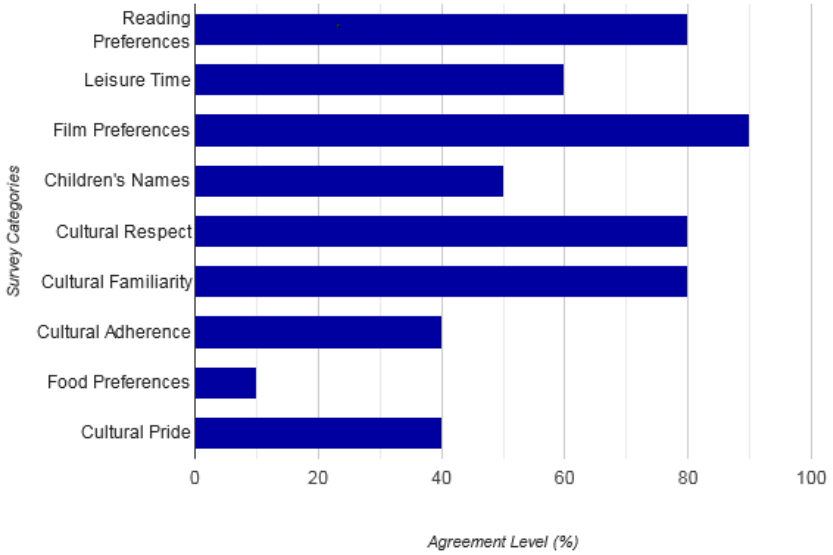
The Responses of Italian Language Students to the HCA Questionnaire



When it comes to identity, there's a split: half the students (50%) identify with Iranian customs, while 40% lean towards foreign names for their children. Interestingly, opinions are divided on the importance of understanding Persian culture for language learners (40% agree, 30% disagree). Overall, these Italian language learners seem interested in foreign cultures without neglecting their own roots. The responses from Japanese language students to the questionnaire are presented in the following graph.

Figure 8

The Responses of Japanese Language Students to the HCA Questionnaire

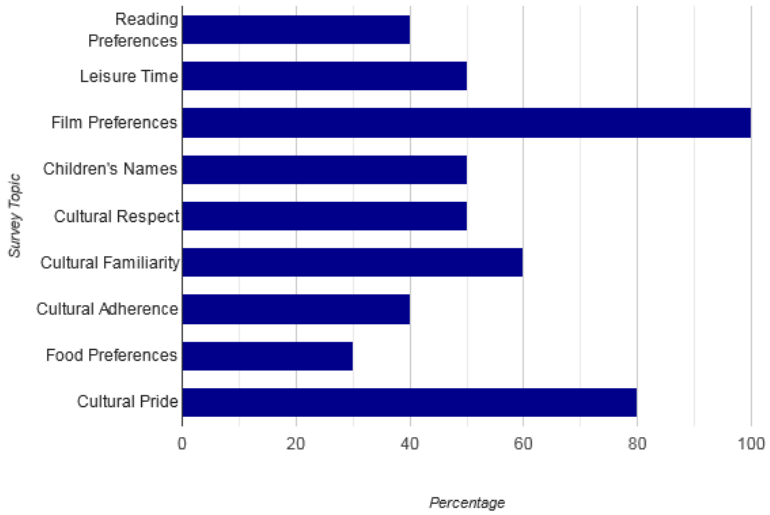


A large majority (80%) of students demonstrate a preference for foreign elements in various aspects of their lives. This is evident in their interest in reading foreign storybooks (80%), spending leisure time studying foreign languages (60%), and watching undubbed foreign films (90%). However, there's also a portion of students (around 10-20%) who disagree with these preferences, suggesting some diversity in viewpoints. Regarding cultural identity, a significant number of students (80%) believe that foreign language professors should respect their native tongue and culture. Similarly, most students (80%) find familiarity with the Persian language and culture essential for foreign language learners. While 40% of students agree with adhering to Iranian customs and traditions, a substantial group (60%) remains

neutral or disagrees. This suggests a more nuanced view of cultural practices compared to the strong preference for foreign elements in other areas. While 30% of students disagree and another 30% are neutral about Nowruz being a major global ceremony, 40% agree. This indicates that students might take pride in their national identity (40% agree on Nowruz's importance) but have varying opinions on specific cultural practices (adherence to traditions shows a higher percentage of neutral or disagreeing students). The responses of Russian language students to the questionnaire are depicted in Figure 9.

Figure 9

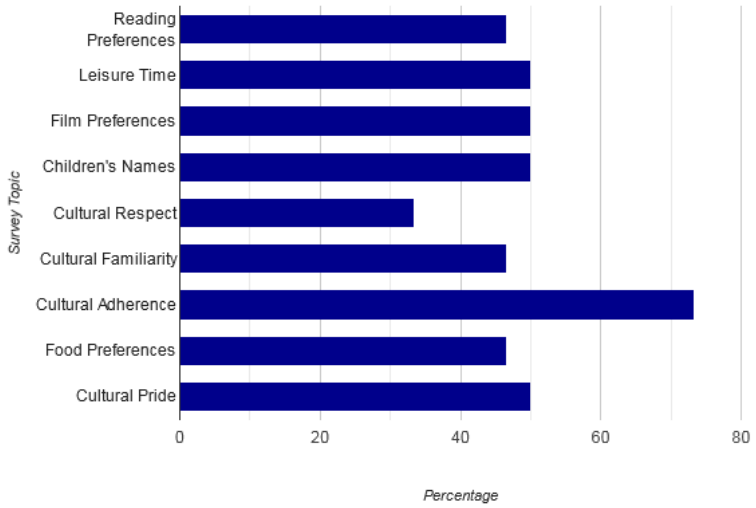
The Responses of Russian Language Students to the HCA Questionnaire



The survey results for Russian language learners reveal a mix of cultural openness and a sense of cultural identity. On the one hand, a significant majority (80%) recognises the importance of Nowruz, a traditional Iranian celebration. Additionally, 100% of students prefer foreign films in their original language, and 40% favour foreign stories over Iranian ones. This suggests a strong interest in engaging with foreign cultures. However, there's a split on cultural adherence, with 60% disagreeing they strictly follow Iranian customs. Interestingly, opinions are divided regarding the importance of understanding Persian culture for language learning (60% agree, 20% disagree), and half the students (50%) are unsure about the role of professors in respecting their heritage. Overall, these Russian language learners seem curious about foreign cultures while maintaining a connection to their own roots. The responses of Spanish language students to the questionnaire are shown in Figure 10.

Figure 10

The Responses of Spanish Language Students to the HCA Questionnaire



The results for Spanish language learners show a complex interplay between cultural curiosity and a strong sense of Iranian identity. A significant majority (73.33%) strongly adheres to Iranian customs and traditions, and an overwhelming majority (86.67%, combining those who strongly agree and agree) recognises the importance of Nowruz. There's also a neutral stance towards actively studying foreign cultures (50% agree, 26.67% disagree) and a similar split regarding film preferences (50% prefer foreign films, 33.33% are neutral). Interestingly, opinions are divided on the role of professors respecting heritage (33.33% agree, 50% disagree), and nearly half the students (46.67%) prefer foreign stories and find foreign food more appealing (46.67% agree). Overall, Spanish language learners seem interested in exploring foreign cultures to some extent, but their focus remains firmly rooted in their Iranian heritage.

In order to answer the research question seeking to find whether there is any significant difference among Iranian foreign language learners (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Russian, and Spanish) in terms of their HCA, one-way ANOVA was performed. First, the mean, standard deviation, and normality scores of the participants are provided in Table 2.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics and Normality Tests of Iranian Foreign Language Learners' Performance on HCA

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test										
		Arabic	Chinese	English	French	German	Italian	Japanese	Russian	Spanish
N		30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
Normal Parameters[a,b]	Mean	74.29	81.08	72.64	78.23	73.81	76.44	77.33	79.51	75.63
	Std. Deviation	19.30	15.44	8.52	12.33	15.28	14.54	16.66	13.48	14.97
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.11	.10	.23	.17	.15	.19	.18	.16	.17
	Positive	.09	.10	.09	.12	.10	.14	.11	.13	.12
	Negative	-.11	-.08	-.23	-.13	-.11	-.15	-.14	-.12	-.13
Test Statistic		.11	.10	.23	.17	.15	.19	.18	.16	.17
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.102[c]	.116[c]	.130[c]	.108[c]	.106[c]	.100[c]	.111[c]	.116[c]	.101[c]
a. Test distribution is Normal.										
b. Calculated from data.										
c. Lilliefors Significance Correction.										

The results showed that the distribution of scores is normal. The results of one-way ANOVA are shown in Table 3.

Table 3

One-way ANOVA among the Performance of Different Languages on HCA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	135.4857	7	22.581	0.0334	0.999
Within Groups	18894.4001	263	674.8		
Total	19029.8858	270	559.7025		

The results showed that there is no significant difference ($F = .03$, $p > .05$) among the participants in terms of their HCA.

5. Discussion

The responses by the participants reflect a diverse range of attitudes towards foreign languages and cultures. This study aimed to investigate whether there are significant differences in Home Culture Attachment (HCA) among Iranian senior undergraduates studying various foreign languages (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Russian, and Spanish). The distributed questionnaire addressed various aspects of cultural attachment, language preferences, and attitudes toward Iranian and foreign cultures.

The data indicates a general openness to foreign languages and cultures, with participants expressing a preference for engaging with foreign languages and cultures in their leisure time. Many participants agreed with statements promoting the benefits of foreign language learning, such as preferring foreign books and films to their dubbed counterparts.

However, the data also suggests a nuanced approach to acculturation. While participants showed interest in foreign languages, they expressed reluctance to adopt foreign names for their children. This indicates a desire to preserve aspects of Iranian culture while embracing the enriching qualities of foreign languages. This complex interplay between cultural identity, national pride, and openness to foreign influences reflects the students' multifaceted attitudes toward cultural integration.

In line with Ferreira and Neto's (2018) research, our study acknowledges the influence of social interaction on HCA. However, our findings highlight the role of cultural practices and traditions shared with friends and peers, emphasising the broader social context in shaping HCA beyond immediate family ties.

The findings of the present study support those of Ebrahimi and Hosseini (2023) in highlighting the complexity of cultural identity and acculturation among Iranian students engaged with foreign languages. The results demonstrate participants' openness to foreign cultures and languages while expressing a desire to maintain aspects of their heritage. This is evident in the current study's findings regarding a preference for foreign language learning but a reluctance to adopt foreign names for children. Similarly, Ebrahimi and Hosseini (2023) suggest that Iranian diaspora communities might utilise foreign language learning to connect with ancestral roots while integrating into new societies.

This research aligns with Shahsavandi et al. (2013) in emphasising the importance of HCA for foreign language learners in Iran. While Shahsavandi et al (2013) focused on developing a tool to measure HCA, the current study underscores its significance by demonstrating how a student's connection to their home culture shapes their experiences with foreign languages. However, the current study investigates the multifaceted nature of HCA among Iranian language learners, rather than developing or validating a specific measurement tool, as in the work of Pishghadam et al (2013).

Regarding the non-significant difference in HCA among Iranian students studying various foreign languages, it can be stated that Iranian educational systems likely emphasise similar values and approaches to language learning across all foreign language programmes. This could lead to a certain degree of homogenisation in students' attitudes toward their home culture, regardless of the specific target language. For example, a focus on cultural competency might be instilled across all programmes, fostering respect for both Iranian and foreign cultures.

The HCA findings underscore the importance of an integrated approach to language learning that goes beyond grammar drills to include cultural content. Incorporating films, music, literature, and guest speakers from diverse backgrounds can enrich the learning experience, fostering a deeper understanding of social, political, and historical contexts. Balancing exposure to foreign cultures with reinforcement of Iranian cultural identity can help students develop a sense of belonging while engaging with the global community.

Future studies should focus on qualitative research to delve deeper into specific aspects of cultural integration in language learning, exploring preferred materials, topics, and potential anxieties. Additionally, investigating the motivations behind students' desires for travel and cultural immersion can provide insights into preferred experiences and benefits sought. Examining the impact of pre-existing cultural attitudes on receptivity to different cultural integration approaches may further enhance the effectiveness of language education in Iran.

Disclosure Statement

The authors claim no conflict of interest.

Funding

The research did not receive any specific grants from funding agencies.

References

Ahmadi, S. (2021). The influence of French culture on Iranian learners' motivation to learn French. *Journal of Language and Cultural Education*, *9*(1), 107-121.

Azadpour, M., & Alizadeh, A. (2022). The role of language heritage in shaping Iranian-American students' cultural identity. *International Journal of Intercultural Education*, *23*(1), 1-15.

Craig, C. S., & Douglas, S. P. (2006). Beyond national culture: Implications of cultural dynamics for consumer research. *International Marketing Review*, *23*, 322–342.

Dahmardeh, M., & Sung Do, K. (2020). Cultural competence: Interculture, transculture, and metaculture. *EPISTEME*, *23*, 155-179. https://doi.org/10.38119/cacs.2020.23.7

Ebrahimi, M., & Hosseini, S. A. (2023). Language, home, and belonging: Exploring the lived experiences of Iranian women in the UK. *International Journal of Multilingualism & Intercultural Communication*, *26*(1), 35-51.

Ferreira, M. B., & Neto, J. A. (2018). Family influences on cultural identity and attachment: A quantitative study with students of a language and culture course. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, *70*, 87-98.

Gholami, S., Rahimi, A., & Amiri, M. (2023). Investigating the motivational factors of Iranian learners of Arabic as a foreign language. *International Journal of Language and Linguistics*, *10*(1), 30-45.

Hajir, A., & Mohammadi, H. (2020). Farsi language learning in diaspora communities: A case study of Iranian students in the United Kingdom. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, *11*(6), 1307-1319.

Hashemi, H., & Pourmohammadi, S. (2020). Cultural aspects of learning Chinese language among Iranian learners: A case study of Tehran University of Foreign Languages. *Chinese Studies*, *8*(2), 182-190.

Hauge, H., Kvalem, I. L., Berget, B., Enders-Slegers, M. J., & Braastad, B. O. (2014). Equine-assisted activities and the impact on perceived social support, self-esteem and self-efficacy among adolescents – an intervention study. *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth*, *19*(1), 1–21. https://doi.org/10.1080/02673843.2013.779587

Khalili, M., & Farhadi, N. (2020). Iranian learners' perceptions of Spanish language and culture: A case study. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, *11*(4), 987-1002.

Lewicka, M. (2011). Place attachment: Linking descriptions to prescriptions. *Landscape Research*, *36*(2), 149-165.

Mehdipour, M., & Safar, M. (2022). The challenges and experiences of Iranian learners of Western languages: A case study of English and French learners. *Journal of Language and Intercultural Communication*, *22*(2), 160-175.

Mehdizadeh, P. (2022). The interplay of cultural identity, foreign language learning, and resistance: A case study of Iranian learners of English. *Journal of Language and Intercultural Communication*, *22*(2), 183-202.

Mohammadi, A. (2019). Language learning and cultural identity: A case study of Iranian students learning Arabic. *International Journal of Language Studies*, *12*(2), 123-135.

Phinney, J. S., & Ong, A. D. (2007). Conceptualization and measurement of ethnic identity: Current status and future directions. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, *54*(3), 271–281. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0167.54.3.271

Pishghadam, R., Hashemi, S. M., & Bazri, S. (2012). Exploring the underlying factors of the home culture attachment scale (HCAS) using structural equation modeling (SEM) analysis. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *49*, 304-309.

Pourhosseini, M., & Sholeh, M. (2018). Language learning as cultural resistance: A case study of Kurdish language learners in Iran. *Iranian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, *18*(1), 1-20.

Rafati, S., & Shojaei, M. (2023). The impact of globalization on re-imagining home culture: A case study of Iranian migrants in Australia. *Journal of Intercultural Communication*, *26*(1), 45-60.

Senel, H. S. (2020). The effect of intercultural communication training on the intercultural competence of Iranian EFL learners. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, *11*(6), 1232-1242.

Shafihi, N., Ghanbari, F., & Kiani, A. (2016). Culture and its role in the public diplomacy. *Intercultural Studies Quarterly*, *11*(29), 175-195.

Shahsavandi, S., Ghonsooly, B., & Kamyabi Gol, A. (2010). Designing and validating home culture attachment questionnaire for students of foreign languages and its application. *Studies in Applied Linguistics*, *1*(1), 49-76.

Tavakoli, M., & Farahani, M. R. (2017). The role of cultural identity in Iranian EFL learners' code-switching behavior. *Iranian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, *17*(4), 1-22.

Williams, D. R., & Vaske, J. J. (2003). The 'most special place' on earth: How attachment to geography brings meaning to life. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, *23*(1), 89-102.

Wu, Y., & Yao, S. (2016). The significance of sentimental objects and symbols in strengthening individuals' attachment to their cultural heritage. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, *48*, 194-202.

Appendix A

The HCA Questionnaire

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. I prefer reading foreign storybooks to Persian storybooks.					
2. I spend my leisure time studying foreign languages and cultures.					
3. I prefer undubbed foreign films to dubbed Persian films.					
4. I prefer my children's names, if married, to be foreign rather than authentic Iranian names.					
5. It is the duty of foreign language and literature professors to respect the mother tongue and culture of students.					
6. For students of foreign languages, familiarity with the language, culture, and beliefs of Persian speakers is essential.					
7. I adhere to Iranian customs and traditions.					
8. I find most foreign foods more delicious than traditional Iranian foods.					
9. Nowruz is one of the largest traditional national ceremonies in the world.					
10. I know Iranian writers better than foreign writers.					
11. Familiarity with the lifestyle, beliefs, and attitudes of foreigners is not necessary to communicate in a foreign language.					
12. Iranian culture is richer than foreign culture.					
13. I prefer to watch foreign films more than Iranian films.					
14. I enjoy hearing Iranian local accents more than foreign local accents.					
15. Authentic Iranian music is the best type of music.					
16. Foreign literary works should be presented to students without censorship and while preserving their cultural content.					
17. I can use Persian literary expressions well.					
18. Most foreign films are more content-rich than Iranian films.					
19. The number of units for teaching foreign languages should be more than the number of units for foreign literature.					
20. I consider visiting religious sites necessary.					
21. I am proud that Persepolis is located in Iran.					

22. Learning foreign culture is an opportunity for the enrichment of the Persian language.
23. I consider using uncensored original films essential in teaching foreign languages.
24. I love Iranian local clothing.
25. Foreign languages are more beautiful and sweet than the Persian language.
26. Foreign culture is richer than Iranian culture.
27. Iranian films are more educational than foreign films.
28. I prefer buying from stores with foreign names.
29. I use a lot of foreign language words in everyday conversations.
30. The style of Iranian architecture is more beautiful than the style of foreign architecture.
31. By learning a foreign language and literature, the culture and values of that language are imposed on the learner.
32. Going to historical places in Iran is always interesting to me.
33. Persian language and literature are in danger of confronting the cultural invasion.
34. I am proud of Iranian poets such as Ferdowsi, Hafez, Nima Yoshij, Saadi, etc.
35. Familiarity with different cultures is essential in the language learning process.
36. In my opinion, language education is separate from culture education.
37. I like holding Iranian-style family parties.
38. Acceptance of social cultural criteria of foreign language and literature is inevitable in the language learning process.
39. Language teaching cannot be completely neutral and the cultural, social, and political issues of the foreign language must be taught.
40. I am interested in traveling to religious (Islamic) places inside Iran and outside Iran.
41. I am interested in traveling to foreign countries.
42. It is more pleasant for me to buy from shops with foreign names.
43. I use foreign language words a lot in everyday conversations.

کدام پاسخ به شکل بهتری بیانگر نظرات شما هست؟	کاملا موافقم	موافقم	بی نظر	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم
۱. خواندن کتابهای داستانی خارجی را به کتابهای داستانی فارسی ترجیح می دهم.					
۲. در اوقات فراغتم به مطالعه در مورد زبانها و فرهنگ های خارجی می پردازم.					
۳. فیلمهای دوبله نشده خارجی را به فیلم های دوبله شده فارسی ترجیح میدهم.					
٤. بیشتر ترجیح می دهم اسامی فرزندانم در صورت تاهل اسامی خارجی باشند تا اسامی اصیل ایرانی.					
٥. از وظایف اساتید زبان و ادبیات خارجی احترام به زبان و فرهنگ مادری دانشجویان است.					

٦. برای دانشجویان زبانهای خارجی، آشنایی با زبان و فرهنگ و اعتقادات فارسی زبانان امری ضروری است.					
٧. به آداب و رسوم ایرانی پایبندم.					
٨. بیشتر غذاهای خارجی خوشمزه تر از غذاهای سنتی ایرانی هستند.					
٩. نوروز یکی از بزرگترین مراسم سنتی ملی در دنیا می باشد.					
١٠. نویسندگان ایرانی را بهتر از نویسندگان خارجی می شناسم.					
١١. برای برقراری ارتباط در زبان خارجی، آشنایی با سبک زندگی، اعتقادات و نگرش خارجی ها لازم نیست.					
١٢. فرهنگ ایرانی غنی تر از فرهنگ خارجی است.					
١٣. بیشتر ترجیح می دهم فیلم های خارجی ببینم تا فیلم های ایرانی.					
١٤. از شنیدن لهجه های محلی ایرانی بیشتر از لهجه های محلی خارجی لذت می برم.					
١٥. موسیقی اصیل ایرانی بهترین نوع موسیقی است.					
١٦. آثار ادبی خارجی باید بدون سانسور و با حفظ محتوای فرهنگی عینا به دانشجویان ارایه شود.					
١٧. از آرایه های ادبی زبان فارسی می توانم به خوبی استفاده کنم.					
١٨. اکثر فیلم های خارجی پرمحتواتر از فیلم های ایرانی هستند.					
١٩. تعداد واحدهای آموزش زبان خارجی می بایست بیشتر از تعداد واحدهای ادبیات خارجی باشد.					
٢٠. رفتن به اماکن مذهبی را ضروری می دانم.					
٢١. افتخار می کنم تخت جمشید در ایران قرار دارد.					
٢٢. فراگیری فرهنگ خارجی برای غنای زبان فارسی یک فرصت است.					
٢٣. استفاده از فیلم های اصلی سانسور نشده را در آموزش زبان خارجی ضرروی می دانم.					
٢٤. لباس های محلی ایرانی را دوست دارم.					
٢٥. زبان خارجی از زبان فارسی زیباتر و شیرین تر است.					
٢٦. فرهنگ خارجی غنی تر از فرهنگ ایرانی است.					
٢٧. فیلم های ایرانی آموزنده تر از فیلم های خارجی هستند.					
٢٨. فرهنگ و تمدن ایرانی یکی از بزرگترین تمدن های دنیا می باشد.					
٢٩. گنجاندن ادبیات ملل دیگر در برنامه درسی گروه زبان خارجی ضروری است.					
٣٠. سبک معماری ایرانی زیباتر از سبک معماری های خارجی می باشد.					
٣١. با فراگیری زبان و ادبیات خارجی، فرهنگ و ارزشهای آن زبان بر زبان آموز تحمیل می شود.					
٣٢. رفتن به مکان های تاریخی ایران همیشه برایم جالب است.					
٣٣. زبان و ادبیات فارسی در مقابله با تهاجم فرهنگی در خطر است.					
٣٤. به شاعران ایرانی همچون فردوسی، حافظ، نیما یوشیج، سعدی و ... افتخار می کنم.					
٣٥. آشنایی با فرهنگ های گوناگون در فرایند زبان آموزی امری ضروری است.					
٣٦. به نظر من آموزش زبان جدای از آموزش فرهنگ است.					
٣٧. برگزاری مهمانی های خانوادگی به سبک ایرانی را می پسندم.					
٣٨. پذیرش معیارهای فرهنگی اجتماعی زبان و ادبیات خارجی در فرایند یادگیری زبان امری اجتناب ناپذیر است.					
٣٩. آموزش زبان نمی تواند امری کاملا خنثی باشد و مسائل فرهنگی، اجتماعی و سیاسی زبان خارجی می بایست تدریس شود.					
٤٠. علاقمند به سفر به اماکن مذهبی (اسلامی) داخل ایران و خارج از ایران هستم.					

٤١.	علاقمند به سفر به کشورهای خارجی هستم.					
٤٢.	خرید از مغازه هایی با اسامی خارجی برایم خوشایند تر است.					
٤٣.	در مکالمات روزمره از کلمات زبان های خارجی بسیار استفاده می کنم.					