

# Cultural Boundaries in Foreign Language Education: Intercultural Awareness

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**Abstract:** *This study examines the obstructive nature of “cultural boundaries” in foreign language education and the boundary-breaking mechanisms of intercultural awareness. It argues that traditional pedagogy, constrained by linguistic forms, severs the intrinsic connection between culture and symbols, thereby inducing cultural shock and inhibiting deeper communicative competence. Intercultural awareness is conceptualized as a dynamic competency system that transcends binary oppositions and integrates “knowledge–attitude–skills”. Its core function lies in facilitating a paradigm shift in cognition, guiding learners to engage in critical negotiation and meaning reconstruction within a “Third Space” of cultural encounters. The study systematically delineates the multidimensional manifestations of cultural boundaries and constructs pragmatic pathways for boundary transcendence, grounded in theories of intercultural communication, postcolonial discourse, and critical perspectives on cultural pedagogy. These pathways include: (1) designing integrative cultural-thematic modules for curricula; (2) employing task-based and experiential cultural teaching methodologies; (3) critically utilizing authentic language materials and digital resources. Ultimately, this research aims to advance foreign language education from instrumental training toward intercultural/mutual cultural competence, empowering learners to coexist amid differences and engage in dialogue amid conflicts.*

**Keywords—**cultural boundary; foreign language education; intercultural awareness; cross-cultural communication; cultural teaching

## 1. INTRODUCTION

As language learning enters its advanced stages, a critical and increasingly salient contradiction emerges. Despite pervasive globalization, foreign language education often remains confined by intangible cultural boundaries. Traditional pedagogy, confined by an emphasis on grammatical rules and vocabulary acquisition, conceptualizes language as a symbolic system divorced from its cultural substrate. This approach results in “cognitive shock” among learners during intercultural communication: they may master grammatical fluency yet lack the knowledge of when to be indirect; possess extensive vocabulary yet struggle to grasp implicature within specific contexts; and, even unintentionally, transgress deep-seated cultural sensitivities inherent in the target language, leading to unforeseen misunderstandings. Kramersch (1993) cautioned that the cultural embeddedness of linguistic signs is central to their very nature, asserting that teaching language stripped of its constitutive cultural context and value system is tantamount to attempting to comprehend a soulless anatomy. This cultural boundary represents a fundamental obstacle hindering foreign language learners from achieving profound communicative competence—a barrier extending far beyond mere knowledge deficits to constitute a deep-rooted chasm within cognitive schemata.

Against this backdrop, Intercultural Awareness (ICA) emerges as both a pivotal theoretical paradigm and a practical pedagogical pathway for transcending these boundaries. Building upon Byram’s (1997) foundational framework, ICA transcends mere cultural knowledge accumulation. It

constitutes a complex, tripartite competency system integrating “knowledge, attitudes, and skills”. This requires learners to detect the underlying cultural value assumptions embedded within language, critically evaluate the limitations of their own cultural frame of reference, and develop decentering reflective capacities (Deardorff, 2006). Ultimately, it fosters the practical wisdom necessary for effective communication and meaning negotiation across differences. Such awareness orients learners towards a “Third Space” (Kramersch, 1995), one that transcends binary oppositions and facilitates proactive critical dialogue and creative reconstruction at the confluence of multiple cultures. This implies that the objectives of foreign language education must shift towards deeper epistemological transformations and the cultivation of cultural competencies, moving beyond purely technical training.

This study focuses on the following core questions: How do cultural boundaries form and manifest within foreign language education? How does Intercultural Awareness serve as an effective impetus for dissolving these boundaries and enabling the transition from linguistic proficiency to intercultural competence? This study will systematically explore: (1) the multifaceted manifestations of cultural boundaries within foreign language learning contexts; (2) the conceptual evolution of Intercultural Awareness and its operative mechanisms as a “deconstructive potential” against boundaries; and (3) the normative direction for innovative pedagogical paradigms aimed at cultivating boundary-crossing capabilities. By elucidating the underlying philosophical and sociological logics of cultural boundaries and investigating pathways for constructing Intercultural Awareness within this interplay, this study ultimately aims to

infuse foreign language education with cultural intelligence and critical perspectives. Its goal is to foster a pedagogical shift towards symbiotic existence amidst difference, mutual accommodation within conflict, and the possibility of forging new cultural connections among humanity, using language itself as the vital conduit.

## 2. THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF INTERCULTURAL AWARENESS

### 2.1 Theoretical Framework of Intercultural Communication Studies

Intercultural Communication Studies (ICS), serving as the core theoretical underpinning for cultivating intercultural awareness, emerged within the mid-20th-century academic milieu marked by the restructuring of international political-economic orders and the acceleration of globalization. Its theoretical basis is primarily grounded in the intersection of anthropology, linguistics, sociology, and communication studies. The discipline centrally concerns itself with investigating the processes by which actors from diverse cultural backgrounds generate meaning, encounter interpretive barriers, and engage in collaborative negotiation during symbolic interaction.

Edward Hall's (1976) paradigm of "high-/low-context cultures" provided the first systematic deconstruction of culture's deep-seated constraints on information encoding. Hall revealed culture as an implicit cognitive schema that governs the expression of communicative intent, offering a methodological lens for understanding the relationship between overt linguistic behaviours and underlying cultural logics. Within ICS, culture is defined not as a static set of knowledge artefacts, but as a dynamically practiced semiotic system (Geertz, 1973), emphasizing the fluidity of cultural identities and their ongoing negotiation contextually. Framed by core theories such as Gudykunst and Kim's (2003) Anxiety/Uncertainty Management (AUM) Theory and Ting-Toomey's Face Negotiation Theory, ICS constructs a three-dimensional "cognitive-affective-behavioral" analytical framework. This framework posits that intercultural competence fundamentally entails sensitivity to cultural difference, adaptability embracing multiple perspectives, and the strategic capacity for collaborative meaning co-construction. These principles establish crucial ontological presumptions and methodological pathways for transcending cultural boundaries within foreign language education.

The current theoretical framework exhibits three principal developments: cultural positioning theory, adaptation process theory, and the critical intercultural paradigm. Cultural orientation/dimension theories, exemplified by Hofstede et al.'s (2010) six-dimensional model, Schwartz's (1994) cultural value orientations, and the GLOBE project's clusters of cultural practices, utilize empirical quantification to unveil the differential configuration of deep cultural structures. These models furnish decoding tools for interpreting cultural conflicts in foreign language pedagogy—for instance, the ways

individualism/collectivism dimensions condition classroom interaction patterns, or how uncertainty avoidance indices profoundly influence tolerance for linguistic errors.

Adaptation process theories, represented by Kim's (1995) Integrative Theory of Cross-Cultural Adaptation and Berry's (1997) Acculturation Strategy Models, focus on the dynamic adaptation mechanisms employed by cultural actors within heterogeneous contexts. They emphasize a "dual-pyramid model" wherein language acquisition and cultural adaptation proceed concurrently. The emergent critical intercultural paradigm challenges traditional static conceptions of culture (Zhang, 2024). Employing post-structuralist and postcolonial lenses, it deconstructs essentialist cultural myths and advances the concept of "Transcultural Competence". This concept emphasizes the agency of individuals to critically position themselves, creatively hybridize elements, and act ethically within pluralistic cultural-semiotic networks. Collectively, this theoretical trajectory indicates that cultivating intercultural awareness must move beyond the mere transmission of cultural knowledge. It necessitates a shift towards a meaning-reconstruction process centred on communicative practice as the primary site and identity negotiation as the core dynamic. This constitutes the pivotal key for foreign language education to overcome the predicament of cultural boundaries.

### 2.2 The "Third Space" Theory

The "Third Space" theory, introduced by postcolonial thinker Homi K. Bhabha in his seminal work *The Location of Culture*, offers profound insights into the nature of cultural interaction, power dynamics, and identity construction. Representing a critical interrogation of traditional essentialist perspectives on culture, Bhabha (1994) contended that encounters between cultures do not result in simple superimposition or unidirectional assimilation. Instead, within the interstitial space or liminality of such contacts, cultures undergo continuous processes of negotiation, translation, and hybridization. Central to this theory is the dismantling of rigid binary oppositions, such as self/other and East/West. In this process, notions of cultural purity or authenticity are deconstructed. The Third Space emerges precisely as this dynamic productive site. It transcends the original boundaries of any single culture: it belongs neither solely to the "self" culture nor entirely to the "other" culture. Rather, within the tension generated by their intermingling, negotiation, and even conflict, it becomes the locus where new cultural significations and new forms of identity are emergent and rearticulated.

Placing this theory within the context of foreign language education reveals that language learning transcends the mere transmission of grammatical rules and lexical knowledge. It involves positioning the learner within a negotiative "Third Space", intricately woven by their native and target cultures, wherein they actively explore, deconstruct, and reconstruct their cultural stance and intercultural understanding. Consequently, Bhabha (1994)'s Third Space theory, with its insightful emphasis on hybridity, fluidity, and discursive negotiation, constitutes an indispensable theoretical lens for

analyzing agency and creative potential within intercultural contexts, establishing a robust foundation for comprehending the complex dynamics of cultural interaction in foreign language pedagogy.

The Third Space theory profoundly illuminates pathways through which foreign language education can foster creative intercultural awareness by navigating and negotiating cultural boundaries. Its significance crystallizes in two core dimensions: the deconstruction of cultural hegemony and cultivation of critical capacity, and the stimulation of creativity and reconfiguration of boundaries.

On one hand, the theory effectively challenges potential cultural hierarchies and essentialist assumptions inherent in foreign language pedagogy. It reveals that the target culture is not a fixed, monolithic, or inherently superior model compared to the learner's native culture, thereby preventing learners from falling into patterns of passive imitation or cultural assimilation (Kramsch, 1993). The inherent qualities of the Third Space are negotiative and agonistic, rather than involving simple cultural accretion. It necessitates that learners, through language practices (e.g., authentic intercultural communication, multimodal text interpretation), continuously identify, question, and critically engage with the cultural presuppositions and power relations embedded within discourse. This fosters their critical intercultural competence—a capability surpassing mere mechanical communicative skills—in interpreting, reflecting upon, and negotiating cultural meanings within dynamic situations.

On the other hand, and more crucially, the Third Space possesses significant generative potential (Bhabha, 1994). As a frontier zone for the production of meaning, it is not confined by predefined cultural boundaries but actively creates novel cultural understandings. When learners engage in the creative negotiation and translation of language and meaning within intertextual junctures where the target culture intersects with their native background (e.g., encountering hybrid texts, participating in intercultural projects, resolving authentic cultural dilemmas), they function not merely as receivers of information, but as active producers of new significances. These innovative practices within the Third Space can not only foster a unique and fluid intercultural identity (Kramsch, 1995), but also fundamentally reframe the very concept of cultural boundaries—transforming them from static lines of separation into dynamic, permeable interfaces where meaning is continuously redrawn through active participation.

Ultimately, influenced by the Third Space theory, the objectives of foreign language education are significantly elevated. It moves beyond producing learners with linguistic proficiency and basic cultural awareness, aiming instead to cultivate global intercultural interlocutors. These individuals are characterized by their ability to traverse cultural boundaries, innovate cultural expression, and possess deep reflective and critical capacities. At its core, this represents a profound expansion and transcendence of intercultural

awareness, emphasizing its dimensions of agentive negotiation and creative generation.

### 2.3 Cultural Teaching Theory: From Cultural Knowledge to Cultural Awareness

Cultural instruction within foreign language education has undergone a significant paradigm shift. This shift moves away from the early emphasis on inculcating “Cultural Knowledge”, which focused primarily on superficial cultural facts (such as festivals, cuisine, or famous landmarks), towards fostering deeper understanding and reflective capacities associated with “Cultural Awareness” and the more advanced “Intercultural Awareness”. Initial approaches to cultural teaching often suffered from a disconnect with language skills training or were treated merely as supplementary background information. They manifested as static and objectified methodologies like “cultural capsules” or “cultural aside” (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk, 2001). The core objective of such instruction centered on the memorization and descriptive presentation of information. Consequently, learners were positioned as “cultural consumers”, passively absorbing selected and solidified representations of the target culture provided by textbooks or teachers (Kramsch, 1993).

This approach frequently resulted in learners developing fragmented, potentially stereotypical cognitive schemata about the foreign culture. While this layer of “knowing that knowledge” provides a foundational repository of cultural information, it fails to penetrate deeply into the internal logic and generative contexts of cultural values, thought patterns, social norms, and underlying belief systems (i.e., the deeper layers of values and basic assumptions within the “cultural onion” as articulated by Hofstede et al. (2010)). Furthermore, it lacks mechanisms for guiding learners to examine their own cultural frame of reference and its potential influence in intercultural interactions. Consequently, remaining solely at the level of cultural knowledge proves inadequate in effectively equipping foreign language learners to navigate complex, dynamic, and tension-fraught real-world intercultural situations. It also presents substantial obstacles to genuinely transcending the “cultural boundaries” inherent in language learning.

These limitations spurred a theoretical deepening within cultural pedagogy. Its core objective consequently evolved towards facilitating learners’ progression from mastering “cultural content” towards developing “cultural understanding” and “intercultural awareness”. Intercultural awareness is broadly defined as an active composite of cognitive, affective, and behavioral capabilities (Byram, 1997). It transcends mere “knowing what” by emphasizing “knowing how” (to understand) and “critical reflection”. This concept is primarily grounded theoretically in social constructivism, hermeneutics, and critical pedagogy: culture is viewed not as a static entity, but as a system of shared meaning-making practices constantly negotiated by members of a social group within specific historical and social contexts (Geertz, 1973). Intercultural interaction is thus understood as

a process of encounter and co-construction of meaning between multiple perspectives within a “Third Space” (Kramsch, 1993).

Within this framework, effective cultural instruction aims to achieve several key objectives. Firstly, it guides learners towards undertaking a “thick description” (Geertz, 1973) of culture, fostering an understanding of the deep-seated meanings, belief structures behind cultural symbols and behaviours, and their complex interrelations with the social context. Secondly, a central focus lies in cultivating a “cultural relativist perspective”, enabling learners to interpret target cultural phenomena within their own logical frameworks, thereby avoiding simplistic judgements based solely on their native cultural standards (Pu & Xu, 2023). The final, and most crucial objective, involves stimulating “reflective practice” (Schön, 1983). This encourages learners to continuously re-examine the deep-seated presuppositions of their own culture (i.e., the “cultural unconscious”) and its potential impacts during intercultural communication (Xu et al., 2025). This fosters an understanding of the fluid and constructed nature of cultural identity.

Achieving these objectives necessitates a methodological shift from “information transmission” towards “process orientation”. Pedagogical strategies should create opportunities for “embodied practice” and multiple layers of reflection through tools such as case studies, cultural simulations, critical discourse analysis, cultural autobiographies, and interaction projects with native speakers (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013). The ultimate goal is to develop the learner's “intercultural competence as *savoir-faire*” (Byram, 1997). This competence encompasses the ability to communicate effectively, negotiate meaning, build relationships, and maintain openness and curiosity within authentic, ambiguous, and even conflict-laden cultural border zones.

### 3. PRACTICAL APPROACHES TO INTEGRATING INTERCULTURAL AWARENESS IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING

#### 3.1 Curriculum Design: Incorporating Cultural Thematic Modules

In implementing pedagogical pathways for fostering intercultural awareness, a key strategy for transcending superficial transmission of cultural knowledge and advancing towards deeper cultural understanding and practice involves the adoption of systematically integrated curriculum design centered around Cultural Thematic Modules (Rissanen et al., 2023). This approach addresses the deficiencies observed in traditional foreign language courses where cultural content is often fragmented, unsystematic, and lacking in depth (Byram, 1997). Such design explicitly moves beyond the peripheral inclusion of “cultural corners” in language textbooks or isolated “country overview” units. Instead, it positions specific cultural themes – such as “Family Structure and Intergenerational Relationships”, “Conceptions of Education

and Success”, “Work Ethics and Leisure Culture”, “Identity and Diversity”, “Festivals, Rituals, and Social Cohesion”, “Norms of Behavior in Public Spaces”, and “Environmental Perspectives and Sustainable Development” – as the driving, core structural units of the curriculum (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013).

The defining characteristics of this approach include comprehensive vertical development and horizontal expansion around structured cultural themes. Firstly, materials selection consciously prioritizes core domains of life that profoundly reflect the target community’s value systems, social norms, cognitive patterns, and affective structures (Davis et al., 2015). Secondly, it emphasizes the complexity and multidimensionality of themes, actively avoiding singular or stereotypical cultural narratives by incorporating diverse perspectives such as historical evolution, regional variations, social stratification, and gender viewpoints. Thirdly, it advocates for a comparative framework, deliberately incorporating structured opportunities for learners to systematically reflect on and compare their native culture throughout the module design.

The effective implementation of Cultural Thematic Modules hinges upon scientific structural sequencing and activity design. Structurally, it must adhere to a progressive principle moving from surface to depth, from the familiar to the unfamiliar, and from cognition to critique (Moran, 2001). This is typically operationalized through a spiraling four-stage model: “Presenting/Describing - Interpreting/Analyzing - Reflecting/Evaluating - Experiencing/Creating”. The initial stage provides abundant authentic materials pertinent to the theme, such as film clips, news reports, social media posts, advertisements, literary excerpts, and interview transcripts, to guide learners in conducting meticulous “thick description” (Geertz, 1973) of cultural phenomena, focusing on observable behaviors and symbolic representations. Subsequently, explanatory models from cultural scholarship are introduced to facilitate learners’ analysis of the underlying deep cultural logic and structural tensions. The core stage activates “critical cultural reflection” (Byram, 1997), utilizing carefully designed “critical incidents” or “cultural dilemmas” that compel learners to apply learned analytical frameworks to specific thematic contexts while consciously integrating their own cultural positioning in making reasoned judgments. The culminating output activities emphasize intercultural co-creation, enabling learners to engage in embodied practices of meaning negotiation and boundary-crossing through interactive dialogue within a “Third Space” (Kramsch, 1993). To ensure the module’s systematic integrity, each theme should integrate coherent language learning components (e.g., relevant vocabulary, pragmatic strategies, discourse styles), core cultural theoretical tools, diverse interactive tasks, and formative assessment indicators, thereby solidifying the cultivation of intercultural awareness as an indispensable and rigorously structured core dimension of the language curriculum (Fantini & Tirmizi, 2006).

### 3.2 Teaching Methods: Task-Based and Experiential Cultural Learning

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), through the design of complex tasks closely aligned with target cultural pragmatics, provides structured scaffolding for the development of intercultural awareness, enabling students to discover culture through practice. Its efficacy stems from its simulation of authentic contexts and mechanisms for internalization rooted in Sociocultural Theory (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). This effectiveness crucially depends on contextualized task design. On the one hand, tasks must be anchored in specific scenarios involving cross-cultural communication or cognitive dissonance. This forces students to confront cultural chasms in values and behaviors while accomplishing concrete objectives such as simulated meetings, cross-cultural email exchanges, or cultural conflict analyses. On the other hand, tasks necessitate the deliberate integration of culturally relevant input, such as videos, authentic discourse samples (Nunan, 2004), or emic perspectives. This provides cognitive anchor points, guiding pre-task cultural exploration and post-task collective critical reflection (Byram, 1997). This internalization chain, moving from concrete practice to abstract analysis, propels students to interrogate appearances critically. They progressively deconstruct and reconstruct their own cultural positioning and interpretative frameworks at the cognitive level, ultimately fostering the synergistic development of language proficiency, intercultural empathy, and negotiation skills.

Experiential Cultural Teaching, conversely, breaks through the “glass enclosure” of the classroom. It emphasizes deep social interaction and immersive sensorial learning within simulated or authentic multicultural environments (Kolb, 2014), thereby facilitating the student's transformation from a passive recipient into an embodied cultural observer. Its power derives from the full activation of situated learning and socio-cultural interaction (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Technological empowerment significantly enhances the immersion and scope of these experiences. For instance, VR technology can reconstruct target cultural scenes, while metaverse platforms dismantle geographical barriers, constructing virtual communities enabling cross-national collaboration. Yet, this is not the endpoint. Community immersion opens up a field for students to deeply negotiate cultural identity (Onosu, 2021). From collaborative projects with native speakers to participation in local rituals or familial contexts, these embodied experiences provide contexts for interpreting subtle cultural signifiers (such as nonverbal taboos) beyond the reach of textbooks. Within this dynamic and authentic process of interactive negotiation, students not only perceive the rich layers of cultural phenomena but also recognize the boundaries of their own cultural frameworks. Consequently, a more holistic and adaptive intercultural competence emerges organically at both affective and cognitive levels.

### 3.3 Utilizing Authentic Materials and Digital Resources

In the practice of fostering intercultural awareness, the incorporation of authentic materials holds irreplaceable value for cognitive restructuring. Authentic materials refer to linguistic resources naturally occurring within the target cultural context and unmodified for pedagogical purposes, such as news reports, film and television productions, social media content, public speeches, literary texts, and recordings of daily conversations. Unlike the often sanitized and simplified “purified” content found in traditional textbooks, authentic materials carry inherent cultural symbols, social conventions, and underlying value logic, thereby providing learners with an immersive cultural cognitive interface (Kramsch, 1993). Educators must employ critical pedagogical activities, such as discourse analysis, decoding of cultural metaphors, and multi-perspective role simulations, to guide students in deconstructing cultural presuppositions inherent within these materials and identifying the dynamic, negotiable nature of cultural boundaries. This process not only disrupts the unidimensional representation of the target culture common in textbooks but also facilitates learners' transition from the cognitive dissonance provoked by culture shock towards meaningful intercultural reflexivity. Consequently, learners progressively develop cultural agency situated within the “Third Place” (Kramsch, 1995).

The proliferation of digital resources offers the technological impetus for a paradigm shift in intercultural awareness pedagogy, fundamentally enabling the transcendence of spatial and temporal constraints to achieve embodied participation in cultural practices. On one level, digital corpora and multimodal resource platforms allow learners to autonomously retrieve and compare pragmatic norms, articulations of social issues, and frameworks of historical narratives across different cultural contexts. This data-driven learning fosters an appreciation of cultural plurality and contextual dependency. On another level, immersive technologies (VR/AR) serve as mediators for intercultural understanding by simulating authentic cultural scenarios, foregrounding “embodied presence” (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013). Concurrently, transnational collaborative projects offer learners “boundary objects” (Caccamo et al., 2023): shared task objectives that compel participants from diverse cultural backgrounds to negotiate meaning, reconcile conflicts, and experientially grasp the inherent instability of cultural boundaries. Nevertheless, the application of digital resources necessitates vigilance against the potential pitfalls of instrumental rationality. Educators must guard against reducing culture to quantifiable, discrete “knowledge points”. Instead, they must leverage guided reflection to elevate technological encounters into a deeper, dialectical understanding of power discourses, cultural hegemony, and the politics of identity. This transformation allows digital learning spaces to become active sites fostering the development of “critical intercultural citizenship” (Bygstad et al., 2022).

#### 4. CONCLUSION

This study reveals that, within the context of foreign language education, the “cultural boundary” is not merely an obstacle to language teaching or a barrier separating foreign cultures. Its essence is that of a complex dynamic system. This system concurrently serves as both an objective representation of the differences existing among cultures and a crucial interface which stimulates learners to engage in cross-cultural understanding and the negotiation of meaning. Cultivating intercultural awareness, as the core competency for breaking through and transcending this boundary to achieve profound cultural dialogue, is of paramount importance. Empirical research provides robust evidence that effective foreign language teaching must position the cultural boundary as a positive fulcrum rather than a daunting hurdle. This necessitates moving beyond curriculum designs historically focused solely on surface-level cultural knowledge toward integrated objectives centred on higher-order thinking skills, which systematically cultivates learners’ abilities to cognitively comprehend differences in symbols, behaviours, and underlying value systems; affectively develop empathy, tolerance, and adaptability of cultural identity; and behaviourally master strategic communicative skills for intercultural contexts. This represents an in-depth integrative process spanning from linguistic symbols to fundamental value concepts.

Based on the above findings, the practical value of this research lies in its emphatic assertion that shaping intercultural awareness cannot rely solely on fragmented cultural knowledge input. It requires educators to meticulously design systematic and progressive pedagogical strategies, such as critical analysis of cultural incidents, in-depth cultural comparison, and reflective writing, to guide learners in actively traversing boundaries across both linguistic and cultural learning dimensions, thereby achieving genuine “fusion of horizons”. Transforming the cultural boundary into a dynamic “contact zone” can not only significantly enhance the quality of foreign language instruction and learning efficacy but also substantially contribute to learners developing an open, inclusive global perspective and excellent cross-cultural adaptability. Future research could further explore how to more precisely define sub-goals of intercultural awareness at different educational stages, develop assessment tools with stronger empirical validity, and investigate technology-empowered innovative pedagogical approaches for traversing cultural boundaries, thereby continuously deepening both the theoretical framework and the practical effectiveness of cultivating cultural awareness within foreign language education.

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