


Trends and language learning: Role and significance

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Abstract

As the decision to learn another language, and which language to learn, is firmly grounded in the goals and motivations of the individual, it is important for language educators, advocates, and stakeholders to understand and consider the motivations of individuals – both current and prospective learners – within the framework of broader global and educational trends. Building on this understanding and knowledge, scholars, practitioners, and supporters can effectively adapt and incorporate widespread movements and directions in recruitment, instruction, and advocacy, while at the same time avoiding ephemeral and transitory fads. Reflectively adapted and implemented, trends form an important element of language learning and use. Languages skills and cultural knowledge are more accessible today than ever before, not only through travel, but through the availability of authentic linguistic and cultural content through online resources and social media. However, it is essential for language educators, advocates, and stakeholders to take inspiration from global trends and trends in education in order to develop curriculum, materials, and an advocacy message most likely to resonate with the broadest possible range of current and prospective language learners as well as with decision-makers in our communities, educational institutions, and in our society.

Keywords: trends, language learning, intercultural understanding, global citizenship, multilingualism

Trends and language learning: Role and significance

1. Introduction

The decision to learn another language, and which language to learn, is firmly grounded in the goals and motivations of the individual, it is important for language educators, advocates, and stakeholders to understand and consider the motivations of individuals – both current and prospective learners – within the framework of broader global and educational trends. Building on this understanding and knowledge, scholars, practitioners, and supporters can effectively adapt and incorporate widespread movements and directions in recruitment, instruction, and advocacy, while at the same time avoiding ephemeral and transitory fads. A trend has been defined as a tendency, inclination, movement, style, development, and more (Merriam-Webster, 2026). Although trends have long existed throughout history, a notable example being the court and era of Louis XIV, and trends such as the widespread adoption of coffee as a beverage, the contemporary conversation on trends has included the concepts of future shock, the megatrend, the tipping point, and others (DeJean, 2006; Toffler, 1970; Naisbitt, 1982; Gladwell, 2000).

Current global trends include global issues and the evolving global marketplace, technology, and media, with an emphasis on sustainability, global issues and trade, AI, and improved connectivity (Singh, 2025; Yee, Chui, Roberts, & Smit, 2025), and global educational trends have been examined through the lenses of global issues, the workplace, culture, and wellness (OECD, 2025). Trends in language learning include the growth of language learning worldwide, the most popular languages for learning (English, Spanish, and French), increasing use of technology, and regional variations in order to empower learners to reap all the benefits of multilingualism in a globalized world. Challenges include accessibility, cost, and sustainable motivation (Kent State, n.d.). Multilingualism itself is a trend, with half the world population regularly using more than one language, and the US is one of the most linguistically diverse countries in the world, with 70M speaking a language other than English (Grosjean, 2010/2020; Carreira, 2025; Leveen, 2021). Language learning and use is both a trend and a priority, and “the future of education is in two languages” (Montlaur, 2019; Jaumont, 2017).

Trends are important because they are visible manifestations of the motivations and goals of current and prospective learners. The challenge is for language educators, advocates, stakeholders, and supporters to use our knowledge and understanding of trends to encourage and promote the learning and use of heritage and world languages. Knowledge of the role and nature of trends around us can support the development of a proactive mindset, grounded in the knowledge that progress is often made by seizing a moment or an opportunity favorable to language learning, or by developing a new program or opportunity for language learning and use (Naisbitt, 2006; Kim & Mauborgne, 2015). Another relevant area to consider in actualizing trends in language learning is change management, including disruptive innovation. Change management is a complex process, including adaptive and transformational change, beginning with creating a sense of urgency, along with multiple steps such as goals, vision, performance indicators, etc. (Miller, 2020; Kotter, 2008; Dyer, Gregersen, & Christensen, 2019). In order to do this, we need to understand the nature and life cycle of trends so that we can choose the best long-term trends and the correct timing in order to gain maximum benefit for language learners.

2. The Language Learning Mindset – Motivations and Goals

Current trends in language learning include, but are not limited to, motivation, goals, and methods. Motivation, whether intrinsic/integrative or instrumental, has become increasingly important as learners consider an increasing number of options in the decision whether or not to study a language, and which language(s) to study. In addition, in the US, where 70M speak a language other than English in the home, and many others have one or more additional languages as part of their family and personal background and identity, heritage languages and heritage language learning and use play an especially significant role in language learning motivation. Goals of language

learners also vary widely, driven by values and interests of the individual, and range from personal and professional reasons to global citizenship.

While the decision to learn another language, and which language to learn, is firmly grounded in the goals and motivations of the individual, the motivations of current and prospective language learners may be changing, and these motivations may include not only personal and professional reasons, but also the desire to learn or learn more about a heritage language and culture, intercultural communication, global citizenship and the desire to understand others in order to work together to create a better world. Recruitment and retention at all levels, in both educational institutions and community programs, need to take into account and address the wide range of learner motivations in order to develop sustainable language learning motivation.

Methods have changed significantly, including technological options like videoconferencing, conversational AI, social media, the instant availability of authentic language and media online, and many more. Language educators and stakeholders need to be proactive in all of these areas in order to attract and retain learner interest. Recruitment of language learners needs to address these motivations, and the development of sustainable motivation needs to focus on the motivation of the individual learner through a variety of means, including technology. Technology offers access to authentic language and a wide range of learning experiences through online and social media, videoconferencing, conversational AI, hybrid learning, and more.

Historically, language learners have been driven by integrative and instrumental motivation (Dornyei, 2005; Gardner, 2010), with integrative, or intrinsic, motivation typically the stronger factor in successful language learning outcome. In more recent years, the COVID-19 pandemic caused many to seek distraction and mental stimulation in language learning, often online. In addition, language learning motivation may vary over time and in different geographic regions, with the values of successive generations, including self-development and self-esteem, driving the acquisition of a variety of skills, including additional and heritage language learning. However, the importance of individual learner motivation cannot be overstated.

It is essential for the language educator to be aware of and to respond to individual learner motivations, and for institutions and language curricula to allow for flexibility in approaches to permit a sufficiently broad approach to both ensure progress in achieving language learning goals and milestones as well as creativity for learners to enjoy maximum satisfaction in the classroom, the community, and in achieving their individual personal goals. This can include, but is not limited to, a multidisciplinary approach to experiential learning, immersive experiences, and individualized instruction.

3. The Nature and Significance of Trends

A trend has been defined as a tendency, inclination, movement, style, development, and more (Merriam-Webster, 2026). The current conversation about trends has included and, to some extent, been framed by the concept of “future shock,” whose core concepts include the end of permanence, replaced by transience, novelty, and diversity, with the limits of adaptability the central challenge, and strategies for survival including coping, education, technology, and social change (Toffler, 1970). Subsequently, the term “megatrend” has been used to describe ten directions transforming life – the information society, high tech/high touch, world economy, long term, decentralization, self-help, participatory democracy, networking, the global south, and multiple options (Naisbitt, 1982). In addition, the moment at which a trend, or change, takes hold and becomes widespread and/or successful has been described as the “tipping point,” driven by the law of the few, or a small number of influential people, the stickiness factor, or the unique and specific aspects of the message that make it memorable, and the power of context, or the environment that makes it possible for an idea to spread (Gladwell, 2000). Elements, or anatomy, of a trend typically include the cast of characters, or trendsetters and creators, the motive, or psychology for creating or following a trend, the setting, or where trends begin, the trend in action, and its conclusion (Vejlgaard, 2008). In considering trends, it is important to examine the implications of both trends, which can be of brief duration, and megatrends, which are long-lasting and multidisciplinary (Naisbitt, 1982; Naughtin, Schleiger,

Bratanova, Terhorst, & Hajkovicz, 2024).

Elements of successful trends include emotional connection and prolonged engagement, along with the speed of optimization (Rascoff, 2023). Trend analysis examines data to establish patterns, formulate predictions, and make informed decisions (Knowledge Academy, 2025). The top business trends for 2025 and beyond include education and upskilling - microlearning, boot camps for specific skills, enrichment programs for children, and coaching for neurodiverse learners (US Chamber, 2026).

Trends are important in our world and in our lives, and they are also important in language learning, and for language educators, advocates, and stakeholders in terms of predicting, understanding, and managing trends that impact interest in languages, language teaching, learning, and enrollment in language courses at all levels. Trends can be positive and involve increasing interest, engagement, and enrollment, or the opposite, meaning decreasing interest. The trend can also be one of stable interest, or seasonal interest, as in travel language courses, etc. Trends can also be short-term, as in the surge in interest in France and in French during the period leading up to the 2024 Olympics in Paris. These upward, downward, horizontal, short-term, long-term and seasonal trends can each have different implications for strategic planning and operational decisions, requiring agile leadership on the part of language educators, advocates, and stakeholders. All of these have implications for education and for language learning and use.

The framing trend in foreign language learning has been its growth worldwide due to increasing globalization, and defining elements include the number of language learners worldwide (1.5B), the number of world languages (7K), and the global language learning market valuation (\$70B in 2022 predicted to rise to \$188B in 2028). Digital learning initiatives predicted to grow \$14B between 2022 and 2028, and the growth of heritage language instruction (Kent State, n.d.). On the other hand, paradoxically, language enrollments at college and university programs continue to decline, and many programs are at risk, or even have been lost – for a variety of reasons, including another trend - the decreasing number of college-age students in the US due to the “birth dearth” and decrease in migration (Wattenberg, 1987; US Census, 2026).

The current conversation on trends includes megatrends such as the information society, the pull of technology, the global marketplace, long-term perspectives, self-help, participatory environments, networking, and the prevalence of choice (Naisbitt, 1982). It also includes the feeling of being overwhelmed by the speed and global nature of change and is also characterized by information overload and the short duration of specific changes (Toffler, 1970). Trends can be caused by small changes, driven by specific individuals, the stickiness, or memorable quality of the message itself, and the context in terms of time, circumstances, and place (Gladwell, 2000). Trends can also include the voice of the individual, the acceptance of career change, the sense of community, and flexibility (Grant, 2017; Glassdoor, 2025). These concepts can be applied to language learning, use, and advocacy, including advocacy strategies as well as teaching methods and learning environments.

Implications of the importance of trends include staying relevant and adapting to change, and these are key to language learning and use. It is important for language educators, advocates, stakeholders, and supporters to identify the patterns behind successful trends, and the role and importance of luck, timing, and environment, in addition to hard work. Global megatrends in education include both polarization and inequality, along with how artificial intelligence, virtual reality, and other technologies could transform teaching and learning (OECD, 2025).

3.1 Why are trends important?

Trends are important because they inform us about the social changes and evolution that impact the decisions and choices of individuals. Informed, language educators, advocates, and stakeholders are better able to engage in conversation in ways that appeal to the individual in order to elicit positive response and engagement, to plan effective strategies, and to continue to innovate in order to stay relevant and competitive, and to respond to ongoing change.

3.2 *Why, When, and How to Adopt and Adapt Trends in Language Education and Advocacy without Falling into the Trap of Being Trendy*

The use of trends in language education and advocacy can help to maximize interest and engagement in languages among current and prospective learners as well as among decision-makers, including parents and communities, as well as decision-makers in educational institutions, government, and business. However, it is not just important to be informed by global and educational trends, it is essential to know when and how to apply this knowledge in the classroom and beyond in order to effectively make the case for languages without losing credibility and falling into the trap of being trendy. It is important for language educators, advocates, and stakeholders to be aware of trends in order to develop a message in alignment with the changing needs of current and prospective learners and of decision-makers at all levels. However, it is equally important to choose carefully which elements of trends to adopt in order to stay relevant while also staying true to the message of accessible and affordable language learning and multilingualism for all interested learners.

For example, a significant global and educational trend includes global citizenship and intercultural understanding. Incorporating these concepts into language learning goes beyond the visible linkage between language skills and cultural knowledge and actually developing meaningful pathways for learners to use classroom knowledge to engage with those of other cultures and work toward creating a better world. Experiential learning. Both locally and globally, can provide this opportunity, as can partnerships with international organizations that may include a wide range of opportunities and inspiration. Another significant trend is the attractiveness of technology in personal and professional life, as well as in education and learning. In this case, it is essential to meaningfully incorporate all the relevant technologies into learning, in the traditional classroom, in hybrid and online learning, and in outreach to non-traditional learners and to those with disabilities.

4. **Incorporating Trends into Language Advocacy**

While it is important to discuss the nature and importance of trends in language learning, use, and advocacy, it is essential to demonstrate this through successful initiatives inspired by overarching trends, as well as trends often considered especially appropriate for language education and use within the context of global education and global citizenship.

The following are just a few of the many examples, as part of its broader global mission, the French government has developed an international strategy framed by the global nature of the French language and based on learning in French, communicating in French, and creating in French – in alignment with the global nature of trends, as well as trends encouraging communication, creativity, and individuality (French Diplomacy, n.d.). Another initiative, framed by global trends, is the bilingual revolution – framed by the global importance of multilingualism, as well as the importance of heritage languages in the life of the individual, the role of family and community involvement, and of multilingualism in cognition and academic achievement (Jaumont, 2017). Other examples of effective language initiatives grounded in global trends include CinéSchool, which empowers the individual learner to experience creative media outside the classroom; the Franco-American Centre, whose programs and initiatives include classes, conversation groups, and sociocultural events; and the Nous Foundation/New Orleans Foundation for Francophone Cultures, which encourages creativity and learning FAC, n.d. Villa Albertine, n.d.; Nous, 2025).

5. **The Role and Importance of Trends in Learner-Centered Language Education**

Trends in language education tend to concern either methodologies and techniques, or core values. The adaptation of trends may develop and evolve more quickly in terms of methodologies and strategies of language instruction and learning, and they may be more durable and long-lasting in terms of practices based on core values, including heritage languages and multilingualism. Interestingly, the two can co-exist within the same learner or same educator, with strategies and methodologies often serving as tools to advance values-driven language

learning.

5.1 Trends in Strategies and Methodologies

It is important to remember that the strategies and methods used in language learning can play a vital role in supporting sustainable motivation among learners and in enhancing the appeal of language learning among prospective learners, with strategies and methods that respond to the time constraints facing many learners and the desirability of being able to demonstrate language skills and proficiency to oneself as well as to others among the most effective. Beyond the obvious appeal of speed of acquisition and the demonstrability of language skills, strategies and methods that leverage the general appeal of technology are among the most readily accepted by learners.

5.2 The Importance of Micro-Learning and Bite-Sized Lessons

In terms of strategies and methodologies for both the learner and the educator, it is important to remember that the time and attention available for language learning are often limited, making micro-learning and the bite-sized lesson appealing and effective. Bite-sized learning is fundamental to contemporary language learning. On the one hand, people of all ages are learning languages, and time is a real issue for all/most of them. This is where short, targeted, lessons are key – on specific vocabulary or grammar, or a brief conversation or cultural experience/lesson. Whether planning lessons for adult and non-traditional learners with multiple commitments or students in a traditional learning environment with multiple courses and activities in a typical day, micro-learning is an effective approach. Language educators, advocates, and stakeholders need to encourage, develop, and support targeted language lessons and instructions in alignment with the interests and learning styles of contemporary learners.

Traditional language classes may last from 40 minutes to an hour or more, and yet, the typical attention span is 40 seconds (Mark, APA, 2023). This disconnect has important implications for language instruction. While in a traditional classroom the possibilities for lessons in alignment with the attention span are limited at best, online learning offers more flexible opportunities for bite-sized lessons more likely to capture the attention of learners. These short lessons can either build on an overarching theme or can touch on a variety of areas in order to engage a broad range of learners. Language educators, advocates, and stakeholders need to work to develop and support language lessons to respond to the attention span of the current learner while continuing to deliver curriculum in alignment with a more traditional attention span.

5.3 Demonstrable learning

Among the most significant trends in language learning is the importance of demonstrable learning. In addition to clear standards and benchmarks, it is essential for language learners to be able to demonstrate their language skills to themselves and to others and to see the impact that their skills can have in the community and beyond (Eaton, 2010). Language educators, advocates, and supporters need to encourage learners to use their language skills in a variety of authentic settings.

5.4 Technology

The use of technology has dramatically transformed language learning, making language learning more accessible, flexible, easier to individualize, and perhaps more fun through online and social media, games, conversational AI, virtual reality, all of which provide additional opportunities to engage with the target language. The availability of authentic resources through media, the use of videoconferencing for online learning and to encourage interactive communication, and conversational AI are among the best-known uses of technology in language learning. Language educators, advocates, and supporters need to support the use of new and emerging technologies to advance language learning and use.

5.5 *Multisensory Learning*

A language learning environment that includes visual, auditory, and kinesthetic elements to support the learning of vocabulary and grammatical rules can be useful for all learners, including those with learning differences or learning disabilities. While the Orton Gillingham approach has long been used in addressing reading difficulties, multisensory learning may be a relatively new and novel approach for language learning (OGA, n.d.). Language educators, advocates, and supporters need to embrace multisensory learning in order to promote language learning and use for all our students.

5.6 *Multiple Language Learning*

The availability of low- or no-cost language learning apps and other materials has made it possible for language learners to engage in learning more than one language at a time. Management of this often-self-directed simultaneous language learning is an evolving issue for language educators. Language educators, advocates, and supporters need to embrace the idea of multilingualism in a multilingual world and encourage the learning of multiple languages.

6. Trends in Values-Based Language Learning – Heritage and World Languages

In addition to practical and professional reasons for language learning, often referred to as instrumental motivation, current and prospective language learners are motivated to learn heritage languages in order to reconnect with their family culture and to learn additional world languages in order to effectively communicate with the globalized, multilingual world and to engage as global citizens. These intrinsic motivations are generally considered the most powerful motivations for language learning, and within this context, language learning and use are characterized by long-term trends such as intercultural understanding and competence, global citizenship, multilingualism, and interdisciplinarity. Along with the strategies and methods inspired by trends for all language learners already described, language learning within a global context, including but not limited to experiential learning, global education, and authentic language, is strongly indicated.

6.1 *Heritage Languages*

The number of people who speak another language in the home in the US has increased to around 70M, and if one considers the number of people who may have a lost or forgotten heritage language in their family, the number of people potentially interested in learning and/or using a heritage language is far greater (Dietrich & Hernandez, 2022). This dynamic upward trend calls for a robust response from language educators, advocates, and stakeholders. It is interesting to reflect on the different types of materials and instructional modalities needed to effectively respond to the needs of learners of all ages, in schools and colleges, as well as the needs of non-traditional learners. In addition, those who have a heritage language may have varying levels of language skills, ranging from those who speak the language as a mother tongue and/or in the home to those who have partially or completely lost or forgotten a family language, but would like to re-connect with their heritage language. Language educators, advocates, and stakeholders need to work to increase awareness of the importance of heritage languages and to develop, expand, and support heritage language programs, using the widest possible array of methodologies to meet the needs of all interested learners, within a framework of respect for other cultures both here at home and around the world.

6.2 *Trends and Additional World Languages in a Multilingual World – Soft Skills, Cultural Fluency, and Interdisciplinarity*

The same respect for other languages and cultures in an interconnected world is the framework for incorporating general trends in language learning and those specific to global education, understanding, and engagement. With a goal of intercultural communication and understanding, language learners may be less

interested in traditional learning activities centered on grammar and literature, and more engaged by interactive communicative activities, media, and cultural experiences. Paradoxically, alongside the increasing use of technology, including but not limited to language learning apps and conversational AI, the need for communicative skills and cultural knowledge has become more important. While cultural knowledge, understanding, and skills have long been at the heart of language teaching and learning, they play an increasingly important role in our lives in a globalized world and in language learning. Rather than emphasizing grammar, vocabulary, and/or literature, many language learners are driven by goals of global citizenship and sustainability, and the objective of being able to converse with those of another culture in their language rather than resorting to English.

While it is easy to think that language learning has been traditionally grounded in the study of literature in the target language, especially at the postsecondary level, a multidisciplinary approach to the undergraduate language major has been recommended as a means to broaden interest and to meet potential enrollment challenges (MLA, 2007). Developing courses to respond to evolving student interests and creating joint programs and double majors are additional recommendations (MLA, 2015; MLA, 2016). In response to growing interest in internationalization and international education in colleges and universities, Languages across the Curriculum (LAC) and Culture and Languages across the Curriculum (CLAC), using languages and culture as a learning tool across the curriculum, have sought to expand the disciplinary focus of the foreign language major (Straight, 1998). In addition, adding language-based modules to existing courses taught in English is another way to demonstrate the applicability of languages across the disciplines.

6.3 Cultural Understanding and Global Citizenship as Language Learning Goals

While technological advances, including AI, may facilitate the process of language learning, the two primary goals of learning an additional or heritage – cultural understanding and global citizenship – remain central to language learning in terms of motivation and successful learning outcome. Specific areas include global citizenship and students as agents of change, self-awareness and emotional intelligence, interpersonal skills, global competencies, learner autonomy, and more (Chong, 2024). Within the framework of these core values, language educators, advocates, and stakeholders can encourage learning activities and reflection to build cultural understanding. In addition to learning about and acquiring knowledge of other cultures, within the context of language learning, cultural understanding also impacts how we interact with those of other cultures – what we say and how we speak in a wide range of contexts (AF, 2025). However, it is important also to consider cultural identity in any discussion of cultural understanding. As the United States has always been a nation of immigrants, it is important to remember this and to frame any discussion of language learning in terms of both additional and heritage language learning, cultures, and cultural identity.

6.4 The Significance of Multilingualism in Cosmopolitanism and Global Citizenship and Global Education

Cosmopolitanism has been described in terms of global citizenship and values, respect for other cultures, tolerance, and interconnectedness, all of which are relevant to language learning and use. Within the broad discussion of global citizenship and cosmopolitanism, issues especially significant to language educators and language learners include the relationship between local and global citizenship, the wide range of issues on which perspectives can be different, the inevitability of these conversation, and its impact on personal cultural identity (Adams & Carfagna, 2006; Appiah, 2006; Gunesch, 2004).

Global citizenship has been described as identity and actions that transcend the local and embrace the global (Oxfam, 2025; TGCI, n.d.). Among the many global citizenship initiatives, Many Languages One World, a partnership between the UNAI (United Nations Academic Impact) and ELS, is among the most interesting, and provided the opportunity for college and university students from around the world to present on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the General Assembly Hall. MLOW (Many Languages One World) was built around an essay contest where students wrote in a learned second language that was also one of the official languages of the UN, and essay contest winners present in the language of their winning essay (UNAI, n.d; UNAI,

n.d.a.). Perhaps the most interesting aspect of this initiative has been its emphasis on student-created local action plans. Global education empowers learners to develop a global perspective and the ability to take global and local action steps by teaching about the interconnectedness of the world through critical thinking and interdisciplinary approaches.

6.5 Encouraging cultural understanding and global citizenship in the language classroom and beyond

Above all, it is important to remember the significance of language and culture in increasing tolerance (WEF; 2017; Thompson, 2016). Beyond critical thinking and social intelligence, it is also significant and revelatory that language skills and cultural knowledge also enhance and increase our tolerance of ambiguity, increasing our comfort level and acceptance of situations and experiences that are not within the framework of our previous experience. It is this ability, often referred to as tolerance of ambiguity, that highlights the true value of language skills and cultural knowledge in a multicultural and multilingual world (Thompson, 2016; WEF, 2017).

In terms of encouraging cultural understanding in the language classroom, it is always important to highlight the importance of language skills. However, beyond the classroom, literally, a world of possibilities exists, including literature, film, and online and social media, along with community events, both online and in person, and – of course – travel, including study abroad, and cultural exchanges (AF, 2025). Within the language classroom, language educators routinely present a wide variety of perspectives on both scholarly topics and those in the current conversation through the use of authentic language and cultural resources. In addition, an examination of the role and use of multiple languages in international and global organizations and initiatives reveals multiple pathways to the development of a global citizenship perspective for the language learner. It is important to support those students who may already view their language studies as part of their global worldview, while also support those who are taking their first steps toward engagement in the wider world,

6.6 Multilingualism, Cosmopolitanism, and the Heritage Language Learner

While it is easy to think of cosmopolitanism and global citizenship in terms of interest, empathy, and engagement in distant places and people, it is important to remember that for many, the first step toward interest in other cultures is through their heritage, their family, and their own cultural identity. It is necessary to build interest in the broader world beginning with the language and culture that are already part of the identity of the language learner. An estimated 70M people in the US speak a language other than English in the home, and countless others – while perhaps not fluent in a heritage language – have family members and traditions from a family heritage culture, whether a Native American or immigrant culture. In other words, an approach that includes language skills and cultural knowledge as a pathway to cultural awareness and even global citizenship is essential.

6.7 The Role and Importance of Cultural Understanding and Global Citizenship in Development of Sustainable Motivation in Language Learning: Mindset Shifts

Motivation, specifically intrinsic motivation, has been described as the most effective pathway to language learning success. (Dornyei, 2005; Gardner, 2010). An interest in another culture, or other cultures, is part of the learner's identity, and language learning can be presented as a pathway to cultural fluency. On the other hand, the desire of a student to change the world, or to make the world a better place, is an equally valid pathway to linguistic and cultural fluency. Mindset shifts have been described as changes in core beliefs to those that may be more productive or beneficial, or to a growth mindset generally. Mindset shifts can impact student attitudes about their language learning ability and skills alongside their development of cultural knowledge and interest in other cultures. Mindset shifts can play an important role in the language learning process, and as a goal of language learning. It is important for language educators and stakeholders to support language learners as they develop both their language skills and a global mindset.

7. Educational Implications and Action Steps for Educators, Learners, and Educational Institutions

Trends play a significant role in language education and learning, and language educators can leverage relevant trends in empowering students to achieve proficiency and fluency and in enhancing the appeal of language learning among current and prospective learners, institutional decision-makers, parents, and communities. The appeal of technology, the importance of micro-learning, and the need for demonstrable learning, along with heritages languages and the need for multilingualism in the globalized workplace and in global citizenship are among the most important trends for the language educator. Technology can be effectively used both as a learning and as a motivational tool, supporting achievement and sustainable motivation among current learners and in strengthening the appeal of language learning among prospective learners. In addition to accessing authentic content in the target language through online and social media, video-conferencing and conversational AI are among the tools that can be used to support language and cultural learning and to enhance the appeal of language classes and independent language learning.

Micro-learning can be applied to classroom instruction, assignments, and individualized learning by language educators in response to many demands competing for the attention of the learner in a multi-tasking environment, supporting both sustainable motivation and achievement. The bite-sized lesson concept can be applied to all aspects of language learning, including conversation, grammar, and vocabulary, along with literature and cultural topics. Demonstrable learning is important to incorporate into the language learning experience, empowering learners at all levels to engage in conversation and communicative language use from the earliest stages of language learning, demonstrating not only to the learner, but also to parents, institutional decision-makers, and language supporters and stakeholders in the community the real, tangible progress being made. Demonstrable learning can take place within the school and community through public speaking, experiential learning, and socio-cultural events, as well as through online and social media.

With increasing global mobility, heritage languages – always an important factor both in education and in our communities – have become even more significant as a local and global skill. Language educators, advocates, and stakeholders can lead in encouraging and supporting the use of additional language in our schools and educational institutions, in the workplace, and in society. Specifically, heritage language supporters and stakeholders can develop both curriculum along with experiential learning opportunities where both the language skills and the value of diverse languages and cultures are highlighted.

The significance of language skills and cultural knowledge in the global workplace and in global citizenship is of ever-increasing importance in a globalized and multilingual world. Professional language courses and experiential learning, in addition to interdisciplinary collaborations among business and STEM educators can better prepare students for international careers and for careers serving multilingual and multicultural communities here at home. As for global citizenship, language skills and cultural knowledge can lead to increased intercultural understanding and provide both the motivation and skills needed for effective global citizenship. Cultural knowledge and intercultural understanding can be included in classroom, school/campus, and community outreach, activities, and learning, as well as through participation in programs for students and young offered by international organizations, many of whom lead by example with more than one official and working language.

The above are just a few of the many global trends that can inspire and be adapted to language learning to enhance both traditional classroom learning as well as online and individual language learning outcomes and language use by the dedicated language educator, advocate, or stakeholder. The partnership among language educators, advocates, supporters, and stakeholders continues to be essential in ensuring a multilingual world.

8. Current Trends and Future Directions Why Trends Matter – Enrollments and Equality

Language skills and cultural knowledge are important in terms of cultural understanding, global citizenship, professional opportunities and advancement, and the personal and cultural life of the individual – and this is true

in terms of both additional languages and heritage languages. In contrast to the demonstrable benefits, enrollments in foreign language learning, especially at the college and university level, have declined in recent years (American Councils, 2017; AMACAD, 2017; MLA, 2016). Incorporating some of the most relevant trends into existing language programs may increase interest and enrollment, and even to make language learning fun. On the other hand, not every interested learner has the opportunity to learn a language in school as the desired language or language level, or even any language at all may not be available. In addition, using a variety of methodologies and media may expand the opportunity for language learning to students of all ages with different styles and those with learning differences and disabilities. Technology-supported language learning through apps, online and social media, AI, etc. may empower language learning both within and beyond the classroom.

9. Conclusions

Reflectively adapted and implemented, trends form an important element of language learning and use. Languages skills and cultural knowledge are more accessible today than ever before, not only through travel, but through the availability of authentic linguistic and cultural content through online resources and social media. However, it is essential for language educators, advocates, and stakeholders to take inspiration from global trends and trends in education in order to develop curriculum, materials, and an advocacy message most likely to resonate with the broadest possible range of current and prospective language learners as well as with decision-makers in our communities, educational institutions, and in our society. The challenge is to take inspiration from relevant, universal trends, rather than to seek to be trendy, embracing transitory and/or irrelevant trends. Above all, it is important to adapt trends and to plan for language learning and use in consideration of the needs of all our learners and language speakers, of all ages and abilities, including learners of all ages and those who face handicaps and learning disabilities, and those who may not be able to afford traditional language classes.

While a distinction is often made between those who learn and use languages for pragmatic and professional reasons, and those who learn for a wide range of individual reasons, a desire to engage as a global citizen, or pursuit of a personal or cultural interest, it is essential to note that – in addition to the trends that can be effectively adapted for all language learners – technology, micro-learning, demonstrable learning, etc. – the intercultural and multidisciplinary approaches that are considered especially suited for current and future global citizens could be more widely adopted in language learning for all for more effective learning with successful results. Key trends to inspire current and prospective learners include global citizenship and intercultural communication, the importance of heritage languages, and the increasing willingness to embrace technology as a learning and informational tool.

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