Research Article

Typology and Classification of Target Culture Perception in Foreign Language Learning: A Case of Japanese Language Learners

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	This study discusses the knowledge about, perceptions of, and interaction with the Japanese culture of Japanese language FL learners who are majoring in Japanese at the undergraduate level in Turkish universities. The field survey was conducted with 298 undergraduate students in a Japanese Language Programs in early 2019. The data were collected using a structured questionnaire. As a result, it was confirmed that the participants acquire a wide range of academic knowledge about Japanese culture during their undergraduate education, and their perceptions of Japanese culture are based on historical and social facts as well as popular culture. However, the students have little interaction with Japanese culture in daily life. In the light of the data obtained in the research, Japanese cultural perceptions of the Japanese FL learners were classified into typologies and discussed in terms of knowledge, perceptions, and interaction.

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Introduction

It is now well established that it is not possible to establish communication in a target language without knowing and understanding the sociocultural background or understanding the culture without learning how different ideas and ways of seeing the world are expressed through the target language. The social and cultural dimensions of foreign language (FL) learning are as important as other prominent components such as grammar and lexis (Alptekin, 1993; Byram, 1997; Kramch, 1993; 1998; Otwinowska-Kasztelanic, 2011; Razı, 2012; Ziebka, 2011). Particularly with the development of communication technologies in the era of globalization, physical borders are no longer a limit in accessing information and interacting with people. FL learners are in need of more than linguistic competence to be able to communicate effectively across boundaries (Furstenberg, 2010, p. 329). Besides a historical, cultural, and social common background between one`s own culture (C1) and the target culture (C2), the sociological, anthropological, theological variables and layers, and macro-political discourses regarding the target country are still some of the prominent variables in terms of target language and culture learning. In terms of the Japanese language, the behavioural norms and tendencies of the Japanese sociocultural structure (Satoh, 1985) have isolated Japanese culture partially, even from its cultural and geographical neighbours such as China and Korea. Therefore, learning the Japanese language and culture, and establishing the inextricable link between communication and culture in Japanese can be even harder for Japanese FL learners, particularly those outside the *Kanji* cultural zone. This makes it even more important to understand Japanese culture in Japanese language learning. Therefore, scrutinizing what the Japanese FL learners know about and how they describe it is one of the first agendas to be able to discuss further issues such as methodologies or strategies for Japanese language teaching on solid ground.

This study will focus on the Japanese culture image of undergraduate students majoring in the Japanese language. In order to depict the Japanese culture image of the students, the discussion is going to focus on three primary topics: Knowledge about Japanese culture and society, perceptions of Japanese culture, and interaction with Japanese culture. It is believed that evaluating the image of Japanese culture of undergraduate students in this triangle of knowledge, perception, and interaction will provide solid ground to scrutinize what will be the most effective and realistic way to develop FL learners` translingual and transcultural competence. This study addressed the following research questions:

R.Q.1. What kind of knowledge do undergraduate students gain in an undergraduate program?

R.Q.2. What kind of Japanese culture image do undergraduate students have? How do they describe the Japanese culture?

R.Q.3. Do undergraduate students actually have interaction with Japanese culture in their daily lives? If so, what kind of interaction and how often does it occur?

Literature Review

Conceptual Framework on Japanese Culture Narrative

Japan used the Japanese language as a foreign policy tool to spread Japanese culture and imperial ideology to regions of the Far East in the early of 20th century (Berreman, 1944). However, particularly since the 1970s, Japanese culture has started to be considered in Japanese language education under different titles such as the culture of Japan (*Nihon no bunka*), Japanese issues, Japanese way of life (*Nihon jijō*), Japanese society (*Nihon shakai*), etc. (Ikeda, 1975; Satoh, 1985; Kanemoto, 1988; Toyoda, 1988). These discussions generally tended to use Japanese culture as a tool to explain everyday life, notions, and words that appeared in the textbooks; and also the 'Japanese mind, which cannot directly be expressed in words' (Ikeda, 1971, p.100). Japanese culture was considered as an important supporting agent of the 'Japanese language teaching' process (Kawakami, 2007, p. 5). Learners in Japan were mostly the main target rather than learners abroad.

In recent years, it can be said that discussions of Japanese culture as a course subject in Japanese language teaching are mainly based on two approaches. One is 'pictured Japanese culture' (*sōzō no Nihon bunka*) (Kawakami, 2007), which is coded as stereotypes (Kawakami, 1999) through classifications (Hosokawa, 2002) built by the teacher's individual life experiences, language textbook authors' worldview and values (Kumagai, 2014a, p. 202), and in some cases, narratives in textbooks (Kumagai, 2014b, p. 240). This approach symbolizes the understanding that defines norms, behaviour patterns, thoughts, and so on within a single 'static and fixed culture image' (Kubota, 2014) with a single 'correct' pattern.

Particularly since the 1960s, after Japan`s emergence as an economic power (Gonzáles de la Fuente, 2021, p. 3; Koschmann, 1997, p. 758), the 'Japaneseness' discourse (*Nihonjinron*) that has received much criticism from several aspects (Befu, 1980; 2001; Dale, 1986; Guarné & Yamashita 2015; Mouer & Sugimoto, 1986; Rear, 2017) has become the source of inspiration for Japanese language teaching abroad too. Such concepts such as homogeneity (Benedict, 1946; Eguchi & Kimura, 2021), uniqueness (Lipset, 1996), singularity of Japanese culture (Ong, 2019), monolithic culture (Murayama-Cain, 2011), hierarchy (Nakane, 1967), collectivism, group-oriented (Sugiyama Lebra, 1976; Vogel, 1979), amae (dependency) (Doi, 1971), harmony, consensus, politeness (Hendry, 1993), prescriptivism, punctuality, and other characteristics related to communication and language such as modesty, taciturnity, greetings, ambiguity, honorifics, and so on have been introduced to Japanese language learners as 'the Japanese culture'.

Theoretical Framework on Japanese Culture Teaching

Hinkel's definition of the term culture for students learning a foreign language(s) helps us to have a clearer view. Culture can refer to tangible components such as literature, the arts, architecture, styles of dress, cuisine, customs, and festivals that can be discussed and explained relatively easily; Hinkel defines this aspect as 'visible culture' (2014, p. 5). To the contrary, again according to Hinkel, there is a more complex definition which is defined as 'invisible culture', referring to socio-cultural norms, worldviews, beliefs,

assumptions, value systems, and so on. Eventually, those aspects form the perceptions and behaviour patterns of those who learn the target language (Byram, 1989). However, it is also fact that along with the developments in information technology in the era of globalization, acquiring knowledge and information on Japan's culture is becoming easier for each individual, and that diversifies the needs, expectations, motivations, goals, and perceptions (Coleman, 2009) of the Japanese learners' too.

However, the conceptualizing notions given above as 'correct information' (Kubota, 2014) regarding the target culture through limited sources (in some cases just one single source) may affect the way students interpret Japanese culture within a fixed reading frame. On the other hand, linguistic practices (e.g., ambiguous expression, politeness), sociocultural codes and/or patterns (e.g., punctuality) may differ according to variables such as gender, age, region, occupation, and context. Moreover, as Kubota points out, it is important to understand that commonly-accepted beliefs about the target culture may not reflect the complexity of how people actually live and communicate (Kubota, 2014, p. 227). The ways that people interact and communicate, the understanding of notions, and the values that people have in daily life may differ from the taught one. For example, for elderly persons living in a mountain village in Japan, understanding punctuality may differ from the white-collar Japanese who reside in Tokyo. Or, normative linguistic expressions (e.g., using honorifics, polite forms), which are taught as 'correct' may be interpreted as too bureaucratic in dialogue with the elder villager. On the contrary, as a foreigner in a mountain community in Japan, when it comes to communicating with locals it may be more effective to use 'broken' Japanese rather than 'accurate, fluent, and perfect' Japanese.

Today, while the Japanese culture is diversifying, with the help of internet technologies students can acquire different 'truths' than those taught in classroom. Apart from the 'pictured Japanese culture' mentioned earlier, 'one`s own culture' (ko no bunka), that each student defines culture as a result of their experiences and communication in their own world (Hosokawa, 2005), is also discussed as a second approach. In this regard, similar to Hosokawa's discussion, Kubota's The Four Ds discussion is also important. Kubota's The Four Ds approach to culture teaching may help teachers and students to develop a cultural reading outside the standardized framework mentioned earlier. Kubota states that the four concepts can provide a heuristic approach for teachers to reconceptualize concepts in culture teaching. Kubota firstly mentions that teachers should critically evaluate the prescriptive information about language and culture presented in course materials and convey language and culture in a more descriptive way. Moreover, culture should be considered as having diversity, not uniformity. For Kubota, culture is always shifting and reshaping itself in new forms. Thus, culture needs to be viewed as a dynamic organism and cultural practices, products and perspectives need to be understood in historical contexts. On the other hand, although these concepts broaden students' and teachers' understanding of culture, since there is a fine line between those concepts and the current framework, the discursive construction of culture should be carefully discussed (Kubota, 2014, p. 226-232).

Considering all these realities, admittedly a rooted perception of Japanese culture courses that has its origin in history is still predominant, but a more individualistic interpretation of Japanese culture has also been getting stronger with the help of

developments in information technology. Therefore, the culture perception of Japanese FL learners is becoming more complicated. Since it is no longer to be measured or evaluated within the current frameworks, a hybrid view that comprises 'dictated' and 'acquired' culture perceptions would be more efficient. Moreover, such issues in Japanese language teaching as Japanese culture teaching approaches, methodologies, course design, teaching curriculums, and even non-native speaker (of the Japanese language) education will remain partially limited unless we shed light on what the learners know and think about Japanese culture too.

Background of the Field Survey: Japanese Language and Culture in Turkey

Interest in a foreign language (FL) and the target culture (C2) may depend on many different variables: a) Political discourse about the country of the target language, b) intensity of historical relationships, c) common cultural history and memory, d) influence of the culture of the target language on daily life, e) the history of research on the target language and culture, f) visibility of the target language and culture in the media, and g) commercial/political investments in the target country.In this regard, Japan's diplomatic relations with Turkey go back to the last quarter of the nineteenth century and its economic relations go back to the early twentieth century (Esenbel, 2006). Since the 1890s, which is considered the starting point of relations, a discourse of solidarity and support has formed the basis of the relationship between the two countries (Pehlivanturk, 2011, p.103). Since particularly 1980s, economic relations have improved and as of 2019 according to the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 224 Japanese companies operate in Turkey in the energy, health, transportation, construction, and education sectors. Investment in projects such as hospitals, bridges and tunnels have made Japan more visible in Turkish society. The number of NGOs that focus on Turkish-Japanese relations as well as higher education programs of Japanese Language and Culture in Turkey has been increasing, especially since the 1990s. The Japanese language itself has also drawn interest as a Japanese cultural element. The Japanese language learner population in Turkey has increased at a rate similar to that of the rest of the world (Table 1) (Japan Foundation, 2018).

Table 1 Number of Japanese Teaching Institutions, Teachers, and Students in Turkey

	Institutions (N)	Teachers (N)	Students (N)	Composition by Educational Stage (Learners)		
				Primary& Secondary N (%)	Higher N (%)	Other N (%)
1987	5	8	124	- (-)	- (-)	- (-)
1990	3	11	133	0	133 (100%)	0
1993	11	32	763	48 (6.2%)	410 (53.7%)	305 (39.9%)
1998	18	66	1340	191 (14.2%)	692 (51.6%)	457 (33.6%)
2003	21	55	1229	219	662	348

				(17.8%)	(53.8%)	(28.3%)
2006	25	57	1473	226 (15.3%)	863 (58.5%)	385 (26.1%)
2009	20	53	1189	134 (11.3%)	841 (71.3%)	204 (17.3%)
2012	40	97	1965	131 (5.9%)	1303 (66.3%)	531 (27.0%)
2015	42	87	2194	277 (11.9%)	1462 (66.6%)	491 (22.4%)
2018	34	85	2500	155 (6.2%)	1788 (71.5%)	557 (22.3%)

Considering the age of participation in cultural activities such as Japanese speaking competitions held in Turkey, and language courses outside the university, it is seen that the participation of the young population is intense. On the other side, the visibility of Japan and Japanese culture in conventional national media is low because Japanese companies do not do much advertising in Turkey. Japanese TV shows do not appear much in conventional media either. But recently, popular cultural products, Japanese literature and traditional Japanese culture have started to attract more attention. It is now possible to learn about Japan without knowing Japanese through publications in Turkish and translations of novels, books and *manga*s.

Taking all of these into account, it is still difficult to say that there is an extensive and deep interest in Japanese culture among most of Turkish society. On the other hand, knowledge of Japanese culture and language in Turkey is deepening, and Japan now figures more prominently in the daily lives of Turkish people. Therefore, it can also be said that the base for the arousal of interest in Japanese culture and language has begun to form.

Methodology

Research Design, Materials, and Procedures

The data were collected from February to May 2019 using a researcher-made structured questionnaire in Turkish language. Ethical Committee approval for conducting the survey was obtained from the ethics committee at the author's university in February 2019. In order to collect data regarding the issue, the approach of this research was essentially based on a descriptive research design that mainly targets to picture the current condition of the issue being considered as a research problem. In order to proceed with the research, a quantitative survey questionnaire was employed. The survey has 20 questions in three sections. It has both open-ended and multiple-choice questions. The closed-ended questions were designed both to identify the sociodemographic characteristics of the participants and to understand the place of culture in Japanese language education. In the open-ended questions, each participant was asked to write three words that describe Japanese culture in their own opinion in order to portray the participants' perception of Japanese culture. The first section has multiple-choice questions about the participants` sociodemographic information such as age, gender, motivation for learning Japanese, and the income levels of the students` parents/caregivers. It should be noted here briefly why the income of parents/caregivers` was asked but not students. Some studies show us that a parttime job (i.e., income source) is not common among Turkish university students (Toprak-Okay et al., 2019; Koç, 2019). Although there is no concrete data for Japanese

undergraduate students, based on these studies, it is thought that the participants of this study are also in a similar situation. For this reason, in order to understand the economic situation of the students, the parent/caregivers` income became the focus point. The second section has multiple-choice questions about the participants` perceptions of Japanese culture and the relationship between Japanese language and Japanese culture. The third section uses a Likert-type scale to inquire about the participants` interaction with Japanese culture.

Participants

Currently, there are five Japanese language-related undergraduate programs in Turkey. However, since one of them (Japanese Translation and Interpreting Departmen, Ankara Social Science University) was not active when the survey was conducted, the population of the study included all the undergraduate students in the departments of 'Japanese Language Teaching' (Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University), and 'Japanese Language and Literature' (Ankara University, Erciyes University, Hacı Bektaş Veli University) in Turkey. According to the 2019 data of Turkey's Council of Higher Education, 556 students were enrolled in these four programs. Of them, 298 participated in the present study; a participation rate of 53.6%. The four programs start at the beginner level and have curriculums targeting C1 level. Information about the participants is given in Table 2.

Table 2 Participant Information

			Female	Male	No answer	Total
Grade	Prep class	Count	16	21	1	38
		% within grade	42.1%	55.3%	2.6%	100.0%
	First-year	Count	41	39	3	83
		% within grade	49.4%	47.0%	3.6%	100.0%
	Second-year	Count	60	26	0	86
		% within grade	69.8%	30.2%	0.0%	100.0%
	Third-year	Count	24	18	1	43
		% within grade	55.8%	41.9%	2.3%	100.0%
	Senior-year	Count	28	18	2	48
		% within grade	58.3%	37.5%	4.2%	100.0%
Total		Count	169	122	7	298

36.6% of students stated that they learned Japanese by themselves before entering their departments. However, since the question was about where they learned Japanese, there is no concrete data revealing the level attained by these students. On the other hand, in terms of Japanese level before entering university, the Japanese Language Proficiency Test (JLPT) may give us a good idea of the students` levels. Among all participants before entering the department, N5-N4 (beginner) level holders are 1.7%, and N3-N1 (intermediate and advanced) level holders are 2%. Of the participants, 75.7% are in middle-income group, and 52% grew up in a metropolis such as Istanbul, Ankara, or Izmir. More than half of the participants (55.2%) had no Japanese friends when the survey was conducted. When just

those who use social media (32.2%) were included, only 12.1% had an actual Japanese friend. Only 35.2% of the participants resided with other students in Japanese language departments.

Results

Knowledge: Japanese Culture Academic Background in Undergraduate Programs

Those four undergraduate programs have different missions and curricula. However, apart from Japanese language, history, and literature courses, culture-oriented courses are

Course name/ semester	Content
Japanese Life Culture 3rd semester	Nature and Human; The place of esthetic in daily life; Life and death; *Giri ve ninjō*; On (indebtedness); House and family; Group concept; Business life; Sempai - Kohai concept; Body Language; Human relations in Japanese; Cuisine Culture; The Culture of Entertainment.
Japanese Folk Literature 5th semester	Riddle - Tongue Twister; *Waraibanashi; Kowaibanashi; Issunbōshi; Momotarō; Yukionna; Taketori monogatari*.
Japanese Society And Visual Arts 8th semester	Japanese movies; Comic books; Japanese cartoon; Japanese theatre.
Japanese Culture 1st & 2nd semester	Japanese cuisine; traditional tea ceremony; traditional sports; performing arts; festivals; life style; rituals; historical and touristic places; Manga-Anime culture; Samurai culture; gardens; traditional architecture; Japanese universities, university life in Japan; Japanese family structure; marriage traditions; music and film culture; popular entertainment culture; working in Japan and work ethics; juridical information for foreign students; Japan's connection to the world; Japan's resources and products; Japan's industrial structure and economy; Japan's political structure; constitution of Japan.
Anime Manga & Popular Japanese Culture 7th & 8th semester	Postmodernism and Popular Culture; popular culture and Harajuku; popular culture and "Cosplay"; *Akiba-Otaku-Soshoku Danshi* in popular culture; gender and stereotypes; media and anime; Miyazaki Hayao; history of manga; manga categories, language used in manga; *Shōnen* Manga; *Shōjo* Manga and BL Manga; Manga series reading.
Japanism And The Image Of Japan In Europe 7th & 8th semester	Japanism in Europe; Japanism and *Ukiyoe*; Japanism and Painting Art: Van Gogh; Japanism and Literature; Image of Japanese and Japan in Turkey; Ruth Benedict: The Chrysanthemum and the Sword; Japanese images in Meiji Era; Japanese Empire and Japanese images; Japanese images and cinema; Japanese image and media.
Introduction To The Japanese Culture 5th semester	Individual and Society; Japanese culture as an Intangible Cultural Heritage: holidays, festivals, arts, daily life, cuisine and diet, recreation and leisure; Japanese culture through notions: *aimai, amae, amakudari, chinmoku, giri, gambari, honne&tatemae, sempai&kohai, uchi&soto, shūdan ish*iki; Japanese culture in Japanese language teaching.
Japanese Mythology 5th&6th semester	Monotheism and polytheism; Buddhism; Shintoism; Japanese mythology; Japanese culture and religion; Japanese folklore
Japanese War And Art Strategies 7th&8th semester	Written pre-cultural Japanese cultural history; Confucian understanding and allegiance, Zen and Buddhism; Japanese art history; Japanese caste system; rituals; Budô history; Kendô and strategy; Analysis of Yagyu Munenori's life and work; Nitobe Inazo's work; Miyamoto Musashi's image of war, art, strategy and leadership; A review through his Five Circles
Japanese Calligraphy 5th & 6th semester	Basic styles in Japanese Calligraphy: (seal, clerical, regular script, semi-cursive, cursive); materials used in Japanese calligraphy; Japanese characters used in medicine, politics, psychology, geography; Advanced Japanese characters used in the fields of history and sociology; Reading and writing Japanese characters related to environment, technology and economy.
Introduction To The Contemporary Japan/ 5th	Social and political developments in Pre-war Japan; Modernization and Japan; Sociodemographic issues on contemporary Japan; Japanese family; Women in Japanese society; Globalization and Japanese Society; Rural Japan; Japanese Education system.

conducted too. As of today, based on the information obtained from the education catalogues of the programs, it is seen that the Japanese culture is taught in a wide range in those programs (Figure 1). Considering the content of these courses, it is also seen that Japanese culture is taught in a wide range from traditional and popular actors to sociological, anthropological, historical and political dimensions. Another point to be emphasized is that these courses are mostly taught in the 5th semester and later, and students who enroll in those courses are mostly third and senior-year students. That is, students are supposed to have an intermediate level of Japanese language and are capable of confirming and deepening the information given in the course by using primary sources. This, in turn, may allow the students to establish more solid ground to describe the Japanese culture by going beyond the image given in the courses. **Figure 1** Japanese Culture-Related Courses in Japanese Language Undergraduate Programs in *Turkey*

Besides all these, there are also student clubs at those four universities that focus on Japanese culture called the Turkish-Japanese Friendship Society, the Japanology Society, and the Japanese Culture Society. Those clubs perform different kinds of activities such as tea ceremony, martial arts, origami, calligraphy, manga drawing and writing, amine and film

subtitle translation, cooking Japanese food, and more. In other words, they have the opportunity to experience and apply what they learned in the course in the field to some extent.

As a first impression, it can be said that the academic environment of Japanese undergraduate programs in Turkey provides a wide range of superficial 'background knowledge' (Mahoney, 2009) about Japanese culture and a partial opportunity to practice and perform the acquired knowledge in daily life, despite the economic and geographic limitations. On the other side, Coleman`s typology regarding cultural lessons in Japanese language teaching (Coleman, 2009) gives us an opportunity to consider the courses in terms of Coleman`s approach. According to Coleman`s typology there are four types of courses: Descriptive, Particularist, Scientific and Emphatic approaches (Coleman, 2009, p. 321-328). The Descriptive approach teaches various cultural aspects of Japanese communication as a prescribed repertory, and deals with stylistic behaviours such as greetings and other interactions that are formal and ritualized (Coleman, 2009, p. 322-323).

The Particularist approach presents Japanese communication as the expression of a unique Japanese culture, and makes extensive use of actor (emic, folk) concepts. It also has intellectual roots in the Group Model and Nihonjinron as well (Coleman, 2009, p. 323-324). The Scientific approach relies on observation and logic to identify universal processes in human communication, and attempts to explain them. It recognizes both culture-specific and pan-human communication patterns, and encourages comparisons between Japan and countries with similar levels of technological sophistication and affluence (Coleman, 2009, p. 324-327). Lastly, the Emphatic/insight approach cultivates students' interpersonal skills, assumes certain universal aspects of human nature, and combines linguistic pragmatics and clinical psychology (Coleman, 2009, p. 327-328). In this sense, it may be said that most of culture-oriented courses mentioned above in the Japanese language undergraduate programs have predominantly Descriptive, Particularist, and partially Scientific approaches.

Perception: Japanese Culture Image of FL Learners

This part of the study discusses how the participants described Japanese culture. In order to demonstrate conclusively the perceptions of participants regarding Japanese culture, an open-ended question was used in the survey questionnaire. The open-ended question was: What three words would you use to describe Japanese culture? Each participant was asked to write three words freely that describe Japanese culture in their own opinion. Their responses included 798 words. This 798-word pool includes those used more than once (e.g. tradition was provided 48 times). The lexical analysis was used in the later part of study to devise codes regarding Japanese culture in the participants' own words and to establish the themes related to the cultural image of the participants based on these codes.

Table 3 Most Frequent Descriptions of Japanese Culture

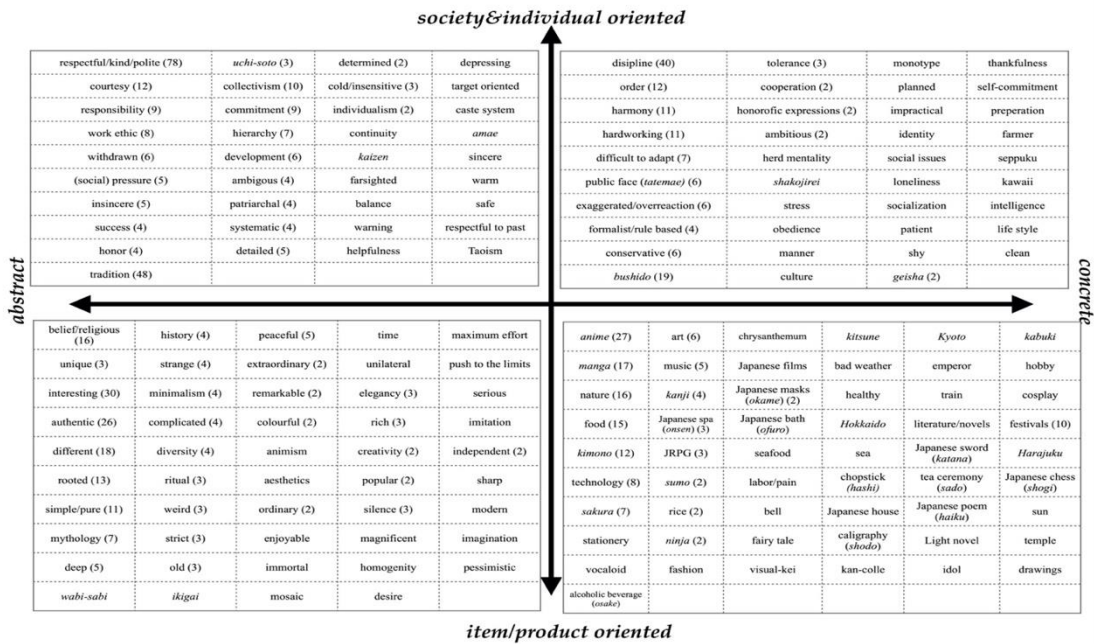| 1	Respectful/kind/polite (78 times)	11	Religious (16 times)
2	Tradition (48 times)	12	Food (15 times)
3	Discipline (40 times)	13	Rooted (13 times)
4	Interesting (30 times)	14	Order (12 times)
5	*Anime* (27 times)	15	*Kimono* (12 times)
6	Authentic/genuine (26 times)	16	Kindness/courtesy (12 times)
7	*Bushido* (19 times)	17	Simplicity/pureness (11 times)
8	Different (18 times)	18	Harmony (11 times)
9	*Manga* (17 times)	19	Festivals (10 times)
10	Nature (16 times)	20	Collectivism (10 times)

Firstly, the undergraduate students' perceptions of Japanese culture will be analysed by looking at the words most frequently included in their responses (Table 3). Table 2 shows 20 words that they used 10 times or more. Considering those 20 most frequently-used words, it can be said that the participants emphasize different aspects of the Japanese culture by focusing on mainly two dimensions: society and culture. The social dimension here mostly refers to social behaviour patterns, social norms and social structure, and especially social relations, while the cultural dimension refers to the culture-oriented objects, organizations, and products. It can also be seen that some are more realistic concepts based on experience and knowledge while others are more abstract concepts based on impressions or hearsay. If these definitions are interpreted within Hinkel`s framework (Hinkel, 2014), the majority can be counted as invisible culture actors as well.

Considering all 798 words provided by the participants to describe Japanese culture, the tendency on the perception of Japanese culture mentioned above can be seen in more detail. The participants preferred 410 words (51.3%) to describe Japanese culture from the viewpoint of the social dimension, which refer to social structure, social norms, behaviour patterns, and images. 388 (48.6%) words refer to cultural image and objects, items or products.

In the study, since the students were asked to write their own words freely, some students wrote the same concept in Turkish, while others wrote it in Japanese. Again, some students wrote the same notion with different expressions even in Turkish (synonym, idiom, etc.). Therefore, in order to establish the themes related to the cultural image of the participants based on these words, those 798 words with similar meanings were combined by author. This generated a pool of 180 notions. These 180 notions were classified according to their meaning and content.

Two dimensions were considered in the classification. The first dimension seeks out whether the themes were *concrete* (based on daily life, experience or theoretical knowledge) or *abstract* (based on impressions and hearsay or less dependent on knowledge). The second dimension tries to determine whether the participants described Japanese culture through *society* and *people*, or through *cultural beliefs, items* and *products*. Figure 2 shows the results of review of the pool of 180 words.

Figure 2 The Japanese culture image of Japanese FL learners in Turkey

society&individual oriented

Upper-left (abstract, society & individual oriented):

respectful/kind/polite (78)	uchi-soto (3)	determined (2)	depressing
courtesy (12)	collectivism (10)	cold/insensitive (3)	target oriented
responsibility (9)	commitment (9)	individualism (2)	caste system
work ethic (8)	hierarchy (7)	continuity	amae
withdrawn (6)	development (6)	kaizen	sincere
(social) pressure (5)	ambiguous (4)	farsighted	warm
insincere (5)	patriarchal (4)	balance	safe
success (4)	systematic (4)	warning	respectful to past
honor (4)	detailed (5)	helpfulness	Taoism
tradition (48)			

Upper-right (concrete, society & individual oriented):

disipline (40)	tolerance (3)	monotype	thankfulness
order (12)	cooperation (2)	planned	self-commitment
harmony (11)	honorific expressions (2)	impractical	preperation
hardworking (11)	ambitious (2)	identity	farmer
difficult to adapt (7)	herd mentality	social issues	seppuku
public face (tatemae) (6)	shakojirei	loneliness	kawaii
exaggerated/overreaction (6)	stress	socialization	intelligence
formalist/rule based (4)	obedience	patient	life style
conservative (6)	manner	shy	clean
bushido (19)	culture	geisha (2)	

abstract ←   → *concrete*

Lower-left (abstract, item/product oriented):

belief/religious (16)	history (4)	peaceful (5)	time	maximum effort
unique (3)	strange (4)	extraordinary (2)	unilateral	push to the limits
interesting (30)	minimalism (4)	remarkable (2)	elegancy (3)	serious
authentic (26)	complicated (4)	colourful (2)	rich (3)	imitation
different (18)	diversity (4)	animism	creativity (2)	independent (2)
rooted (13)	ritual (3)	aesthetics	popular (2)	sharp
simple/pure (11)	weird (3)	ordinary (2)	silence (3)	modern
mythology (7)	strict (3)	enjoyable	magnificent	imagination
deep (5)	old (3)	immortal	homogenity	pessimistic
wabi-sabi	ikigai	mosaic	desire	

Lower-right (concrete, item/product oriented):

anime (27)	art (6)	chrysanthemum	kitsune	Kyoto	kabuki
manga (17)	music (5)	Japanese films	bad weather	emperor	hobby
nature (16)	kanji (4)	Japanese masks (okame) (2)	healthy	train	cosplay
food (15)	Japanese spa (onsen) (3)	Japanese bath (ofuro)	Hokkaido	literature/novels	festivals (10)
kimono (12)	JRPG (3)	seafood	sea	Japanese sword (katana)	Harajuku
technology (8)	sumo (2)	labor/pain	chopstick (hashi)	tea ceremony (sado)	Japanese chess (shogi)
sakura (7)	rice (2)	bell	Japanese house	Japanese poem (haiku)	sun
stationery	ninja (2)	fairy tale	calligraphy (shodo)	Light novel	temple
vocaloid	fashion	visual-kei	kan-colle	idol	drawings
alcoholic beverage (osake)					

item/product oriented

The participants used different concepts regarding Japanese culture. 37 different *abstract notions* (roughly one-fifth of the concepts of the pool -20.5%-) and 39 different *concrete notions* (again one-fifth of the concepts of the pool -21.6%-) refer to social dimension of Japanese culture. On the other hand, 49 different *abstract notions* (roughly quarter of the pool -27.2%-) and 55 other different *concrete notions* (about one-third of the pool -30.5%-) describe the Japanese culture through cultural objects, items or products. The distribution of the themes indicates that a significant group of notions (57.7%) describes Japanese culture by referring to beliefs, objects, items or products. Nevertheless, the students used more *concrete* notions (52.1%) than *abstract* descriptions (47.7%) to describe the Japanese culture. From this, it can also be understood how the students' perceptions of Japanese culture are very diverse when the content of the words is scrutinized.

It also appears that the pool of 180 terms focuses specifically on certain aspects of Japanese culture. They referred to concrete elements of daily life culture such as foods and beverages (sushi*, sake,* etc.), clothing (kimono, etc.), sports (sumō, etc.) and fine arts (calligraphy*, shōgi,* etc.) more than its abstract side. Another remarkable finding was that one-fifth of the terms describes Japanese culture by referring to social variables such as social structure (hierarchy, collectivism, caste system, etc.), norms (order, harmony, patriarchy, etc.), daily life (cooperation, success, stress, etc.) and social relations (patience, balance, tolerance, socialization, etc.). If the individual characteristics of Japanese people such as their behaviour patterns (kind, respectful, devoted, extreme reactions) and character (shy, planning, responsible) are also included, almost half of the participants (42.1%) described Japanese culture from a social perspective. The participants describe Japanese culture in two different ways. A relative majority of them tend to describe Japanese culture by referring to 'culture-related' objects, items, and products, and the others use 'social' dynamics as their descriptors. The findings show that students have a very broad perception of Japanese culture. It is clear that the participants again have descriptive and particularist

approaches if we interpret Coleman`s framework (Coleman, 2009). Besides, Moreover, from the viewpoint of Kubota's framework, diversity and dynamism (Kubota, 2014) elements are strongly presented in the participants' pool of images of Japanese culture.

Interaction: Japanese Culture in Everyday Life

The interaction of students with Japanese culture in daily life is directly related to geographical, cultural, historical and political proximities and distances, as noted at the beginning of this study. Experiencing Japan in everyday life in Turkey, or in more tangible terms, students' interaction with Japan itself, is not easy without making a special effort. Thus, learners' efforts have to be the starting point for assessing their interaction with Japanese culture. This study evaluates interaction with Japanese culture based on two separate factors, money and time. In most cases, money is related with consumption of products from the target culture (Agyeiwaah et al, 2019), and how much money they spend on interacting with Japanese culture might be a quantifiable way to understand student efforts in terms of being in contact with Japanese culture. How much time they spend in contact with Japanese culture, apart from lessons and designated tasks, might also be a way to interpret their interactions with Japanese culture.

Understanding the money factor requires looking at the economic conditions of university students in Turkey. As mentioned earlier, most of the students' families are middle class. A glance at the monthly pocket money that students receive from their parents, excluding compulsory payments such as rent and bills, shows that they lead an economic life in direct proportion with their family income. As of the year the survey was performed, 39.6% of undergraduate students in Japanese language programs receive 500 Turkish lira (TL), 32.2% receive 500-750 TL, and 15.8% receive 750-1,000 TL as monthly pocket money[1]. Considering that most students' monthly pocket money was 400-650 TL at the time in Turkey, the participants' economic levels are not below the average in Turkey. However, when we examine their average monthly spending on Japanese culture (e.g. purchasing a book, an equipment for the hobby from Japan, or having lunch/dinner at Japanese restaurant, etc.) by means of the question in the survey, it is understood that 28.9% never spend any pocket money on Japanese culture-related activities or items, and almost half (49%) of them spend only 10% of their pocket money on this. It is of course difficult to state by basing only the data given above that there is a direct relationship between students` financial condition and their interaction level with Japanese culture. However, in most cases, money is related with consumption of target culture products, and this may not always be directly proportional. Considering the reality where participants' total monthly pocket money is less than one hundred dollars, it can be assumed that it is at least difficult for students to maintain the interaction with Japanese culture on a consistent basis with ten percent of their pocket money.

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[1] Since it is aimed to reveal the purchasing power of Turkish undergraduate students, the currency is stated in Turkish lira.

Table 4 Interaction with Japanese Culture in Everyday Life by Students (time/week)

	0 min.	less than an hour	1-3 hours	3-6 hours	more than 6 hours
			%		
Daily conversation with Japanese native-speaker teachers	58.1	22.8	9.4	4	3.7
Speaking Japanese with ordinary Japanese people	14.8	29.9	25.5	12.4	16.8
Hobbies related Japan	40.3	24.8	18.5	8.1	6.7
Watching Japanese movies (in Japanese language)	42.3	12.8	25.8	13.1	4.7
Watching Japanese tv series	51	13.1	16.8	10.1	8.1
Watching *anime* (in Japanese language)	30.2	21.1	21.8	13.1	13.1
Reading manga (in Turkish translation and/or original)	51.3	18.1	11.4	8.7	8.7
Reading Japanese novels (in Turkish translation and/or original)	52.7	20.8	13.1	6.7	5
Club activities related to Japan	53	17.4	19.5	6.4	2.7

Another question is how much time the participants allocated to Japanese culture. Table 4 shows us that they mostly do not interact with Japanese culture and people in everyday life outside of their academic schedule. It also shows how much time the participants allocated for each activity on a weekly basis. Less than one-tenth of the students allocate 3 or more hours in a week to the club activities which are partially costly and daily conversation with native speaker teachers. On the other side, speaking Japanese with ordinary Japanese people, watching Japanese anime, and reading Japanese comics (*manga*) can be counted as the activities that the students relatively allocate time to.

At first, it may seem that doing relatively more 'money-requiring' activities such as watching *anime* and Japanese movies, and reading *manga*, contradicts the money-interaction assumption discussed earlier. However, internet provides opportunities to access official and relatively low-cost resources even for Turkish students (e.g. Netflix, Amazon Prime, etc.). In some cases, students reduce the expense even more by sharing the monthly bill. Moreover, putting aside ethical and legal discussions, as a reality, students may and/or do preferably use unofficial and cost-free media tools (e.g. free anime/movie streaming sites) to watch *anime*, movies and to read *manga* as well. Therefore, on the contrary of money-consumption contradiction, it is possible to say that they tend to prefer an internet-based interaction method as a low-cost method.

Discussion

Undergraduate students who study Japanese language and culture as a field of expertise can be regarded as *future experts on Japan*. Their knowledge about, perceptions

of and interaction with Japanese culture are directly related to the future of academic, diplomatic, cultural and economic relations between their native country and Japan.

In terms of academic environment, apart from history and literature there are several different courses focusing on Japanese culture in the syllabuses of the four universities' programs. Students who take those courses are mostly third and senior-year students, which may us to interpret that they are capable to confirm what they learned and deepen the knowledge regarding what they are interested in. This, in turn, may allow the students to establish more solid ground to describe the Japanese culture by going beyond the culture image given in the courses. And thus they can combine both approaches (Pictured vs One's own culture) and form their image of culture in a hybrid way.

Opportunities to access Japanese culture in Turkey are very limited. Only one of the four universities is in a metropolitan area where cultural events are mostly held. Students of the other three universities live in relatively small towns and have less opportunities to engage in activities regarding Japanese culture. Despite all these limitations, they do not only read Japanese culture uni-directionally but also describe its social, historical aspects at a certain level. In terms of Hinkel's definition of the term 'culture', 180 notions provided by students to describe Japanese culture show a balanced distribution between invisible (abstract) and visible (concrete) culture (Figure 2).

In terms of interactivity with Japanese culture, firstly students tend not to effort financially for interaction, and this is reflected in their activities. They tend to contact with Japanese culture mostly through internet-based methods. The other significant point is that they prefer activities that they can move on their personal timelines (e.g. watching anime, film; reading manga) instead of activities that require reciprocal interaction (e.g. club activities).

The less interaction and more infrequent communication there is with real Japanese people, the fact that the academic environment provides a level of knowledge within the Descriptive approach and the lack of involvement with Japanese culture in daily life leads us to interpret that the undergraduate students' Japanese culture image is relatively closer to the 'pictured image' defined by Kawakami. On the other hand, it is a reality that students now tend to acquire the information about Japanese culture that they are interested in and thus shape the image on their own via the internet in tandem with the 'standardized Japanese culture' taught by the teacher and/or educational institution. Some notions not taught in curricula such as fashion, idol, visual-kei, and etc. also support this inference.

Conclusion

It should also be noted that although it seems that they shape Japanese culture via knowledge they have acquired on their own, there may actually be a paradox here. In the 1980s, Japanese culture began to be branded as a soft power with the 'Cool Japan' approach. Especially since the 2000s, Japanese pop culture items such as *anime, manga*, games, fashion and subcultural lifestyles such as *otaku* have been exported to the global market as global cultural products (Goldstein-Gidoni, 2005). The global fetishism of Cool Japan's pop culture elements (Abel, 2011) has also allowed the Japanese language to become a cultural

product. Japanese culture is presented to the global market as 'manufactured cultural items', and the diversity of cultural perceptions generally occurs within the range of options on the market. The examples are not limited to *anime* and *manga*. The sale of *tofu*, one of the simplest elements of Japanese cuisine, and the marketing of martial arts (*Kendō, Aikidō, Judō,* etc.) as a fitness workout, embellished with Eastern mysticism and exoticism, are also examples of the commodification of Japanese culture. Therefore, the possibility that the information students have accessed and acquired 'on their own' may have been produced and created by the market and/or government institutions should also be considered. Accordingly, it is debatable whether the knowledge that individuals gain by themselves has occurred within a pool of commodities or through a deeper, natural process. Hence, evaluating the cultural perceptions of Japanese learners should require both the qualitative and quantitative aspects. In the light of all these data and discussions, the image of Japanese culture according to Japanese learners can be seen in Figure 3.

Figure 3 Typification of Japanese culture of Japanese FL learners
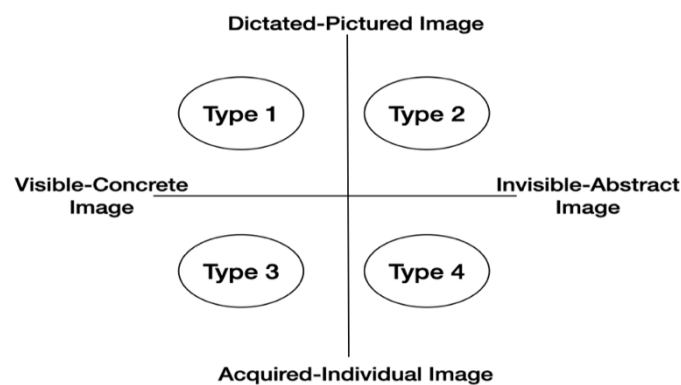
As can be understood from Figure 3, type 1 refers to a visible-concrete Japanese culture image that is formed by external sources, while type 2 refers to an invisible-abstract Japanese culture image that again is shaped by outside sources. On the other side of the coin, types 3 and 4 show us both visible and invisible Japanese culture images that are shaped from students' experiences. The general characteristics of these typologies of the Japanese FL learners in terms of knowledge, perception, and interaction can be summarized in Table 5.

Table 5 General Characteristics of Typologies of Japanese Culture as Described by Japanese FL learners

Type 1	Knowledge	- Relatively superficial, mostly taught by media tools, curriculum or teacher.
	Perception	- Relatively tangible, mostly traditional culture component (foods, festivals, dress, etc.) oriented.
	Interaction	- Relatively limited, mostly no effort to acquire; passive.
Type 2	Knowledge	- Relatively shallow knowledge, mostly taught by media tools, curriculum or teacher.

	Perception	- Mostly focuses on social and cultural norms, rules, customs, behavioral patterns, etc., obtained from tv shows, textbooks, and/or internet media.
	Interaction	- Relatively limited, some efforts made if student is interested in the component.
Type 3	Knowledge	- Relatively deeper, acquired by both outsources (media, curriculum, teacher) and personal effort.
	Perception	- Relatively tangible, mostly interest-based, mostly popular culture component (anime, manga, fashion, etc.) oriented.
	Interaction	- Mostly own efforts, usually via internet media, tv shows, social capital, network.
Type 4	Knowledge	- Relatively intangible and deeper, in some cases more academic, usually use individual sources and networks to procure.
	Perception	- Completely own interest based, mostly focuses on values, norms, history, philosophy, art, etc.
	Interaction	Mostly own efforts, generally via reading texts such as books, papers, researches, textbooks on the subject.

It is a fact that the image of the target culture (C2) of those who major the target language (FL) is shaped according to the regional dynamics, as mentioned earlier. Accordingly, it is also a fact that local or regional findings cannot go beyond being 'field data' in general discussions. Therefore, the findings presented in this paper are also limited to the region where the field study was carried out. In this sense, the cultural perspective typologies of FL students and the general characteristics of these typologies proposed in this paper is a proposition and is thought to have the potential to be further developed and solidified through more field studies in different societies. Last but not least, it is believed that the findings of this paper may contribute to developing a common discussion framework that will enable the exchange of ideas in the target culture (C2) teaching to proceed on more solid ground.

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