

Original Paper

A Study on Correlation between Intercultural Sensitivity and the Acquisition of Culture-loaded Vocabulary for Junior High School Students

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Abstract

As a crucially essential part of intercultural communication competence, intercultural sensitivity has been receiving extensive attention from scholars at home and abroad. English Curriculum Standards for Compulsory Education (2022 Edition) also clearly sets out the importance of “cultural awareness” and “intercultural communication competence” from a variety of perspectives. Language acts as the carrier of culture and vocabulary acts as the basic unit of language. Therefore, whether students can grasp the cultural meaning of vocabulary plays an important role in their acquisition of culture. This study aims to investigate the correlation between intercultural sensitivity and the acquisition of culture-loaded vocabulary for junior high school students using a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods. The results show that there is a significant correlation between intercultural sensitivity and the acquisition of culture-loaded vocabulary, and five factors of intercultural sensitivity (interaction engagement, respect for cultural difference, interaction confidence, interaction enjoyment, and interaction attentiveness) influence the acquisition of culture-loaded vocabulary to different degrees. This study not only inspires students on how to improve their intercultural sensitivity as well as their ability to acquire culture-loaded vocabulary but also provides suggestions for contemporary foreign language education researchers on how to enhance students’

cultural awareness.

Keywords

cultural awareness, intercultural communication competence, intercultural sensitivity, junior high school students, culture-loaded vocabulary

1. Introduction

The English Curriculum Standards for Compulsory Education (2022 Edition) states that the unifying role of core competence are supposed to be brought into play, and cultural awareness, as one of the four elements of core competence, is a breakthrough in the value orientation of the contemporary English curriculum. The cultivation of students' cultural awareness helps students understand different cultures, compare the differences between them, gradually develop the awareness and ability of cross-cultural communication, cultivate students' global cognition and awareness of the community of human destiny, and enhance their cultural self-confidence.

Language acts as the carrier of culture, and culture itself is expressed and inherited in language. Vocabulary, as a basic component of language, carries the connotation and characteristics of culture. Language reflects the values, traditions, and social customs of a culture. Languages in different cultures possess different types of vocabularies and expressions, reflecting that culture's view and comprehension of the world. Culture influences the use and meaning of vocabulary. The same vocabulary may have different meanings and usage scenarios in different cultures. By learning and using the vocabulary of a particular culture, an individual can not only understand the characteristics of that culture but also deepen his or her identification with and understanding of the culture. Language, culture, and vocabulary interact with each other and build people's cognitive world and social interactions together. Understanding this relationship helps us to learn and use language better, and also helps to promote cross-cultural communication and understanding.

2. Current Researches

2.1 Current Researches on Intercultural Sensitivity

Intercultural sensitivity is a crucial aspect of cross-cultural competence that is increasingly important in our diverse society and it has attracted extensive attention from scholars at home and abroad. International scholars focus on the construction of mature measurement models and how to use appropriate measurement models for in-depth research. The Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) proposed by Bennett provides a framework for comprehending the developmental stages of intercultural competence which divides cross-cultural sensitivity into six stages: denial of difference, defense against difference, minimization of difference, acceptance of difference, adaptation to difference and integration of difference (Bennett, 1993). And then Bennett and Hammer developed Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) which is a psychometric instrument that measures

cross-cultural competence and training needs in individuals (Bennett & Hammer, 2003). Chen and Starosta (1996), based on the above research, further explored the definition of intercultural sensitivity which is a multidimensional concept for dynamic development. Based on this core concept, they developed a highly validated Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS) in 2000 which consists of intercultural engagement, respect for cultural difference, interaction confidence, interaction enjoyment and interaction attentiveness.

Domestic research on intercultural sensitivity started late but has gradually gained attention in recent years. The research mainly focuses on the following aspects. Firstly, for the measurement of intercultural sensitivity, Zhou (2007) adopted ISS and tested the level of intercultural sensitivity of college students. As noted by Zhou (2007), the overall intercultural sensitivity of college students in the university was at the middle level, and some specific measures were proposed to improve the level of intercultural sensitivity of college students. In addition, domestic scholars have found that intercultural sensitivity is a multidimensional concept, which is affected by a variety of factors, including nationality, occupation, learning experience, etc. As stated by Peng (2006), nationality and occupation have a significant effect on intercultural sensitivity, in which Chinese people's intercultural sensitivity is higher than that of Thai people, and English majors' intercultural sensitivity is higher than that of non-English majors. As argued by Zhang (2022) found that different study-abroad experiences had a significant effect on intercultural sensitivity of Chinese undergraduates. Based on the results of the study, suggestions for improving intercultural sensitivity of Chinese undergraduates are proposed.

In general, the research on intercultural sensitivity is deepening both at home and abroad, and scholars are working to understand and enhance this ability through a variety of methods and perspectives. Nowadays, the research mainly focuses on college students. However, the current situation of intercultural sensitivity of middle school students, especially junior high school students, and its influencing factors need to be further studied.

2.2 Current Researches on Culture-loaded Vocabulary

Culture-loaded vocabulary refers to iconic linguistic units defining the unique connotation of a certain culture, encompass words, phrases and idioms unique to a particular cultural context (Liao, 2000). These terms are essential for expressing concepts that are specific to a particular cultural context. In the study of culture-loaded vocabulary, researchers aim to identify specific terms that are unique to a language and may not have direct translations in other languages (Leeds, 1979). And for the classification of culture-loaded vocabulary, International scholar G. Leech classifies lexical meanings into seven different types: conceptual meaning, connotative meaning, social meaning, affective meaning, reflected meaning, collective meaning and thematic meaning, and he groups connotative meaning, social meaning, affective meaning, reflected meaning and collective meaning to a word's associative meaning (Wang, 2001). For the domestic scholars, they also classified the culture-loaded vocabulary. Hu (1988) distinguishes between culture-loaded vocabulary and non-culture-loaded

vocabulary and believes that culture-loaded vocabulary contains special cultural meanings of the nation, which are directly or indirectly reflected in the vocabulary level of the culture of the nation. He thinks that culture-loaded vocabulary includes idioms, metaphors and so on. Wang (2022) believes that culture-loaded vocabulary can be divided into eight categories according to different aspects of people's lives: political, social, legends and allusions, colors, animals, human, food and others.

In a word, there are few studies on how and to what extent intercultural sensitivity correlates with the learning of culture-loaded vocabulary. Therefore, it is essential to take the two factors: culture-loaded vocabulary and intercultural sensitivity together into theoretical and empirical study.

3. Research Design

3.1 Research Questions

The main research question of this study is to explore how is the correlation between junior high school students' intercultural sensitivity and the acquisition of culture-loaded vocabulary, and how the five factors of intercultural sensitivity (interaction engagement, respect for cultural difference, interaction confidence, interaction enjoyment, interaction attentiveness) influence the acquisition of culture-loaded vocabulary and to what degrees.

3.2 Research Subjects

This study took a middle school in Changchun as the research basis to investigate and analyze the status of junior high school students' intercultural sensitivity and acquisition of culture-loaded vocabulary among 485 students in 14 classes of the junior high school's second-year English learners, in which three students from the experimental class and three students from the parallel class were interviewed respectively.

Junior high school period from is the golden duration of compulsory education and the key period of one's growth. The first year of junior high school students have just entered junior high school, the students' learning level of cultural vocabulary is limited, and the third year of junior high school students are facing graduation, especially the looming midterm examination, and they don't have the energy and time to cooperate with this survey. Therefore, this study chooses the second year junior high school students as the sample to measure the intercultural sensitivity and culture-loaded vocabulary acquisition of junior high school students.

3.3 Research Tools

3.3.1 Questionnaire

This study adopts Chen's Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS) that consists of 24 questions, categorized into 5 dimensions: interaction engagement, respect for cultural difference, interaction confidence, interaction enjoyment, and interaction attentiveness. And these corresponding items are shown in Table 1. Interaction engagement refers to the tendency and degree of communicative participation, covering questions 1, 11, 13, 21, 23, and 24. Respect for cultural difference refers to the awareness and

recognition of cultural differences, covering questions 2, 7, 8, 16, 18, and 20. Interaction confidence refers to the degree of confidence in participating in communication, covering questions 3, 4, 5, 6, and 10. Interaction enjoyment refers to the satisfaction gained after participating in communication. It refers to the degree of satisfaction and happiness after participating in communication, covering questions 9, 12, and 15. Interaction attentiveness refers to the willingness and degree of concentration of the communicative subject in the process of participating in communication, covering questions 14, 17, and 19.

The questionnaire is based on a five-point Likert scale, in which 1 means “strongly disagree”, 2 means “disagree”, 3 means “uncertain”, 4 means “agree” and 5 means “strongly agree”. Participants are allowed to choose only one of the options. A total of 500 questionnaires were returned, of which 15 were invalid. The author adopted SPSS software to reverse-score some of the reverse questions and then analyzed the reliability of the questionnaire through SPSS software. The Cronbach α is 0.74 (Table 2), so the questionnaire is credible.

Table 1. Items of ISS

	Name of the 5 Perspectives	Correspond Items
1	Interaction engagement	Items 1, 11, 13, 21, 23, 24
2	Respect for cultural difference	Items 2, 7, 8, 16, 18, 20
3	Interaction confidence	Items 3, 4, 5, 6, 10
4	Interaction enjoyment	Items 9, 12, 15
5	Interaction attentiveness	Items 14, 17, 19

Table 2. The Reliability of the Questionnaire

Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
.74	24

3.3.2 Test on Culture-loaded Vocabulary

The test covers Wang's classification that culture-loaded vocabulary can be divided into 8 categories according to different aspects of people's lives: political, social, legends and allusions, colors, animals, human, food and others (Wang, 2002). The test consists of 30 vocabulary test multiple-choice questions and 5 fill-in-the-blank questions. Based on the consideration of junior high school students' vocabulary level, this test retains the 20 questions of Dai (2018) for reference and combines the relevant cultural vocabulary expressions integrated in the last five years of midterm exams. The innovation of this text is adding 15 questions which were based on basic expressions from The English Curriculum Standards for Compulsory Education (2022 Edition) such as month, day of the week, etc., as well as some words such as some geographic names, some abbreviations of the names of some countries and important

organizations, some names of important festivals, and some Chinese cultural terms.

The test takes approximately 20 minutes to complete including 3 questions. The 1st question tests junior high school students' mastery of some everyday English phrases and expressions of basic common sense, with a total of 10 questions, each of which has 2 options, A and B, and only one correct option, which is not too difficult for students to choose according to the meaning of the contextual sentences. The 2nd question tests junior high school students' mastery of the cultural meanings behind individual vocabulary words, with a total of 20 questions, each with four choices, A, B, C and D, but only one correct choice; the 3rd question tests senior high school students' mastery of some English sayings, with a total of five questions, to make the test more differentiated. Some of the questions in the test are categorized as shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Selected Question Items for Specific Categories of Culture-loaded Vocabulary Test

Classification	Examples
Political	Q27, Item 2: Examine the cultural meaning of Independent Day .
Social	Q10, Item 1: Examine the Western custom of tipping the waiters.
Legend and allusion	Q30, Item 2: The word <i>dragon</i> in the west has specific allusions and cultural connotations as the a symbol of evil, while in China, it represents a totem symbol. (Notes: ODE has added the extra meaning of Chinese totem, referring specifically to the respect for Chinese Ancient Emperor)
Color	Q12, Item 2: Examine the idiomatic expression of <i>blue</i> .
Animal	Q11, Item 2: Examine the symbol meaning of animals in Western countries.
Human	Q35, Item 3: Examine the cultural meaning of <i>green hand</i> .
Food	Q14, Item 2: Examine the common saying of <i>bread and butter</i> .
Others	Q17, Item 2: Examine the cultural stories of <i>Pandora's Box</i> .

The English culture-loaded vocabulary test for junior high school students in this study is a level test, and its validity is tested by the indicators of surface validity and content validity. The test was compiled by the researcher under the guidance of the three tutors, and the researcher carefully studied a large amount of related literature, so it has a good surface validity. To ensure the content validity, we carefully read the syllabus and curriculum standards, listed the purposes of the test, and discussed and revised the test with the tutors many times, so as to make the test meet the requirements of the above three aspects.

3.3.3 Interview

The study formulated an interview outline for junior high school students. This interview mainly focuses on the students' intercultural sensitivity situation and their views on the culture-loaded vocabulary. The study randomly selects six students as the interviewee and records the interview content in detail.

4. Results

4.1 Results of Questionnaire

The average score of the subjects' intercultural sensitivity level was 3.46 (Table 4). So the intercultural sensitivity level of junior high school students is at the middle level with 5 being the highest level of intercultural sensitivity, 4-5 being the upper-middle level, and 3-4 being the middle level (Zhou, 2007). Although more attention has been paid to the cultivation of intercultural communication skills in recent years, students and teachers still focus more on the cultivation of listening, speaking, reading and writing skills, and students' intercultural sensitivity still needs to be further improved.

Table 4. Descriptive Analysis of Intercultural Sensitivity

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Average	Standard Deviation
Intercultural sensitivity	485	2.21	4.88	3.46	.47
Number of active cases	485				

Each question on the questionnaire ranges a maximum score of 5 and a minimum score of 1, with a medium critical value of 3. The higher the score students receive; the higher intercultural sensitivity students possess. After returning the questionnaire, the author first used SPSS software to reverse-score some of the reverse questions and then conducted a descriptive statistical analysis (Table 5), which led to the following conclusions. The average scores of respect for cultural difference (3.70) and interaction enjoyment (3.70) were the highest scores. It reflects that in this age of information technology, subjects are able to come into contact with various cultures through more channels, so students are able to treat foreign cultures with positive and open, tolerant and understanding attitudes, and are able to recognize and readily accept cultural differences. The average score of interaction confidence (3.08) is the lowest

score. It reflects that the lack of practical experience in communicating with people from different cultural backgrounds and the lack of English language skills led to the subjects' low communicative confidence. It is worth noting that the standard deviation of all five dimensions is high which is basically close to 1, with interaction enjoyment being the highest (0.93). It demonstrates a large polarization exists in students' perceptions of intercultural sensitivity especially for interaction enjoyment which means that junior high school students' attitudes toward intercultural communication need to be further deepened and formed. And individual students' possible attitudes of exclusion toward intercultural communication need more special attention from teachers.

Table 5. Descriptive Analysis of Five Factors of Intercultural Sensitivity

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Average	Standard Deviation
Interaction engagement	485	1.57	5.00	3.44	.61
Respect for cultural difference	485	1.50	5.00	3.70	.70
Interaction confidence	485	1.00	5.00	3.08	.71
Interaction enjoyment	485	1.00	5.00	3.70	.93
Interaction attentiveness	485	1.00	5.00	3.37	.77
Number of active cases	485				

The author also made a descriptive statistical analysis of culture-loaded vocabulary through the SPSS software (Table 6) and summarized the following conclusions. The whole test is worth up to 60 points, and the passing score is 36 points. From Table 6, it can be seen that the acquisition of culture-loaded vocabulary by junior high school students is 49 points in the maximum value, and 8 points in the minimum value. So there is an excessive gap in students' scores. And the average score is 23.34, which is lower than the passing level. And it can be seen that only 7.22% (6.80%+0.42%) of the students were at the passing level. Over 90% of students did not pass the test as shown in Table 7. So the level of culture-loaded vocabulary of junior high school students is very unsatisfactory.

Table 6. Descriptive Analysis of Culture-loaded Vocabulary

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Average	Standard Deviation
Culture-loaded vocabulary	485	8	49	23.34	7.577
Number of active cases	485				

Table 7. Frequency of Culture-load Vocabulary Test Scores

Range	Frequency	Percentage
0-35	450	92.78%
36-47	33	6.80%
48-53	2	0.42%
54-60	0	0%
	485	100%

As can be seen from Table 8, there are basically positive correlations among the five dimensions of intercultural sensitivity. Only respect for cultural difference and interaction confidence have no correlation ($r=0.085$, $p=0.062>0.05$), which indicates that even though students recognize the cultural differences between countries, they sometimes do not have the confidence to communicate with cultural learners due to shyness or other factors. The highest correlation is between interaction enjoyment and respect for cultural difference ($r=0.496$, $p=0.000<0.05$). Respect for cultural difference is somewhat dependent on interaction enjoyment. It is only when communication is enjoyable that differences between cultures can be respected and accepted. The second highest correlation between interaction engagement and respect for cultural difference ($r=0.437$, $p=0.000<0.05$). Interaction engagement refers to the active participation of the communicator in the cultural exchange, and only through active participation can the communicator have the opportunity to understand the information of other culture learners and then respond positively and effectively to it. It is also an indispensable way of enhancing students' intercultural sensitivity. In a word, the five dimensions constrain and influence each other.

Table 8. Correlation between Five Dimensions of Intercultural Sensitivity

		Respect for				
		Interaction engagement	cultural difference	Interaction confidence	Interaction enjoyment	Interaction attentiveness
Interaction engagement	Pearson	1	.437**	.302**	.354**	.308**
	Correlation					
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000
N		485	485	485	485	485
Respect for cultural difference	Pearson	.437**	1	.085	.496**	.121**
	Correlation					

		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.062	.000	.008
	N	485	485	485	485	485	
Interaction	Pearson	.302**	.085	1	.193**	.173**	
confidence	Correlation						
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.062		.000	.000
	N	485	485	485	485	485	
Interaction	Pearson	.354**	.496**	.193**	1	.109*	
enjoyment	Correlation						
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.016
	N	485	485	485	485	485	
Interaction	Pearson	.308**	.121**	.173**	.109*	1	
attentiveness	Correlation						
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.008	.000	.016	
	N	485	485	485	485	485	

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

It can be seen that the correlation between culture-loaded vocabulary and the five dimensions of intercultural sensitivity are totally different (Table 9). Culture-loaded vocabulary is positively related to interaction engagement ($r=0.125$, $p=0.006<0.05$). Culture-loaded vocabulary and respect for cultural difference have a significant positive correlation too ($r=0.164$, $p=0.000<0.05$). And culture-loaded vocabulary and interaction attentiveness have a positive correlation but not significant ($r=0.102$, $p=0.025<0.05$). There are also two dimensions that are not related to culture-loaded vocabulary which were interaction confidence ($r=0.081$, $p=0.077>0.05$) and interaction enjoyment ($r=0.043$, $p=0.350>0.05$).

These data indicate varying degrees of correlation between culture-loaded vocabulary and different dimensions of intercultural sensitivity. Specifically, culture-loaded vocabulary richness appears to significantly enhance interaction engagement and respect for cultural difference. However, it does not significantly impact interaction confidence or enjoyment, and its influence on interaction attentiveness is suggestive but not conclusive.

Table 9. Correlation between Culture-loaded Vocabulary and Five Dimensions of Intercultural Sensitivity

		Culture- loaded vocabulary	Interaction engagement	Respect for cultural difference	Interaction confidence	Interaction enjoyment	Interaction attentiveness
Culture- loaded vocabulary	Pearson	1	.125**	.164**	.081	.043	.102*
	Correlation						
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.006	.000	.077	.350	.025
	N	485	485	485	485	485	485
Interaction engagement	Pearson	.125**	1	.437**	.302**	.354**	.308**
	Correlation						
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.006		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	485	485	485	485	485	485
Respect for cultural difference	Pearson	.164**	.437**	1	.085	.496**	.121**
	Correlation						
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.062	.000	.008
	N	485	485	485	485	485	485
Interaction confidence	Pearson	.081	.302**	.085	1	.193**	.173**
	Correlation						
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.077	.000	.062		.000	.000
	N	485	485	485	485	485	485
Interaction enjoyment	Pearson	.043	.354**	.496**	.193**	1	.109*
	Correlation						
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.350	.000	.000	.000		.016
	N	485	485	485	485	485	485
Interaction attentiveness	Pearson	.102*	.308**	.121**	.173**	.109*	1
	Correlation						
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.025	.000	.008	.000	.016	
	N	485	485	485	485	485	485

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 10 demonstrates that there is a positive correlation between the subjects' intercultural sensitivity and the level of culture-loaded vocabulary, and it reaches a significant level ($r=0.167$, $p=0.000<0.05$). This indicates that the higher the students' intercultural sensitivity is, the better they can understand and master culture-loaded vocabulary. And for the same reason, the more culture-loaded vocabulary students' acquire, the more comprehensively they understand the cultural differences between different countries. For the cognitive level, students with high intercultural sensitivity are more likely to be aware of the existence of culture-loaded words and understand their cultural background and deeper meanings, which helps them understand and learn about different cultures more deeply. For the affective level, students with high intercultural sensitivity are likely to show more respect and interest when encountering culture-loaded vocabulary, and are willing to explore and learn the cultural stories behind these words, thus enhancing the motivation of intercultural communication. For the behavioral level, in actual communication, students with high intercultural sensitivity are more likely to use culture-loaded vocabulary appropriately or explain the meanings of these words in communication, thus facilitating effective communication.

Table 10. Correlation between Culture-loaded Vocabulary and Intercultural Sensitivity

		Culture-loaded vocabulary	Intercultural sensitivity
Culture-loaded vocabulary	Pearson Correlation	1	.167**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	485	485
Intercultural sensitivity	Pearson Correlation	.167**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	485	485

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

4.2 Results of Interview

4.2.1 Intercultural sensitivity

In terms of intercultural sensitivity, most students indicate that although they are interested in intercultural knowledge, they currently prioritize academic and test-related skills (Table 9). They believe that intercultural knowledge should not interfere with their primary learning tasks. At the same

time, due to limited awareness of cultural differences, many students find it somewhat challenging to initiate their understanding of foreign cultures, as there is too much to grasp. This process of understanding intercultural knowledge may cause certain stress. Overall, based on the questionnaire results, the main reason for students' relatively low intercultural sensitivity stems largely from the pressure of exam-oriented education. While they are willing to explore and learn cross-cultural knowledge through various means, practical academic pressures may lead them to make compromises in their learning pursuits.

Table 11. The Situation of Intercultural Sensitivity

Interviewee	Response
S1	I'm interested in learning about different cultures, but my main focus is still laid on my academics, with a preference for learning more about test-taking.
S2	It's new and interesting, but it's so complicated and there's so much to know that I don't know where to start.
S6	I am willing to learn about the differences between different cultures only if I've completed my studies

4.2.2 Culture-loaded vocabulary

In terms of understanding culture-loaded vocabulary, students find culture-loaded vocabulary fascinating initially, but some words are too complex and their meanings are intricate, making them tedious to learn. And students feel it's not suitable to delve deeply into such vocabulary due to its limited relevance to their English exams. Based on the questionnaire results, students are not motivated to understand culture-loaded vocabulary, believing it lacks practical utility for their academic goals. Thus, students choose to focus their efforts on more exam-relevant content, disregarding culture-loaded vocabulary as unnecessary.

Table 12. The situation about Culture-loaded Vocabulary

Interviewee	Response
S1	I found it fascinating the 1 st time I learned it. However, some words are more complicated and have more complex meanings that can be a little boring to learn.
S2	It's interesting but it's kind of hard. It's not really appropriate to explore this type of vocabulary in depth at this stage, which is not conducive to my English exam.
S3	I am not willing to understand the culture-loaded vocabulary because I think the vocabulary is not very useful for the English exam. So there is no need to pay attention to culture-loaded vocabulary.

5. Discussion

5.1 Intercultural Sensitivity

For the students' intercultural sensitivity, this study investigated the level of intercultural sensitivity of junior high school students, which is generally at the middle level and has much room for improvement. The study found that students' intercultural sensitivity is strongest in the dimension of respect for cultural difference, which indicates that students have good awareness and recognition of cultural differences. The lowest dimension of students' intercultural sensitivity is interaction confidence. This confirms that students may be too shy to communicate with different culture learners. Therefore, in order to effectively improve intercultural sensitivity, it is especially important to enhance students' communicative confidence. Teachers should adopt different teaching strategies according to different levels of students, such as using interactive teaching methods such as case studies, role-playing and situational simulation, so that students can communicate with other cultural learners in simulated cross-cultural environments, and practice and experience cultural differences in real situations. Secondly, teachers can guide students to recognize their own cultural biases and positions and encourage them to be open-minded to accept different cultural concepts.

5.2 Culture-loaded Vocabulary

For the students' level of culture-loaded vocabulary, Students have little understanding of culture-loaded vocabulary and think that learning culture-loaded vocabulary is of little use and that they should focus more on test-taking knowledge. Therefore, in order to change students' inappropriate perceptions of culture-loaded vocabulary and to improve their acquisition of culture-loaded vocabulary,

teachers should emphasize the teaching of culture-loaded vocabulary in language teaching, especially vocabulary teaching, not only teaching words themselves but also exploring their cultural meanings and contexts of use in depth. And in guiding students to read the discourse, provide corresponding cultural background knowledge, help students understand the deeper meaning of culture-loaded vocabulary in the discourse, and enhance their cultural comprehension ability.

5.3 Correlation between Culture-loaded Vocabulary and Intercultural Sensitivity

For the correlation between culture-loaded vocabulary and intercultural sensitivity, the results show that there is a positive correlation between culture-loaded vocabulary and intercultural sensitivity. And the study found that interaction confidence is strongly correlated with interaction attentiveness, interaction enjoyment and interaction engagement, which provides an important basis for the improvement of interaction confidence.

Before class, teachers themselves should act as role models for students' intercultural communication, demonstrating openness and respect through their behavior. And they should constantly update their intercultural knowledge and improve their intercultural teaching skills.

During class, teachers can relate to the concept of intercultural sensitivity so that students can understand the importance of mastering these words for intercultural communication. The use of culture-loaded vocabulary can also be demonstrated through practical examples of intercultural communication to help students build intercultural understanding and expression. From the specific aspects of the five dimensions, firstly, teachers encourage students to actively participate in intercultural discussions and activities to enhance their sense of participation and motivation. Second, teachers educate students to respect the values of all cultures and eliminate cultural superiority and prejudice. And through a variety of positive encouragement and feedback, they enhance students' self-confidence in cross-cultural environments. Further, teachers create a positive learning atmosphere so that students can enjoy intercultural learning and increase their motivation to learn. Finally, teachers develop students' observation and listening skills to improve their attention to cross-cultural details.

After class, in conjunction with "Integrating-Teaching-Learning-Assessment" in the English Curriculum Standards for Compulsory Education (2022 Edition), teachers can regularly assess students' intercultural sensitivity and mastery of culture-loaded vocabulary, and provide personalized feedback and guidance.

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Appendix I

Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS) (Chen & Starosta)

Dear Students:

Hello! Thank you for taking the time to participate in this survey. The purpose of this questionnaire is to understand everyone's intercultural sensitivity and provide reference for related research. Please indicate your level of agreement based on your initial impressions. There are no right or wrong answers in this survey, so please respond based on your actual experiences. Your responses will be kept strictly confidential.

Part 1: Confidential Survey of Respondent Information

Please fill in:

1. Name: _____ 2. Gender: _____

Part 2: Please carefully read each item below and mark (✓) the number (1, 2, 3, 4, or 5) that best describes your situation. Make sure the selected number accurately reflects your study habits.

5-strongly agree; 4-agree; 3-uncertain; 2-disagree; 1-strongly disagree.

- | | |
|--|-----------|
| 1. I enjoy interacting with people from different cultures. | 5 4 3 2 1 |
| 2. I think people from other cultures are narrow-minded. | 5 4 3 2 1 |
| 3. I am pretty sure of myself in interacting with people from different cultures. | 5 4 3 2 1 |
| 4. I find it very hard to talk in front of people from different cultures. | 5 4 3 2 1 |
| 5. I always know what to say when interacting with people from different cultures. | 5 4 3 2 1 |
| 6. I can be as sociable as I want to be when interacting with people from different cultures. | 5 4 3 2 1 |
| 7. I don't like to be with people from different cultures. | 5 4 3 2 1 |
| 8. I respect the values of people from different cultures. | 5 4 3 2 1 |
| 9. I get upset easily when interacting with people from different cultures. | 5 4 3 2 1 |
| 10. I feel confident when interacting with people from different cultures. | 5 4 3 2 1 |
| 11. I tend to wait before forming an impression of culturally-distinct counterparts. | 5 4 3 2 1 |
| 12. I often get discouraged when I am with people from different cultures. | 5 4 3 2 1 |
| 13. I am open-minded to people from different cultures. | 5 4 3 2 1 |
| 14. I am very observant when interacting with people from different cultures. | 5 4 3 2 1 |
| 15. I often feel useless when interacting with people from different cultures. | 5 4 3 2 1 |
| 16. I respect the ways people from different cultures behave. | 5 4 3 2 1 |
| 17. I try to obtain as much information as I can when interacting with people from different cultures. | 5 4 3 2 1 |
| 18. I would not accept the opinions of people from different cultures. | 5 4 3 2 1 |

19. I am sensitive to my culturally-distinct counterpart's subtle meanings during our interaction. 5 4 3 2 1
20. I think my culture is better than other cultures. 5 4 3 2 1
21. I often give positive responses to my culturally different counterpart during our interaction. 5 4 3 2 1
22. I avoid those situations where I will have to deal with culturally-distinct persons. 5 4 3 2 1
23. I often show my culturally-distinct counterpart my understanding through verbal or nonverbal cues. 5 4 3 2 1
24. I have a feeling of enjoyment towards differences between my culturally-distinct counterpart and me. 5 4 3 2 1

Appendix II

A Test on Culture-loaded Vocabulary

I. Multiple choice: choose the correct one from A and B to complete each statement.

1. When you meet (遇见) your friend John in the park (公园), you should say ____ to John.
A. Hello! B. Have you eaten?
2. The right expression (正确表达) of "1993.10.12" is _____.
A. 1993, October 12 B. October 12, 1993
3. What is the family name (姓氏) of "Taylor Swift"? _____.
A. Taylor B. Swift
4. Is it polite (礼貌的) to ask your friend Alice's age (年龄)? _____.
A. Yes B. No
5. When you eat western food (西方食物) with a knife (刀) and fork (叉), which is on your left hand? _____.
A. the knife B. the fork
6. — Wow, your new T-shirt is very beautiful (美丽的)!
— _____.
A. It's just so so. I bought (买) it last year. B. Thank you.
7. You should call your English teacher _____.
A. Miss Wang B. Teacher Wang
8. Tom said "Pardon me" (原谅我) to you because he broke (弄坏) your bike, and you should say _____.
A. It's nothing B. Never mind
9. A man _____ shake hands (握手) with a speaking lady (女士) first.
A. should B. should not
10. Should you tip the waiters (给服务员小费) after finishing your meals (吃完饭)?
A. Yes B. No

II. Multiple choice: choose the correct one from A, B, C and D to complete each statement.

11. He is as brave (勇敢的) as a(an) _____.
A. tiger (老虎)
B. lion (狮子)
C. elephant (大象)
D. Bear (熊)
12. He was blue in the face. He was _____.

- A. ill （生病的）
B. excited （激动的）
C. angry （生气的）
D. happy （高兴的）
13. _____ is not only （不但） a girl's name but also （而且） a kind of flower （一种花） .
A. Mary
B. Alice
C. Jack
D. Lily
14. He works the hardest （工作最努力） in our company （公司） because this job is his _____.
A. bread and butter （黄油）
B. beef （牛肉）
C. water
D. Earth （地球）
15. He spends money （花钱） like _____.
A. fire
B. gold
C. water
D. earth
16. Which of the following （以下） is a day to remember （纪念） the deceased （逝者） ? _____
A. Spring Festival
B. Lantern Festival
C. Tomb-sweeping Day
D. Mid-Autumn Festival
17. In Pandora's Box （潘多拉的盒子） , there is everything except （除了） _____.
A. hope
B. hatred(仇恨)
C. jealousy(嫉妒)
D. conspiracy(阴谋)
18. John always makes troubles （惹麻烦） in school and he is really a hot _____ to his teacher.
A. potato
B. banana
C. bread
D. tomato
19. Life （生活） is like a box of _____.
A. candy

- B. bread
C. flower
D. chocolate
20. What is the date (日期) of PLA Day? _____
A. October 1st
B. July 1st
C. August 1st
D. January 1st
21. What is the date of Tomb-sweeping Day? _____
A. May 1st
B. March 12th
C. April 1st
D. April 5th
22. “13” (thirteen) in英美具有哪种 _____ 象征?
A. doom(厄运)
B. health (健康)
C. divine (神圣)
D. wisdom (智慧)
23. Which one is not created originally (本土创造) by American culture (美国文化)? _____
A. Cinderella (灰姑娘)
B. Donald Duck (唐老鸭)
C. Tom and Jerry (汤姆和杰瑞)
D. Mickey Mouse (米老鼠)
24. Which color reminds (代表) a novice (新手) in the West? _____
A. Pink (粉)
B. Brown (棕)
C. Green (绿)
D. White (白)
25. What is the national flower (国花) of the UK (英国)? _____
A. Daisy (雏菊)
B. Lily (百合)
C. Rose (玫瑰)
D. Carnation (康乃馨)
26. Which one is about trick-or-treating (不给糖就捣蛋)? _____
A. Valentine's Day (情人节)
B. Women's Day

C. Children's Day

D. Halloween Day

27. Which one matches (对应) to National Day (国庆节)? _____

A. Independent Day (独立日)

B. Labor's Day (劳动节)

C. Father's Day

D. Thanksgiving Day

28. Which bird means talkative (爱说话的) in the West? _____

A. Swallow (燕子)

B. Magpie (喜鹊)

C. Crow (乌鸦)

D. Wild goose (大雁)

29. Which animal is the most likable (最喜爱的) in the West? _____

A. Cat

B. Dog

C. Horse (马)

D. Bear

30. “龙” (dragon) 在英美具有哪种_____象征?

A. health

B. national symbol (民族象征)

C. strong (强壮的)

D. bad luck (厄运)

III. Fill in the blanks to complete the sentences.

31. She has three sons (儿子) but she loves her daughter (女儿) best, so people say that her daughter is the _____ of her eye. (fruit)

32. Western writers (西方作家) usually use red _____ to express true love (表达真爱). (flower)

33. A hot _____ has two pieces of bread and a red sausage (香肠). It is very delicious (美味的). (animal)

34. _____ is a kind of sweet food (甜食). You can also use it to name(起名字) your boy/girl friend. (food)

35. Tom is new in our company (公司). He is a real (真正的) green _____. (body)

Appendix III

Student Interview Outline

I. Introduction

Hello everyone! I am currently conducting research on the correlation between intercultural sensitivity and the acquisition of culture-loaded vocabulary in junior high school. I would like to gather some information through interviews with you to complete my research. This interview will be completely confidential and will not affect your studies in any way. The interview will take approximately half an hour. Would you be willing to spare some time for this interview?

II. Interview Content

1. How do you usually learn about and study Western culture?
2. How does the teacher in class teach the cultural meanings of vocabulary?
3. How do you feel about the process of learning and understanding culture-loaded vocabulary in English?
4. What do you think about the relationship between learning culture and words?
5. Do you think it is necessary for teachers to teach related knowledge about intercultural communication in class?

III. Conclusion

Our interview ends here. Thank you once again for your help and cooperation. If you have any suggestions or requests regarding our interview in the future, please feel free to provide feedback through the contact information provided. We look forward to your valuable opinions. Wishing you smooth studies and a happy life!