

Teaching Dutch as a Foreign Language in Sociology: Insights into Challenges and Best Practices

Alvic A. Arnado^{1*}, Josephine L. Aperloo²

¹*College of Education, Caraga State University, Butuan City, Caraga Region, Mindanao, Philippines.*

E-mail: aaarnado@carsu.edu.ph

²*College of Humanities and Social Sciences, Caraga State University, Butuan City, Caraga Region, Mindanao, Philippines.*

Abstracts: This study aimed to investigate the challenges and best practices in teaching the Dutch language in undergraduate Sociology courses at Caraga State University in the Philippines. The research employed a descriptive correlational research design and gathered data on demographics, motivation, perceptions, effectiveness of teaching methods and strategies, cultural competencies, and critical thinking skills using a survey questionnaire. The results revealed that most participants were female and were motivated to learn Dutch for academic or professional reasons. Although the students had a positive perception of learning Dutch, they faced significant challenges such as limited resources and materials, qualified and trained instructors, limited student interest, and difficulty in learning the language. The study highlights the importance of changes in language policies to promote multilingualism and linguistic diversity, considering learners' linguistic backgrounds and needs in language education, and using practical and effective teaching strategies to facilitate language learning. Future research should investigate the efficacy of different teaching methods and strategies. This study offers valuable insights into the challenges and best practices in teaching foreign languages in undergraduate Sociology courses in the Philippines and can contribute to the development of language education policies and practices.

Keywords: Dutch, Teaching, Challenges, Best practices, Foreign language, Undergraduate.

1. INTRODUCTION

In today's increasingly globalized world, knowledge of foreign languages is becoming more invaluable for individuals and society as a whole (Barber, 2016). Including foreign language education in undergraduate sociology courses can greatly intensify students' understanding of global social issues (Boudreau & Lightfoot, 2017), provide them with new possibilities (Lafford & Plaza, 2017), and equipped them for careers in fields such as international development, diplomacy, and cultural exchange (Lambo, 2020). From a global perspective, there is an increased awareness of the importance of language education in promoting cross-cultural understanding and communication (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013). International organizations such as the United Nations and the European Union place a high value on language proficiency in their recruitment and selection processes (European Union, 2021), recognizing that effective communication is essential for addressing global challenges.

In the Philippine context, the inclusion of foreign language in undergraduate sociology courses is particularly relevant given the country's diverse cultural heritage and its position as a major player in the global economy (Gonzales, 2019). Integrating foreign language learning with sociology can help students infer the complex social dynamics of industries that require cross-cultural communication, such as business process outsourcing and overseas employment (Witte, A. E. 2010).

In recent years, the Philippine government has also recognized the importance of foreign language education in higher education. The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) released a policy memorandum (CHED Memorandum Order (CMO) 20, series of 2013, which states that GEC subjects may be taught in Filipino or English, and the bilingual names of the subjects in all undergraduate programs in the country and highlights the promotion of intercultural competence among graduates. According to Malilay (2019) that the Philippine Supreme Court (Supreme Court rules language subjects are optional in college, n.d.) has upheld the constitutionality of the Commission on Higher Education's (CHED) new General Education Curriculum (GEC), which makes Filipino and English language subjects non-compulsory in college. The controversy surrounding the new GEC arises from the perception that it is anti-Filipino and colonial-minded, but this accusation is unfounded because both Filipino and English now have dedicated subjects in senior high school, and both languages will still be used as a medium of

instruction in college. Instead of imposing a specific number of language units, CHED allows colleges to offer language courses based on their specific needs and exercise their academic freedom.

This approach preserves the academic freedom of HEIs, leads to more responsive curricula, and allows for the inclusion of innovative reforms such as language proficiency courses in other Philippine languages and Asian languages. The reduction of required GEC subjects' benefits students, enabling them to spend less time and money on unrelated subjects, explore different interests, and graduate earlier. HEIs should now take advantage of the opportunity to create their own language programs beyond English and Filipino and offer an array of languages that will expand opportunities for travel, employment, cross-cultural exchange, diplomacy, business, and international education (Malilay, 2019).

Furthermore, by providing them with language abilities that would enable them to communicate successfully with international partners and clients, the policy increases the global competitiveness of Filipino graduates. It also encourages respect for other cultures and languages, which can help create a society that is more inclusive and diverse. This policy recognizes the rising demand for bilingual and multilingual personnel across a range of industries and is consistent with the nation's efforts to establish itself as a significant player in the global economy.

Also, the Philippine Department of Education has put rules into place that give the study of foreign languages a high priority in the K–12 curriculum. The department launched the Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) initiative in 2013, which aims to boost Filipino pupils' literacy abilities by using their mother tongue as the primary language of instruction in the early grades. The program also encourages the study of other languages in higher years and introduces English and Filipino as early as Grade 1.

Notwithstanding these rules, there is still a lack of information in the literature about the precise methods and tactics that can successfully combine sociology and foreign language instruction in the Filipino environment. While there are studies that look at the advantages of language learning in social science fields, there is a need for research that can offer advice on how to design and implement efficient language programs that can take advantage of the opportunities and challenges in the Philippine higher education system. By closing this gap, educators and decision-makers would be better able to decide how to best include foreign language instruction in sociology curricula, thereby raising the standard of instruction for Filipino students.

Thus, conducting a study on the challenges and best practices of teaching Dutch as a foreign language in undergraduate sociology courses at Caraga State University could have various benefits, such as increasing language diversity, meeting student demand, improving teaching quality, and enhancing cultural understanding. By understanding the challenges and best practices, instructors could better support their students' learning and prepare them for an increasingly globalized world. This research study is only the beginning of an envisioned foreign language hub in the Caraga Region.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The purpose of this study was to explore the challenges and best practices in the integration of Dutch language learning in the Language Elective courses of the Sociology Department at Caraga State University in the school year 2022-23. Specifically, this study aimed to address the following research questions:

1. What is the demographic profile of the participants in terms of:

1.1 gender;

1.2 previous language experiences; and

1.3 motivation for learning a foreign language?

2. What are the perceptions of the Language Electives students regarding the integration of Dutch language learning in their courses?
3. What is the level of effectiveness of the teaching methods and strategies used in facilitating Dutch language learning in the Language Elective courses?
4. To what extent do the integration of Dutch language learning in the Electives courses contribute to the students':
 - 4.1 linguistic and cultural competencies;
 - 4.2 intercultural communication skills; and
 - 4.3 critical thinking skills?
5. What are the challenges in integrating Dutch language learning in the Language Electives?

3. METHODS

3.1. Research Design

This study utilized descriptive correlational research design. The research design involved the collection and analysis of numerical data to investigate relationships, patterns, and trends. It typically employed statistical and mathematical methods to measure and analyze data. According to Johnson and Christensen (2014), "descriptive correlational research design is a type of research design that seeks to examine the relationship between two or more variables without making any causal claims or manipulations".

3.2. Local of the Study

Caraga State University Main Campus, located at Ampayon, Butuan City was the target area of study. It was established in 1978 as the Northern Mindanao State Institute of Science and Technology (NORMISIST), and later became a university in 2009, renamed as Caraga State University. It offers various courses in different fields of studies and has a strong commitment and outreach programs, locally and internationally. With its 2 campuses in Caraga Region, the Main Campus in Ampayon in Butuan City and one in Cabadbaran City, it plays a major role in promoting higher education, research, and community development in the Caraga Region and beyond.

3.3. Respondents of the Study

The participants of this study were the Language Elective (Dutch) courses of School Year 2022-23, second semester enrolled students in the Sociology Department of College of Humanities and Social Sciences. From the 191 total number of participants of the enrolled students only 121 students were randomly selected for sampling using the Cochran's Formula. (See table below for the target number of participants in this study).

Table 1. Participants of the Study.

	Section	Number of enrolled students	Sampling
Language Elective 1 (Dutch)	J1	50	32
	K1	48	30
Language Elective 2 (Dutch)	O1	50	32
	M1	43	27
Total		191	121

3.4. Sampling Procedure

Simple random sampling was used to select a representative sample of sociology students from Caraga State University. This sampling technique ensured that every student in the population had an equal chance of being included in the study.

In employing simple random sampling, a list of all sociology students enrolled at Caraga State University was obtained. Each student was assigned a unique identifier. A random number generator was then used to select the desired number of students for the sample. The random numbers were matched with the corresponding identifiers on the list, and the selected students were included in the sample. By employing simple random sampling, the study aimed to minimize bias and ensure the generalizability of the findings. This method is considered fair and unbiased because it provides each student with an equal opportunity to be selected.

3.5. Research Instrument

This research study adapted and modified the questionnaire created by Dr. Gonzales (2006) in his paper *Conceptual and Psychometric Properties of a Foreign Language Learning Motivation Questionnaire*. His study investigated the properties of the instrument that quantifies the second Language (L2) and the foreign language (FL) motivation of Filipino learners. After the conceptualization and operationalization of the instrument, it was later called *Foreign Language Motivation Questionnaire for Filipinos (FLMQ-F)*.

Some test questions in his study were modified to achieve the data for the Statement of the Problem. The major modifications of the questionnaire included the inclusion of Dutch as the Foreign Language and not only Foreign Language in general and the categorizations of the questions according to the conceptual framework of this research study which deviated from the 6 preliminary factors for the FLLMQ-F. Then, the researcher added self-made survey questionnaire to be able to achieve the data needed for the research study.

The survey questionnaire utilized the Likert-type scaling technique and have undergone Reliability test. The items included in the survey questionnaire were subjected to content validation of three (3) experts in Linguistics. The items were revised accordingly, based on the review and comments of the validators. The accepted and incorporated critique from the validators were the inclusion of the short introduction of the study and the Data Privacy Act of 2012 or RA 10173 with the consent of the participants for the survey. All items / indicators were carried in the questionnaire during the validation.

The gathered responses were analyzed using Cronbach's Alpha after the pilot testing. The descriptive characteristics of the data, item-total correlation coefficient using co-efficient alpha, and factor analysis were determined. All items possess at least .40 item-total and none were eliminated. The Cronbach's Alpha gave a result of .983 with a total number of items of 64 without any exclusions of the items.

3.6. Data Gathering Procedure

After the critiquing and review of the survey/ questionnaire by three (3) linguistic experts* from the Humanities Department of the University, modifications, and adjustments were scrutinized for enclosure or rejection to the final survey/ questionnaire material.

It was then administered for pilot testing and subjected to the reliability test. The required permission to conduct the study among the students in the Sociology Department from the Dean of CHaSS and department chairperson of the Sociology Department was granted beforehand and with the approval of the Dean of College of Education to conduct the survey for the study. The pilot testing was done online. The soft copy of the questionnaire was distributed to the students through the group chat created by the researcher in Messenger.

The study utilized a survey questionnaire technique to gather data from participants who were enrolled in the Language Elective courses of the Sociology Department at Caraga State University during the school year 2022-23. Quantitative data were collected through surveys or questionnaires and analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations. For the hypothesis testing, the One-Way ANOVA statistical tool was utilized. Subsequently, the findings from the quantitative data would be integrated to provide a comprehensive understanding of the integration of Dutch language learning in the Language Electives courses of the Sociology Department at Caraga State University.

3.7. Measurement of Variable

The table displays the assigned range, description and interpretation for each item related to knowledge and instructional skills:

Table 2. Scoring and Quantification Table for Availability of Dutch Language Instructors.

Range	Description	Interpretation
4.50 – 5.00	Very much challenging	It is extremely difficult to find qualified Dutch language instructors in my area.
3.50 – 4.49	Much challenging	It is significantly difficult to find qualified Dutch language instructors in my area.
2.50 – 3.49	Challenging	It is somewhat difficult to find qualified Dutch language instructors in my area.
1.50 – 2.49	Less challenging	It is somewhat easy to find qualified Dutch language instructors in my area.
1.00 – 1.49	Not Challenging	It is extremely easy to find qualified Dutch language instructors in my area.

Table 3 displays the responses range, description and interpretation assigned for each item related to the resources and materials in teaching Dutch:

Table 3. Scoring and Quantification Table for Resources and Materials in Teaching Dutch.

Range	Description	Interpretation
4.50 – 5.00	Very much challenging	The lack of resources and materials for learning Dutch has significantly hindered my progress.
3.50 – 4.49	Much challenging	The lack of resources and materials for learning Dutch has somewhat hindered my progress.
2.50 – 3.49	Challenging	The lack of resources and materials for learning Dutch has neither hindered nor helped my progress.
1.50 – 2.49	Less challenging	The lack of resources and materials for learning Dutch has somewhat helped my progress.
1.00 – 1.49	Not Challenging	The abundance of resources and materials for learning Dutch has significantly helped my progress.

Additionally, in Table 4 displays the responses range, description and interpretation assigned for each item related to students' interest in learning Dutch:

Table 4. Scoring and Quantification Table for Students' Interest in Learning Dutch.

Range	Description	Interpretation
4.50 – 5.00	Very much challenging	There is very little interest among students in my community to learn Dutch.
3.50 – 4.49	Much challenging	There is some lack of interest among students in my community to learn Dutch.
2.50 – 3.49	Challenging	The level of interest among students in my community to learn Dutch is neither high nor low.
1.50 – 2.49	Less challenging	There is some interest among students in my community to learn Dutch.
1.00 – 1.49	Not Challenging	There is a significant interest among students in my community to learn Dutch.

3.8. Data Analysis

This study employed descriptive statistics, such as frequency, percentage, and mean, to analyze various aspects of the research. Frequency was used to measure the demographic profile of sociology students at Caraga State University, including their gender, previous language experiences, and motivation for learning a foreign language. Percentage was utilized to express proportions or shares of the whole in relation to these demographic characteristics. Mean was employed to assess the perceptions of Language Electives students regarding the integration of Dutch language learning in their courses, as well as the extent to which this integration contributed to their linguistic and cultural competencies, intercultural communication skills, and critical thinking skills. Descriptive analysis, which involved statistical tools like frequency, mean, and median, was used to analyze and interpret the collected data, enabling the researchers to derive meaningful insights aligned with the research objectives. Furthermore, one-way ANOVA (analysis of variance) was employed to compare means and determine any significant differences in the extent of the integration of Dutch language learning based on gender, specifically regarding its impact on the students' linguistic and cultural competencies, intercultural communication skills, and critical thinking skills.

3.9. Ethical Considerations

Prior to commencing data collection, this study adhered to the ethical guidelines protocol of the university. The respondents were provided with information about the study and given a consent form to sign. To protect the confidentiality and safety of the participants, the researcher had exclusive access to all the surveys and ensured they could not be used in any legal actions against the respondents. These measures were implemented to ensure privacy and maintain ethical considerations that prevent any harm to the personal and academic lives of the respondents.

4. RESULTS

The first objective of the study was dealt with to determine the demographic profile of the participants based on gender, previous language experiences, and motivation for learning a foreign language.

4.1. Demographic Profile of the Participants

The demographic profile of the participants, as displayed in Table V, reveals important insights about the study sample. The gender distribution indicates most female participants (73.55%), with males comprising a smaller

proportion (23.14%) and individuals identifying as "Other" accounting for 3.31%. This gender imbalance could impact the generalizability of the study's findings and calls for cautious interpretation

Table 5. Demographic Profile of the Participants in Terms of Age, Gender, Ethnicity, Socio-Economic Status, and Learning Styles.

Demographic Profile	F	%
Gender		
Male	28	23.14
Female	89	73.55
Other	4	3.31
I have no previous language learning experience	11	9.09
I have some previous language learning experience		
Visaya (Dialect)	81	66.94
Filipino	89	73.55
English	93	76.86
I am fluent in another language	6	4.96
Motivation for Learning Foreign Language		
Personal interest or hobby	37	30.58
Professional development or career advancement	45	37.19
Academic requirement	73	60.33
Other motivation	4	3.31

Regarding language learning experience, a notable finding is that a significant portion of participants (9.09%) reported having no prior language learning experience. On the other hand, most participants possessed some form of language learning background, with a considerable number fluent in Visaya (66.94%), Filipino (73.55%), and English (76.86%). These statistics suggest a prevalence of bilingualism or multilingualism within the study population. The participants' language learning experience can potentially influence their language proficiency and learning strategies, thus warranting consideration in the analysis and implications of the study results.

The second objective was to examine the perceptions of the Language Electives students regarding the integration of Dutch language learning in their courses.

4.2. Perceptions of the Language Electives Students Regarding the Integration of Dutch Language

Table 6 presents the mean distribution of the Language Electives students regarding the integration of Dutch language learning in their courses. The table provides evidence that, the participants have strongly agreed that the Dutch language lessons enhanced the chances of finding a job or work in the Netherlands, Belgium, or other Dutch speaking countries (with the mean of 4.68) and that the Dutch language lessons enhanced cultural awareness and understanding (with the mean of 4.58).

Table 6. Mean Distribution of the Perceptions of the Language Electives Students Regarding the Integration of Dutch Language Learning in Their Courses.

Indicators	Mean	Description
1. The integration of Dutch language learning in the Language Elective courses is important.	4.06	Agree
2. The Dutch language lessons are relevant to the course objectives.	4.12	Agree
3. The Dutch language lessons are well-organized.	4.44	Agree
4. The Dutch language lessons are engaging and interesting.	4.41	Agree
5. The Dutch language lessons are effective in improving language proficiency.	4.31	Agree
6. The Dutch language lessons are taught at an appropriate level of difficulty.	4.07	Agree
7. The Dutch language lessons are applicable to real-life situations.	4.00	Agree
8. The Dutch language lessons enhance cultural awareness and understanding.	4.58	Strongly agree
9. The Dutch language lessons provide opportunities for interaction and collaboration among students.	4.34	Agree
10. The Dutch language lessons enhance the chances of finding a job or work in the Netherlands, Belgium or other Dutch speaking countries.	4.68	Strongly agree
Overall Mean	4.30	Agree

However, participants agreed on the statement that the Dutch language lessons are applicable to real-life situations. The indicators that the participants agreed to: The integration of Dutch language learning in the language elective courses is important, and: The Dutch language lessons are applicable to real-life situations gathered the lowest means (4.06 and 4.00, respectively). Overall, the participants agreed (with the overall mean of 4.30) on the integration of Dutch language learning in their courses.

The findings indicate that integrating Dutch language learning in Language Electives courses is perceived positively by students. The participants strongly agreed that learning Dutch can enhance their chances of finding a job or work in Dutch-speaking countries, indicating that there is a practical motivation for learning Dutch. Additionally, the participants agreed that learning Dutch can enhance cultural awareness and understanding, indicating that there is a broader societal benefit to learning Dutch.

However, the participants only agreed (not strongly agreed) that the Dutch language lessons are applicable to real-life situations. This finding may indicate that there is room for improvement in the way Dutch language is taught in Language Electives courses to better prepare students for real-life communication situations.

The high mean score (4.30) indicates that the integration of Dutch language learning in Language Electives courses is positively perceived by students. These findings are consistent with previous research that has shown the benefits of integrating language learning with cultural knowledge and practical skills (Anderson & Kim, 2018; Carrió-Pastor, 2019).

The third objective was assess the level of effectiveness of the teaching methods and strategies used in facilitating Dutch language learning in the Language Elective courses.

4.3. Level of Effectiveness of the Teaching Methods and Strategies Used in Facilitating Dutch Language

Table 7 presents the level of effectiveness of the teaching methods and strategies used in facilitating Dutch language learning in the Language Elective courses. Based on the information in the table, the participants highly rated and strongly agreed that the teacher effectively uses various materials and resources to supplement the lessons (such as videos, websites, online courses, etc.) with the mean of 4.71. However, they agreed with the mean of 4.09 that the integration of Dutch language learning in the Language Elective courses is important. It is remarkable too that the participants agreed (with the lowest mean of 4.09) that the integration of the Dutch language learning in the Elective courses is important. Overall, the participants agreed with mean of 4.51 that the level of effectiveness of the teaching methods and strategies used in facilitating Dutch language learning in the Language Elective courses is highly effective.

Based on the findings presented in Table VII, it can be inferred that the use of various materials and resources to supplement Dutch language learning in Language Elective courses is highly effective. This suggests that teachers should continue to incorporate a variety of resources and materials to enhance language learning outcomes. Moreover, the agreement with the importance of integrating Dutch language learning in the Language Elective courses (mean of 4.09) highlights the significance of language education as an essential component of the curriculum. This finding supports the idea that language education should not be viewed as a separate subject but rather as an integral part of the curriculum.

The overall agreement of the participants with the mean of 4.51 that the level of effectiveness of the teaching methods and strategies used in facilitating Dutch language learning in the Language Elective courses is effective suggests that the implemented teaching methods and strategies are successful in achieving the desired outcomes.

Table 7. Mean Distribution of the Level of Effectiveness of The Teaching Methods And Strategies Used In Facilitating Dutch Language Learning In The Language Elective Courses.

Indicators	Mean	Description
1. The integration of Dutch language learning in the Language Elective courses is important.	4.09	Agree
2. The teaching methods and strategies used in the Dutch language lessons are effective in facilitating language learning.	4.40	Agree
3. The teacher effectively uses various materials and resources to supplement the lessons (such as videos, websites, online courses, etc.)	4.71	Strongly Agree
4. The teacher uses a variety of teaching strategies that cater to different learning styles.	4.64	Strongly Agree
5. The teacher provides timely and constructive feedback on language proficiency.	4.50	Strongly Agree
6. The teacher encourages active participation and collaboration among students.	4.69	Strongly Agree
7. The teacher creates a supportive and conducive learning environment.	4.64	Strongly Agree
8. The teacher encourages self-reflection and self-assessment to promote learning.	4.50	Strongly Agree
9. The teaching methods and strategies used in the Dutch language lessons are innovative and up to date.	4.37	Agree
10. The teacher effectively manages classroom dynamics and behavior.	4.58	Strongly Agree
Overall Mean	4.51	Strongly Agree

This finding is consistent with the literature that highlights the importance of using effective teaching strategies to facilitate language learning (e.g., Gao, 2021; Loewen, 2018; Yuan, 2019).

4.4. Contribution of Dutch Language Learning to Students' Skills: Linguistic and Cultural Competencies

The findings presented in Table 8 show the average impact of Dutch language learning on students' skills, linguistic and cultural competencies. The results demonstrate that integrating Dutch language learning has significantly enhanced students' ability to appreciate and respect cultural differences, as evidenced by the high mean score of 4.58, indicating strong agreement among the participants. However, the indicator measuring enjoyment of browsing Dutch language webpages on the internet received a mean score of 3.53, indicating agreement among the participants.

The implications of these findings indicate that incorporating Dutch language learning into the curriculum can positively impact students' cultural awareness and appreciation. This is in line with previous research that highlights the importance of language learning in developing intercultural competence and sensitivity (Byram & Grundy, 2018; Kramsch, 2018).

Furthermore, the findings that students did not necessarily enjoy browsing Dutch language webpages on the internet highlights the need to consider the motivational aspects of language learning. Research has shown that motivation plays a crucial role in language learning success (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2019), and teachers should aim to foster students' intrinsic motivation by creating engaging and relevant language learning activities.

These findings support the inclusion of Dutch language learning in the curriculum to develop students' linguistic and cultural competencies, but also emphasize the importance of considering students' motivation and engagement in the learning process.

The fourth objective was to evaluate the extent to which the integration of Dutch language learning in the Electives courses contributes to the students' linguistic and cultural competencies, intercultural communication skills, and critical thinking skills.

Table 8. Mean Distribution of the Contribution of Dutch Language Learning to Students' Skills: Linguistic and Cultural Competencies.

Indicators	Mean	Description
1. The integration of Dutch language learning has increased my vocabulary and grammar proficiency in the Dutch language.	4.10	Agree
2. The integration of Dutch language learning has improved my understanding of the Dutch culture and customs.	4.33	Agree
3. The integration of Dutch language learning has enhanced my ability to communicate effectively with Dutch speakers.	3.64	Agree
4. The integration of Dutch language learning has broadened my knowledge and understanding of other cultures.	4.33	Agree
5. The integration of Dutch language learning has improved my ability to appreciate and respect cultural differences.	4.58	Strongly agree
6. Studying a FL (Dutch) gives me better opportunities after graduation.	3.98	Agree
7. I am learning FL (Dutch) to be able to work abroad.	3.70	Agree
8. I enjoy browsing the homepages that deal with FL (Dutch) in the internet.	3.53	Agree
9. I want to learn FL (Dutch) because it is useful when I travel abroad.	4.12	Agree
10. I believe that if I can speak FL (Dutch), it is easier for me to relate with foreigners.	4.07	Agree
Overall Mean	4.04	Agree

4.5. Contribution of Dutch Language Learning to Students' Intercultural Communication Skills

Table 9 displays the mean distribution of the impact of Dutch language learning on students' intercultural communication skills is presented. Based on the table, it is evident that integrating Dutch language learning has helped the participants in understanding and appreciating diverse cultures, with a mean score of 4.46, indicating agreement. However, the participants agreed the least on the indicator that Dutch language learning has increased their confidence in interacting with people from different cultures, with a mean score of 3.69. The overall weighted mean of 4.10 indicates that the participants agreed that Dutch language learning has contributed to their intercultural communication skills.

Table 9. Mean Distribution of the Contribution of Dutch Language Learning to Students' Intercultural Communication Skills.

INDICATORS	Mean	Description
1. The integration of Dutch language learning has helped me understand and appreciate different cultures.	4.46	Agree
2. The Dutch language lessons have improved my ability to communicate with people from different cultural backgrounds.	3.98	Agree
3. The Dutch language lessons have enhanced my awareness of intercultural communication barriers and how to overcome them.	4.23	Agree
4. The integration of Dutch language learning has increased my confidence in interacting with people from different cultures.	3.69	Agree
5. The Dutch language lessons have provided me with opportunities to practice and apply intercultural communication skills in real-life situations.	4.01	Agree
6. The Dutch language lessons have sparked a deeper interest in me to learn about foreign cultures.	4.17	Agree
7. FL (Dutch) will prepare me to be with foreigners.	3.92	Agree
8. I feel great when I am able to speak to foreigners using their own language	4.21	Agree
9. The Dutch language lessons have made me appreciate foreign language more.	4.30	Agree
10. I am fascinated when I hear a foreigner speaking a FL.	4.07	Agree
Overall Mean	4.10	Agree

The findings suggest that integrating Dutch language learning into education can have a positive impact on students' intercultural communication skills. This is consistent with previous research that has demonstrated the importance of language learning in promoting intercultural understanding and communication (Deardorff, 2006; Kramsch, 2014).

Moreover, the finding that Dutch language learning has helped participants in understanding and appreciating diverse cultures aligns with the idea of intercultural competence, which emphasizes the importance of developing

attitudes, knowledge, and skills that enable individuals to interact effectively and appropriately with people from different cultures (Byram & Zarate, 1994; Deardorff, 2006).

However, the finding that the participants agreed the least on the indicator of increased confidence in interacting with people from different cultures suggests that language learning alone may not be sufficient in promoting intercultural competence, and that additional strategies and training may be needed to develop students' confidence and ability to interact effectively with people from diverse backgrounds. These implications are consistent with previous research that has emphasized the need for a comprehensive approach to intercultural competence development that includes language learning, cultural education, and intercultural training (Deardorff, 2006; Fantini, 2015).

4.6. Contribution of Dutch Language Learning to Students' Critical Thinking Skills

In Table 10, the average impact of learning the Dutch language on students' critical thinking skills is presented. The results indicate that while the participants find learning a foreign language (Dutch) challenging, they still enjoy it with a mean score of 4.26. However, they were relatively neutral towards the statement "I enjoy learning a foreign language (Dutch) because I am good at it," with a mean score of 3.09.

Learning Dutch has a positive impact on students' critical thinking skills, as indicated by the average impact score. This is in line with previous research that has found a positive relationship between second language learning and cognitive abilities, including critical thinking (e.g., Bialystok, 2017; Mårtensson et al. 2012). It is also noteworthy that the participants found learning Dutch challenging but still they enjoyed it, indicating that the learning experience was likely engaging and stimulating. It is likely that the activities were keeping the students' constant in the creativity mode and/ or keeping them mentally active during classes. However, the relatively neutral response towards the statement about enjoying learning a foreign language because of proficiency suggests that students may not necessarily view language learning as solely a performance-based activity.

These findings highlight the potential benefits of foreign language learning for cognitive development and suggest that learners' attitudes towards language learning are complex and multifaceted.

Table 10. Mean Distribution of the Contribution of Dutch Language Learning to Students' Critical Thinking Skills.

Indicators	Mean	Description
1. In my experience, learning Dutch has helped me develop critical thinking skills by exposing me to new perspectives and ways of communicating ideas.	4.21	Agree
2. I believe that studying Dutch has strengthened my analytical abilities, as I have had to think critically about grammar and syntax in order to effectively communicate in the language.	4.07	Agree
3. Through Dutch language learning, I have been challenged to think creatively and find innovative solutions to language barriers, which has improved my problem-solving skills.	4.03	Agree
4. I have found that studying Dutch has enhanced my ability to interpret and analyze complex texts, as I have had to closely examine language nuances and meanings.	4.05	Agree
5. In my opinion, learning Dutch has contributed to my overall intellectual development by sharpening my critical thinking skills, encouraging me to question assumptions and think critically about the world around me.	4.07	Agree
6. I am learning fast in my FL (Dutch) because I believe I have the ability in learning it.	3.36	Neutral
7. I am delighted when my teacher notices how I progress in my FL (Dutch) class.	4.24	Agree
8. I enjoy learning an FL (Dutch) even if it is difficult.	4.26	Agree
9. I feel comfortable speaking in my FL (Dutch) class.	3.42	Neutral
10. I enjoy learning an FL (Dutch) because I am good at it.	3.09	Neutral
Mean	3.88	Agree

4.7. Challenges and best practices in integrating Dutch language

The fifth objective was to identify the challenges and best practices in integrating Dutch language learning in the Language Electives and provide recommendations for addressing them.

Table 11 shows the challenges in integrating FL (Dutch) in the Language Elective Courses in Sociology. It can be gleaned in the table that; limited resources and materials with the mean of 3.35 which means it is extremely difficult to find qualified Dutch language instructors in the researcher’s area; it is also challenging as rated 2.50 by the participants was the indicator “limited student interest” which means that there is very little interest among students in my community to learn Dutch; next is the indicator which was rated 2.33 by the participants is that “there is difficulty of the language” which means Dutch is somewhat easy to learn, even for those not familiar with Germanic languages.; and lastly, the least indicator rated 2.21 by the participants was, “there is a limited availability of Dutch language instructors” which means it is somewhat not easy to find qualified Dutch language instructors in my area.

Table 11. Challenges In Integrating FI (Dutch) In The Language Elective Courses In Sociology.

Indicators	Mean	Description
1. Limited availability of Dutch language instructors.	2.21	Less challenging
2. Limited resources and materials	3.35	Challenging
3. Limited student interest.	2.50	Challenging
4. Difficulty of the language.	2.33	Less challenging

Legend: 4.50 – 5.00 – Very much Challenging; 3.50 – 4.49 – Much Challenging; 2.50 – 3.49 – Challenging; 1.50 – 2.49 – Less Challenging; 1.00 – 1.49 – Not Challenging

The findings of Table XI have significant implications for the integration of FL (Dutch) into Language Elective Courses in Sociology. Firstly, the limited availability of resources and qualified instructors presents a challenge in developing a successful language program. According to Lai and Zhao (2018), the availability of resources and qualified instructors is essential for successful foreign language learning. The shortage of resources and instructors can affect the quality of instruction, making it difficult to engage and motivate students. Secondly, the limited student interest in learning Dutch is also a concern. Student motivation is critical in language learning, and low motivation can lead to poor academic performance and dropout rates (Dörnyei, 2017). Strategies such as promoting the usefulness and benefits of learning Dutch, incorporating cultural activities, and creating a positive learning environment can help to increase student interest (Lai & Zhao, 2018). Thirdly, while Dutch is a relatively easy language to learn, participants identified the difficulty of the language as a challenge. It is essential to acknowledge that different students may face different challenges in learning a foreign language. Providing individualized support and differentiated instruction can help to address this challenge (Lai & Zhao, 2018).

Finally, the somewhat limited availability of Dutch language instructors suggests that efforts should be made to recruit and train qualified instructors. This can involve collaboration with local universities and language institutes or offering incentives to attract experienced instructors (Lai & Zhao, 2018).

The findings of Table 11 highlight the need for a comprehensive strategy to overcome the challenges of integrating FL (Dutch) into Language Elective Courses in Sociology. This may involve addressing the shortage of resources and qualified instructors, promoting student interest and motivation, and providing differentiated instruction and support.

Table 12 presents the best practices in integrating FL (Dutch) in the language elective courses. The table revealed that the participants often use online translation websites to complete assignments and tasks in the Dutch elective classes with the mean of 4.40. However, the participants sometimes listen to Dutch music or watch Dutch movies with native Dutch speakers on social media platforms to practice their listening skills with the mean of 3.07.

Table 12. Mean Distribution of the Best Practices in Integrating FI (Dutch) in the Language Elective Courses.

Indicators	Mean	Description
1. How often do you use online translation websites to complete assignments and tasks in your Dutch elective classes?	4.40	Often
2. How often do you listen to Dutch music or watch Dutch movies with native Dutch speakers on social media platforms to practice your listening skills?	3.07	Sometimes
3. How often do you participate in online group discussions or forums to practice your Dutch writing and conversational skills?	3.40	Sometimes
4. How often do you use apps on your phone or gadget to practice Dutch language pronunciation at home?	3.79	Often
5. How often do you utilize language learning websites like Duolingo, Easy Dutch, juf M NT2#learndutch, or others to practice Dutch language pronunciation?	3.53	Often
6. How often do you ask your teacher for help with pronouncing certain Dutch words?	3.21	Sometimes
7. How often does your teacher ask you to compose write-ups in the language of your choice with the help of an online translation app, such as Google Translation, Syastran, or DeepL?	4.21	Often
8. How often do you use graphic websites to create vlogs or slogans using Dutch as the language?	3.66	Often
9. How often do you spend a few minutes every day practicing reading and speaking the Dutch language?	3.43	Sometimes
10. How often do you practice speaking Dutch with your classmates and peers, using Dutch phrases and idiomatic expressions?	3.35	Sometimes
Mean	3.61	Often

Legend: 4.50 – 5.00 – Always; 3.50 – 4.49 – Often; 2.50 – 3.49 – Sometimes; 1.50 – 2.49 – Rarely; 1.00 – 1.49 – Never

This implies that the participants are actively engaged in learning and practicing the Dutch language, with a strong focus on improving their pronunciation and communication skills. However, the reliance on online translation apps may not be the most effective approach to improving language skills.

The sixth objective was to determine if there is a significant difference in the extent of the integration of Dutch language learning according to gender and its contribution to the students' linguistic and cultural competencies, intercultural communication skills, and critical thinking skills.

4.8. Analysis of Variance on the Extent of Integration Dutch in Sociology Courses According to Gender

Table 13 presents a one-way ANOVA between the differences in the extent of the integration of Dutch language learning according to gender that contributes to the students' linguistic and cultural competencies, intercultural communication skills, and critical thinking skills. There were no significant differences on the students' linguistic and cultural competencies [F = .501, p = 0.607], intercultural communication skills [F = .585, p = .559], and critical thinking skills [F = .035, p = 0.965] according to the gender of the participants.

Table 13. Analysis of Variance on the Extent of the Integration of Dutch Language Learning According to Gender.

		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Linguistic and cultural competencies	Between Groups	0.215	2	0.108	0.501	0.607
	Within Groups	25.370	118	0.215		
	Total	25.585	120			
Intercultural communication skills	Between Groups	0.447	2	0.224	0.585	0.559
	Within Groups	45.132	118	0.382		
	Total	45.580	120			
Critical thinking skills	Between Groups	0.017	2	0.008	0.035	0.965
	Within Groups	27.710	118	0.235		
	Total	27.726	120			

Level of significance: .05

Based on the findings presented, it appears that there were no significant differences in the extent of integration of Dutch language learning and its impact on the linguistic and cultural competencies, intercultural communication skills, and critical thinking skills of the participants based on their gender.

These findings suggest that both male and female students are equally capable of acquiring and applying language and cultural competencies, intercultural communication skills, and critical thinking skills through learning the Dutch language. This is supported with the study of Ziegler (2015) who conducted a case study of German language instruction in an undergraduate Sociology course and found that students reported increased cultural awareness, engagement, and interest in German culture and society, regardless of gender.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study suggests that language policies and programs in the Philippines should prioritize the promotion of multilingualism, provide access to foreign language instruction, and develop bilingual or multilingual instructional materials and pedagogies. It also recommends that language education should be responsive to the needs of learners, and that language policies should aim to ensure equitable access to English and Filipino for all learners.

Based on the results and analysis, the study recommends that teachers continue to use a variety of resources and materials to enhance language learning outcomes. Furthermore, language education should be viewed as an integral part of the curriculum, rather than a separate subject. The study also highlights the importance of improving the applicability of language lessons to real-life situations by including practical exercises and activities that simulate authentic communication scenarios.

Regarding the challenges of teaching Dutch in the Sociology course, the following recommendations can be made:

1. Enhance the quality of instruction by improving the resources available and hiring qualified instructors to engage and motivate more students.
2. Promote the benefits of learning Dutch and other foreign languages, integrate cultural activities, and create a positive learning environment to increase student interest.
3. Provide individualized support and differentiated instruction to address the difficulties of learning a foreign language, not only Dutch.
4. Collaborate with foreign universities and language institutes to recruit and train qualified instructors or offer incentives to attract experienced instructors.

Finally, the study recommends that language educators use technology effectively in their teaching, such as providing access to useful language learning apps like Google Translation and Duolingo and incorporating lessons by native speakers on YouTube. Educators should also adopt the communicative language teaching approach to encourage meaningful communication and interaction in the target language.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

REFERENCES

- [1] Barber, M. (2016). The value of foreign language learning. *Education Journal*, 141(1), 23-25.
- [2] Boudreau, A., & Lightfoot, E. (2017). Intensifying global sociology education through foreign language integration. *Teaching Sociology*, 45(4), 334-346.
- [3] Lafford, B. A., & Plaza, M. P. (2017). Spanish for specific purposes and global competence: New possibilities for undergraduate Spanish programs. *Foreign Language Annals*, 50(1), 49-66.
- [4] Lambo, M. (2020). The impact of foreign language education on career development. *International Journal of Linguistics, Literature and Culture*, 6(3), 62-70.
- [5] Lafford, B. A., & Plaza, M. P. (2017). Spanish for specific purposes and global competence: New possibilities for undergraduate Spanish programs. *Foreign Language Annals*, 50(1), 49-66.
- [6] Liddicoat, A. J., & Scarino, A. (2013). Intercultural language learning in Australian schools. *Language Learning Journal*, 41(3), 303-321.

- [7] Liddicoat, A. J., & Scarino, A. (2013). Intercultural language learning in Australian schools. *Language Learning Journal*, 41(3), 303-321.
- [8] European Union. (2021). Job opportunities. Retrieved from https://europa.eu/european-union/work/job-opportunities_en
- [9] Gonzales, R. G. (2019). The challenges of teaching foreign languages in Philippine higher education. *Asia Pacific Journal of Multidisciplinary Research*, 7(3), 53-60.
- [10] Witte, A. E. (2010). The Global Awareness Curriculum in International Business Programs: A Critical Perspective. *Journal of Teaching in International Business*, 21(2), 101–131. doi:10.1080/08975930.2010.483908
- [11] Maililay, J. A. (2019). The controversy over CHED's new general education curriculum. *Philippine Daily Inquirer*. Retrieved from <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1124223/the-controversy-over-cheds-new-general-education-curriculum>
- [12] Johnson, R. B., & Christensen, L. B. (2014). *Educational research: Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed approaches*. Sage publications.
- [13] Anderson, M. M., & Kim, M. K. (2018). An interdisciplinary approach to foreign language and cultural learning. *Foreign Language Annals*, 51(2), 258-275.
- [14] Carrió-Pastor, M. L. (2019). Developing Intercultural Communicative Competence: From language to culture. *Porta Linguarum*, 31, 29-43.
- [15] Byram, M., & Grundy, P. (2018). *From principles to practice in language teaching*. Routledge.
- [16] Kramsch, C. (2018). *Language and culture: Oxford research encyclopedia of linguistics*. Oxford University Press.
- [17] Dörnyei, Z., & Ushioda, E. (2019). Motivation, language identity and the L2 self. *Multilingual Matters*.
- [18] Dearsdorff, D. K. (2006). Identification and assessment of intercultural competence as a student outcome of internationalization. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 10(3), 241-266.
- [19] Byram, M., & Zarate, G. (1994). Defining and assessing intercultural competence: Some principles and proposals for the European context. *Language Teaching*, 27(2), 14-26.
- [20] Fantini, A. E. (2015). Intercultural competence: From validation to application. *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research*, 44(4), 215-224.
- [21] Bialystok, E. (2017). The bilingual adaptation: How minds accommodate experience. *Psychological Bulletin*, 143(3), 233–262. <https://doi.org/10.1037/bul0000099>
- [22] Mårtensson, J., Eriksson, J., Bodammer, N. C., Lindgren, M., Johansson, M., Nyberg, L. & Lövdén, M. (2012). Growth of language-related brain areas after foreign language learning. *NeuroImage*, 63(1), 240–244. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.neuroimage.2012.06.043>
- [23] Lai, C., & Zhao, Y. (2018). Challenges and strategies for foreign language education in the digital age. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 9(31), 91-97.
- [24] Dörnyei, Z. (2017). Researching motivation: From integrative to instrumental orientations. In M. Lamb & F. L. Huang (Eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Applied Linguistics* (pp. 103-117). Routledge.
- [25] Gonzales, R. (2006) Conceptual and Psychometric Properties of a Foreign Language Learning Motivation Questionnaire. *Philippine Journal of Psychology*, vol. 39, No.1.pp.76-97

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.15379/ijmst.v10i2.1285>

This is an open access article licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution Non-Commercial License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/3.0/>), which permits unrestricted, non-commercial use, distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the work is properly cited.