

# A Study on the Cross-Cultural Literacy Among College Japanese Learners

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**Abstract:** With the rapid development of communication technology, cross-cultural communication between regions and countries transcends the limitations of time and space. The form and content of cross-cultural communication are unprecedentedly diverse. Avoiding and resolving the accompanying cross-cultural conflicts and cultivating international talents with cross-cultural abilities are important issues in the reform of foreign language education in colleges and universities in various countries. Based on the perspective of learners' self-perception, this paper examines the correlation between Japanese learners' cross-cultural confidence and the elements of cross-cultural educational environment. Reflect on the problems existing in the construction of cross-cultural education in colleges and universities. A survey of 1027 Japanese learners in 5 colleges and universities in Northeast China was conducted. Through quantitative research methods, it is found: Due to the influence of the foreign language teaching mode that focuses on cultivating language ability for a long time, foreign language learners make self-judgment on their own cross-cultural self-confidence mainly based on language ability. The current cross-cultural curriculum consists of foreign cultural courses, There are few cross-cultural professional courses, and they are characterized by incoherence, The system has not yet been formed. Cross-cultural competence development is long-term, diverse and dynamic. Therefore, the construction of intercultural competence education environment needs to explore an open intercultural competence training model on the basis of solid theories and diverse practices.

**Keywords:** University, Japanese Learners, Cross-Cultural Confidence, Curriculum

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## 1. Introduction

With the in-depth development of globalization, diversified cross-cultural exchanges and cooperation have become the norm in social development. President Xi Jinping emphasized that different civilizations are colorful, equal, and tolerant in an important speech delivered by UNESCO in 2014 on the "New Concept of Civilization". Only through exchanges and mutual learning can civilizations be full of vitality and civilization harmony can be achieved. A high degree of cross-cultural understanding can help people of different cultural backgrounds to achieve benign interaction, promote people's self-knowledge of the ontology and the cognition, tolerance and understanding of others, and avoid prejudice, discrimination and misunderstanding. Cultivating international talents with cross-cultural competence has become a consensus in the development of higher education institutions at home and abroad, especially in the foreign

language education circle in my country, which has been widely recognized and is being fully implemented. In the 2018 National Standards for the Quality of Undergraduate Professional Teaching in General Colleges and Universities, intercultural competence has been included as an important training goal for foreign language education. Cultivating the cross-cultural competence of foreign language learners in the multi-lingual environment of the new era, and constructing a training paradigm that is based on the world and has the characteristics of my country's education has become an important issue that needs to be solved urgently. Not only need a solid theoretical foundation, but also need to fully grasp the current cross-cultural competence training model in foreign language education. Under the modern education concept of "learner-centered", learners' perception of the existing educational environment can present a more distinct educational status quo.

The concept of intercultural competence emphasizes the



context of cultural differences and illustrates the close connection between culture and communication behavior. In terms of the connotation of intercultural competence, the intercultural competence proposed by Byram consists of four elements: knowledge, attitude, skills and critical intercultural awareness [1]. This view has been generally recognized by scholars from the East and the West. Around these four elements, scholars from various countries have carried out more detailed interpretations and explorations. For example: interpreting the "attitude" in cross-cultural competence by using the element of "motivation", and emphasizing the mutual influence and interdependence of knowledge, motivation, and skills [2]. Cognitive ability, emotional ability and behavior ability are interconnected and influence each other [3]. Chen&starosta incorporates psychological adaptability into the connotation of cross-cultural competence [4], Provides long-term and procedural new perspectives for cross-cultural competence training. In the past 20 years, Europe and the United States have made significant progress in the theoretical exploration of cross-cultural competence. Cross-cultural competence is composed of communication/communication skills (skills) and other external manifestations and internal factors such as knowledge, awareness, and attitude. This view is generally recognized. It provides a solid theoretical foundation for the training paradigm of cross-cultural competence.

The study of cross-cultural competence in my country began in the 1980s. Although it started relatively late, it has benefited from the rapid development of theoretical achievements in European and American academic circles. At the beginning of the 21st century, Chinese scholars called for the cultivation of talents with cross-cultural competence in the comprehensive application of foreign languages in the foreign language syllabus. And it is proposed that the promotion of cross-cultural competence in foreign language education must be based on the actual situation in my country [5, 6]. Xu Lisheng & Sun Shunv proposed the "progressive-interactive training model" of cross-cultural competence. In the context of globalization, learners' cross-cultural competence is cultivated in a progressive manner in accordance with knowledge acquisition, motivation training, and skill training [7]. Wu Weiping scholars found through empirical investigations that Chinese college students' cross-cultural competence is multi-dimensional. The influence of foreign cultural knowledge is the strongest, the influence of cross-cultural communication skills is second, the influence of domestic cultural knowledge and attitudes is the middle, the influence of cross-cultural cognitive skills is weak, and the influence of cross-cultural awareness is the weakest [8]. Fu Mingxia took non-English major college students as the research object and used the fuzzy comprehensive evaluation method to score and found that the respondent's foreign cultural knowledge is relatively lacking, the attitude of cross-cultural communication is better, the domestic cultural knowledge, cross-cultural communication knowledge, and cross-cultural communication The four items of communicative skills and consciousness are all at the average

level. Students' learning motivation, emphasis on the development of cross-cultural competence, and cross-cultural experience are correlated to a certain degree with their cross-cultural competence [9]. In addition, Zhang Hongling and other scholars designed the "Foreign Education Club Cup" Shanghai College Student Intercultural Ability Competition on the basis of constructing a cross-cultural competency competition evaluation index system, and demonstrated the feasibility of the competition as a cross-cultural competence evaluation method [10]. Xu Jia emphasized that the concept of cross-cultural competence cannot be generalized and should focus on local personality [6]. The "National Standards" promulgated by my country in 2018 interprets the framework for cultivating local cross-cultural competence. The positioning of cross-cultural competences in the "National Standards" promulgated in 2018 is an important milestone in the history of the development of cross-cultural competence in my country [11]. To sum up, the research on intercultural competence in my country basically revolves around the development of consciousness, attitude, skills and effective communication in traditional European and American theories. Chinese scholars have given a high degree of intercultural knowledge, dynamics and locality in teaching. s concern.

At present, most of the research on intercultural competence in my country is concentrated in the field of English. There are relatively few research papers on the teaching of cross-cultural competence in the teaching of Japanese, German and French. For example, there are only 220 academic journal papers in the search bar of CNKI with the themes of "intercultural competence" and "Japanese language teaching" between 1997 to 2022 (As of August 17, 2022). The cultivation of cross-cultural competence in foreign language teaching has regional and national characteristics. Therefore, on the basis of the research on the theory and methodology of intercultural competence, it is very necessary to develop the research on the characteristics of small languages. In recent years, research on cross-cultural competence development in Japanese language teaching has mainly focused on specific practical teaching and strategies. Cultivation Strategies Based on Humanistic Philosophy [12], Improve students' cross-cultural communication ability by innovating Japanese teaching mode, strengthening teacher team construction, expanding language communication environment and other strategies [13] Emphasis on cross-cultural understanding learning in curriculum teaching [14, 15]. Most of the current research discusses the cultivation of intercultural competence from the perspective of professors, ignoring the foreign language learners' own cognition of intercultural competence learning, and there are few practical investigations.

## 2. Analysis and Investigation

Based on the self-cognition of foreign language learners, this article explores the influencing factors of cross-cultural self-confidence by examining the curriculum in Japanese



education, and provides references for cultivating Japanese learners' cross-cultural self-confidence. The subjects of the survey were Japanese language learners from grades 1 to 4 in four universities in the three northeastern provinces. The survey method adopted quantitative analysis. The questionnaire includes learners' cross-cultural attitudes, cross-cultural courses, cross-cultural competence and self-confidence evaluation, and objectively describes the effect of existing cross-cultural education through the correlation coefficient test.

This study describes students' confidence in their own cross-cultural competence through self-assessment questions. Cross-cultural competence takes "1" as "very good", "2" as "good", "3" as "not so good", "4" as "bad", and "5" as "don't know". Options. In the frequency analysis, "very good"

accounted for 15.2%, "good" accounted for 41.5%, "not so good" accounted for 34.4%, "bad" accounted for 8.2%, and "don't know" accounted for 0.8%. The relationship between grades and cross-cultural competence and self-confidence is first shown in the interactive classification chart 1: 51.5% of students confident in cross-cultural competence in the first grade, 55.3% in the second grade, 57.8% in the third grade, and 57.8% in the fourth grade. Accounted for 61.9%. With the improvement of grade, the number of people confident in their own cross-cultural competence increased relatively, and there was a tendency of positive correlation. Among the students who are very confident in their own cross-cultural abilities in each grade, 11.3% in the first grade, 14.3% in the second grade, 17.5% in the third grade, and 13.6% in the fourth grade, showing no increasing trend.

**Table 1.** The relationship between grade and cross-cultural competence and confidence.

		Grade (%)				total
		1	2	3	4	
Self-evaluation of cross-cultural competence	super	11 (11.3)	59 (14.3)	70 (17.5)	16 (13.6)	156 (15.2)
	good	39 (40.2)	169 (41.0)	161 (40.3)	57 (48.3)	426 (41.5)
	not too good	33 (34.0)	148 (35.9)	136 (34.0)	36 (30.5)	353 (34.4)
	not good	11 (11.3)	33 (8.0)	31 (7.8)	9 (7.6)	84 (8.2)
	do not know	3 (3.1)	3 (0.7)	2 (0.5)	0 (0.0)	8 (0.8)
total		97 (100.0)	412 (100.0)	400 (100.0)	118 (100.0)	1027 (100.0)

Based on the above analysis results, this study investigates the impact of curriculum settings on cross-cultural self-confidence and ability training based on the theoretical connotation of intercultural competence.

(1) Curriculum: In terms of attitudes towards foreign cultural knowledge, 91.5% of students are interested in foreign cultural knowledge, and 74.6% of students have read extracurricular readings related to foreign cultures. About 70% of the students have also bought relevant reading materials spontaneously. This shows that most foreign language learners have a positive attitude towards cross-cultural knowledge. In terms of curriculum, 70.0% of students have taken courses related to cultural knowledge of their own country, 70.1% of students have taken courses related to knowledge of foreign cultures in compulsory courses, and the establishment of courses related to cultural knowledge at home and abroad has reached the basic popularization. However, according to the cross-analysis of grade and curriculum, it is found that: In the first grade, both the interest in foreign culture knowledge and the setting of

related courses are below 10%; In the second grade stage, the domestic and foreign cultural knowledge courses are set at more than 40%, and the second grade stage has the most students interested in foreign cultural knowledge; In the third year, the domestic and foreign cultural knowledge courses are maintained at about 35%, and the interest in foreign cultural knowledge has also declined. At the fourth grade, the attitude towards foreign cultural knowledge and the curriculum of domestic and foreign cultural knowledge have been reduced to the level that was close to that of the first grade. It can be seen that almost all courses related to cultural knowledge at home and abroad are set in the second and third grades, and they do not run through the four-year undergraduate teaching.

(2) Cross-cultural competence and various influencing factors.

In this study, "intercultural communication skills", "intercultural understanding skills", "intercultural competence and self-confidence" and related courses were analyzed (Table 2).

**Table 2.** Cross-cultural competence dimensions are related to each element.

	Cross-cultural communication skills	Cross-cultural understanding	Cross-cultural competence
National Cultural Knowledge Course	.083**	.061	.067**
Foreign Culture Knowledge Course	.037	.092**	.049

The acquisition of domestic cultural knowledge is positively correlated with cross-cultural communication skills and self-confidence in cross-cultural competence, and both are statistically significant. At the same time, the

acquisition of foreign cultural knowledge is only positively correlated with cross-cultural understanding, which is statistically significant. The acquisition of cross-cultural knowledge is of positive significance to the improvement of



cross-cultural competence. The survey found that so far, cross-cultural knowledge courses are almost only set in the second or third grade, and the target country cultural courses of the foreign language colleges of universities not only have less class hours, but most of the content is the introduction of the target country's knowledge. The incoherence and single content of cross-cultural knowledge curriculum have an important influence on the cultivation of cross-cultural competence. The native culture promotes the enrichment of information, and the acquisition of foreign cultural knowledge is currently limited to the accumulation of knowledge, and cultural understanding has not been integrated. Therefore, based on the existing cultural knowledge curriculum, integrating cross-cultural theory and knowledge system into the overall undergraduate teaching is an important topic for constructing the paradigm of cross-cultural competence training.

### 3. Conclusions and Reflections

This study found that intercultural competence did not improve year by year with the increase of grades. Foreign language learners' confidence in intercultural competence originated from the recognition of foreign language competence. The lack of confidence in cross-cultural competence comes from the mastery of foreign cultures. At present, all colleges and universities have set up certain cross-cultural courses. Due to the fault phenomenon in the 2-3 grades, the students who are confident in their own cross-cultural abilities are concentrated in the third grade. Therefore, in the process of constructing the cross-cultural competence training paradigm, it is necessary to set up cross-cultural knowledge courses in the overall teaching activities and introduce cross-cultural experience activities into the teaching system to fully promote the cross-cultural exchange activities between foreign teachers and foreign students in the school and local college students. Before the start of cross-cultural practice activities such as summer camps, short-term study abroad, and foreign company internships, students should be prepared for systematic and comprehensive cross-cultural training. In addition, after the end of the cross-cultural practice activities, reflection and experience sharing activities are carried out, and various individual cultural experiences are built into a multicultural experience database, which provides a wealth of reference for cultivating cross-cultural competence. The cultivation of intercultural competence has the characteristics of long-term, diversified and dynamic. Therefore, the construction of an educational environment for intercultural competence requires continuous exploration of a compound and open intercultural competence training model on the basis of solid theories and appropriate local characteristics.

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