EXPLORING AWARENESS OF ENGLISH CULTURE-LOADED WORDS AMONG JORDANIAN EFL LEARNERS: A CASE STUDY OF ENGLISH-MAJOR UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS AT MUTAH UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT*:   The primary objective of this paper is to explore the awareness of English culture-loaded words among Jordanian EFL learners at Mutah University. The study attempted to answer whether the EFL learners recognized and understood English culture-loaded words. The study sample of 112 EFL learners attending Mutah University and currently pursuing English majors was required to undertake a culture-loaded words test. A strategy questionnaire was designed to amass the data. The instrument was substantiated and administered using a five-point Likert scale. SPSS analytical software was employed to analyze the accumulated data. Various learning strategies and their impact on EFL learners were determined. An initial examination of the results revealed that English culture-loaded words are a clear barrier to the understanding and absorption of a second language; additionally, it was evident that the learners had not developed any effective strategies to employ when encountering culturally loaded words. These results suggest the existence of a series of implications for the education sector and indicate that Jordanian EFL learners at Mutah University require additional education and direct teaching of specific strategies when encountering English culture-loaded words. Further study needs to be conducted concerning the capacity of students to translate words, proverbs, and metaphorical language. Since culture is an essential element of literature, further research is needed to determine how thoroughly students can translate literary texts.*

Keywords: Awareness, Culture-loaded Words, EFL learners, Translation

1. INTRODUCTION

There is a perpetual link between language and culture, and it is not viable to learn a language and culture independently without depending on one another [1]. As individuals develop, they must be provided with opportunities to experience alternative languages and cultures; Accurate understanding is challenging without exposure to individuals who speak different languages. No matter how proficient, it is demanding for any translator to translate words with diverse cultural implications into an alternative language when some words do not exist in the cultures of other languages. The responsibility of a translator increases to accurately translate these words into the target language through the closest synonym to the original word in the source text [2].

Culture-loaded words (vocabulary vacancies) are words, phrases, and idioms associated with and expressing culturally specific concepts that distinguish one ethnic group and their distinct cultural development from other ethnic identities. Additionally, Yu [3] defines the concept as a word that is absent from the target language but expresses cultural information in the lexis of the source language. Culture-loaded words consist of terminology (words and phrases) incorporating specific cultural information that is problematic to translate into the target language.

Kramsch [4] asserts that language expresses cultural reality when defining communication among speakers of a language as uncomplicated due to their shared social and cultural origins, and, consequently, it is simple to interpret their communication appropriately. When considering the cultural values of English and Arabic, many native English speakers may consider certain polite Arabic behaviors as invasions of privacy. To prevent misunderstandings while communicating across cultural boundaries, one must consider what to say and whether it is appropriate to the listener's culture. The ability to communicate effectively with people who speak other languages improves further with cultural understanding [2, 5].

According to Bada [6], cultural literacy in English Language Teaching (ELT) is necessary because EFL students may experience difficulty communicating with native English speakers because they are unaware of their cultural differences. Translation strategies are divided into domestication and foreignization [7]. The translation of culture-loaded words should employ a foreignization strategy as an auxiliary strategy [8]. Additionally, Liu [8] introduced translation strategies for culture-loaded words and elaborated on the methods used in the translation process. The focus of the translators should be to fulfill the aim of their work rather than just the literal translation of the source language into the target language. Translators should ensure the accuracy of the translation, respect the original text's content, and refrain from playing arbitrarily to fulfill the activity's objectives [9].

Kim [10] studied the impact of the social, natural, and normative, alongside the psychological and physiological environment, by examining examples of the translation of culture-loaded words in literary works, guided by the theory of translation ecology. Additionally, [10] proposed several methods for augmenting word-by-word translation, including implementing a unique denoising auto-encoder to supervise reordering and a language model allowing context-aware searches [11]. Creating a perfect ecological balance between the original author and the readers in the target language is necessary. Applying theory to translating words with cultural connotations represents a significant development in the field and characterizes the extension and integration of translation ecology.

Culturally loaded words are lexical items with analogous primary meanings [in both L1 and L2] but have widely different connotations [12]. Connotation, as opposed to denotation, refers to the inferred meaning of a word, including any positive or negative associations it may have in addition to its primary meaning. Denotation refers to a word's literal dictionary definition [13]. The meanings of several terms vary depending on the culture; for example, in some Western cultures, owls are associated with wisdom and

knowledge and have a positive connotation. By contrast, in Arab culture, owls are associated with death and bad luck and have a negative connotation. In Arab tradition, owls are said to portend people's deaths, a bleak future, and terrible luck for everyone who sees or mentions them [14].

Learning culture-loaded words can be challenging for EFL learners, particularly in Jordan, where the cultural context and language usage might differ significantly from native English-speaking countries. Hence, the importance of learning strategies plays a pivotal role. Student self-awareness, goal setting, cultural context awareness, and contextual learning can form the basis of student learning goals [15]. As per the traditional/behaviorist framework of learning, the process of learning and language advancement happens by establishing habits through repetitive actions and training. This means intricate skills can be deconstructed into separate learned skills built by forming specific connections between stimuli and responses. According to Gipps [16], this perspective suggests that breaking complex abilities into discrete components is vital.

From a behaviorist standpoint, techniques like repeating information, committing dialogues to memory, and engaging in structured exercises for speaking and writing aid in shaping these habits. Subsequently, these habits can be refined through reinforcement and feedback [17].

As per the cognitive model, acquiring language involves progressively accumulating language information. This information can be stored, processed, and ultimately accessed instinctively for both speaking and comprehension, facilitated by cognitive processing [18, 19] clarifies that learning is a multifaceted procedure that goes beyond simple habit formation and the accumulation of knowledge. Instead, it utilizes pre-existing cognitive frameworks in advanced thinking and problem-solving, concurrently fostering self-monitoring and a heightened consciousness of when and how to apply acquired skills. At the end of the learning process, summative and formative assessment categories can be used [20].

Analysis of Cultural-Specific Words

In Jordan, the term 'lover' is frequently used to describe a romantic or platonic partner and is not always associated with a sexual connection. This can be attributed to the conservatism of Jordanian society, which asserts that sexual intimacy should occur after marriage. However, in Western cultures, a 'lover' can also be a partner in a sexual relationship outside of marriage. Another example concerns the term 'simple': in Western cultures, it may be used to describe unintelligent, whereas, in Jordan, it refers to a modest or humble person who is not arrogant and does not show off [21].

According to the impressions created by translating the phrase 'love child,' the target expression's seemingly literal denotative meaning differs entirely from its connotative cultural connotation. Therefore, employing guesswork and a literal translation is misleading for most participants. The Arabic word for 'love' also has spiritual and emotional overtones instead of explicit sexual implications. The expression 'smell a rat' is an interesting example: culturally, the term 'rat' conveys the same connotation of doubt or suspicion in Arabic and several Western countries. In Arabic,

it is common to say رائحة الفئران to convey a sense of suspicion [22].

In English-speaking communities, the word "gazelle" can denote nothing other than a little antelope when employed as a form of address or an adjective to describe someone. In Arab countries, the word /ɣzala / is strongly associated with beauty and cuteness and can symbolize love and affection. This implies that what is culturally acceptable to address someone and express one's preferences in one speech community may be socially unacceptable and rejected in another [14] Among English-speaking communities, the term "flea" carries a negative implication since it refers to a bloodsucking insect associated with very old, unclean, and worn-out clothing. This association is reflected in a "flea market," where second-hand items that might be infested with fleas are vended. In Moroccan Arabic, the word "/lberɣut/" evokes similarly unfavorable connotations, representing a filthy insect culturally linked to disdainful notions, including dirty dogs, unwashed garments, and squalid locales. This word could even be an offensive expression to degrade and diminish someone. Although the term "flea" bears adverse undertones in both English and Moroccan Arabic, these two languages diverge in how they employ this term linguistically. If the word "flea," as mentioned earlier, is utilized to characterize an unclean individual in Moroccan Arabic, it would undoubtedly be interpreted as an insult. In contrast, when the same phrase is used to address a person in English, it would appear peculiar, unfamiliar, and incomprehensible [14].

2. REVIEW of LITERATURE

Xiaoying [23] investigated the use of culture-loaded words (formulated by contestants in the 18th and 19th Chinese Proficiency Competition for Foreign College Students) by adopting two methods: statistical analysis and literature research by comparing the use of culture-loaded words with the outline of Graded Vocabulary for HSK. The study revealed several significant aspects. Firstly, it was noted that the HSK test should include more content concerning practical culture-loaded phrases. Secondly, it was recognized that participants utilized more linguistic and ideologically culture-loaded words than HSK and fewer linguistically culture-loaded words (but more ideologically culture-loaded ones). Thirdly, they often employed uncomplicated, flexible, and colloquial culture-loaded vocabulary. Finally, there needs to be improvement concerning the inclusion of culture-loaded words with higher linguistic qualities (individually and in the curriculum), while the remaining categories must preserve their current cultivation rhythms. Similarly, Ngoc [24] aimed to translate culture-loaded words from Vietnamese into English by investigating cultural festival texts, categorizing them, and applying suitable translation methods. The SLD Multi-Term program gathered data from three hundred texts detailing one hundred of the most renowned Vietnamese festivals. The findings contain a list of terms with cultural connotations in Vietnamese and English, along with their meanings and literal translations, that could be employed in universities' tourism, culture, and Vietnamese translation courses.

Towairesh [25] highlighted that a lack of cultural perspective negatively affects communication and precise translation.

This study intends to examine and quantify the extent of this apparent disconnect by scrutinizing and defining the inclusion of cultural knowledge in EFL language classes via an analysis of data collected from group discussions and open-ended questionnaires. An analysis of the data revealed that the current paradigm for teaching the cultural components of language is deficient and inadequate. Additionally, the respondents considered some categories of cultural knowledge absent from their curricula and that their learning in some subjects was negatively impacted. This research concludes with several potential solutions that emphasize the employment of the tools available to Saudi students (and other students in comparable situations) and the advancements in online learning over the previous two years.

Another study by [26] considered translating culturally loaded words to be one of the most challenging tasks for a translator. The Persian novel *Bouf-e-Kour* by Sadeq Hedayat and its English translation, *The Blind Owl* by Costello, served as the corpus for this study. In contrast, the translation model (1987) and Newmark's cultural categories (1998) served as mechanisms for the study. This research was conducted to establish the most frequently utilized methods employed by non-native translators to translate culturally loaded words and phrases. The study revealed that literal translation was employed most frequently, while omission was used the least often.

Guan [27] also examined the familiarity of culturally loaded terms among students majoring in other fields than English at Baoding University in China. The participants were asked regarding the meaning of ten animal-related words in Chinese and English. The results unambiguously prove that EFL learners experience difficulty in understanding the cultural connotations of several English words and expressions. They also revealed that they were unacquainted with the cultural meaning of these words, which resulted in misunderstanding and miscomprehension.

Similarly, [28] examined the comprehension and understanding of culture-loaded words among English majors attending Chinese vocational college and their results agree with the aforementioned arguments. The results revealed that 7.86% of participants passed the test, however, the large majority of the Chinese-speaking students displayed a poor understanding and command of culture-loaded words. Based on these findings, it is recommended that EFL teachers and learners should develop their awareness and understanding of culture-loaded words and broaden their understanding of the target culture which will result in improved cross-cultural communication.

Altakhaineh [21] conducted a study analyzing the understanding of English culture-loaded words among Jordanian EFL learners studying at the University of Jordan. The respondents were asked about the appropriate use of seven culture-loaded words in context-sensitive sentences. The findings of this study indicate that although the judgment ratings of the advanced language students were slightly superior (when compared with their intermediate counterparts), both groups displayed an unsatisfactory awareness and a limited understanding of culturally loaded English words.

Benattabou [14] in his study focused on how English culture-loaded words are learned by Moroccan EFL students. Through a comparative analysis, the research identifies challenges that foreign language learners might encounter due to their limited understanding of the cultural nuances of certain words in the target language. Misusing these words can often lead to significant misunderstandings, exacerbating intercultural confusion and disputes. Neglecting to acquaint students with these additional cultural meanings of words beyond their literal definitions could prove detrimental to their education, ultimately hindering effective communication.

Badawi [22] conducted a study that evaluated the capability of Saudi EFL prospective teachers to translate expressions tied to specific cultures, along with their level of awareness regarding translation strategies. The study involved 43 fourth-year students training to become EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia. They were enrolled at the Teachers' College, University of Tabuk. To gather data, a translation test and a questionnaire designed to gauge strategy awareness were developed, verified, and then administered during the student's final second-term examination in the 2007–2008 academic year. The translation test comprised 20 items, each containing a culture-bound expression, and participants were instructed to provide translations. Participants were required to complete the translation strategy questionnaire, indicating the strategies they typically employed when translating the test items. The results demonstrated that a significant proportion, 86.05%, of the EFL Saudi prospective teachers did not perform satisfactorily in the translation test, underscoring their challenges with translating culture-bound expressions. Moreover, the prospective teachers displayed limited awareness of translation strategies, scoring 40.24%, which fell short of the 50% threshold. The study concluded with recommendations and educational implications for enhancing translation instruction.

Questions of the Study

English is a universal method of communication and a critical component of Jordan's social, economic, and cultural development [29]. It is crucial to evaluate the current perception and understanding of culture-loaded words among EFL learners due to an increase in the prevalence of English in Jordan. Language and culture are inextricably linked, whereby language acts as a means of cultural expression and cultural identity; therefore, it is logical that some vocabulary has diverse meanings and distinct cultural connotations in other languages. This study aims to answer the following questions

1. Are the Jordanian EFL students at Mutah University aware of English culture-loaded words?
2. What strategies do the Jordanian EFL students at Mutah University employ to learn English culture-loaded words?

3   METHODOLOGY

3.1 Participants

This study comprises 112 English-major students drawn from Mutah University in Jordan. All of them are native speakers of Arabic; most have been exposed to English learning and have been studying English as a major at the university under the same English curriculum syllabus.

Table 1: Gender of the Participants

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	68	60.7
Female	44	39.3
Total	112	100.0

Source: Primary Source, Compiled by the Researcher

Table (1) illustrates the gender of the respondents: 68 respondents (60.7%) were male, and 44 respondents (39.3%) were female.

3.2 Instruments

To establish the current situation concerning the learning of culture-loaded words among English majors at Mutah University, Jordan, this research employed a culture-loaded test and a questionnaire as instruments of study.

3.3 Culture-Loaded Words Test

The design and classification of culture-loaded words defined by Yuewu [28] formed the basis of the study's culture-loaded words test. Twenty culture-loaded words frequently employed in daily life and communication were selected for the test designed to assess the participants' knowledge of these words. Twenty multiple-choice questions in the test (with one correct response for each question) made it possible to analyze the participants' comprehension and ability to identify culturally relevant vocabulary.

3.4 Questionnaire

The questionnaire employed by this study was generated following an in-depth literature review concerning the strategies employed by respondents to learn culture-loaded words administered in person. The primary strategies employed in the study were cultural explanation, contextual learning, cultural context awareness, naturalization, vocabulary, cognitive flexibility, ethnocultural empathy, and intercultural understanding [30, 31, 32, 33]. Although the sample size criteria for the study are 112, the questionnaire was sent out to 145 respondents; however, not all respondents completed the questionnaire. 112 were completed and returned, and all respondents participated in the study.

Data Analysis

This study involved students pursuing English language majors at Mutah University, Jordan, and involved all the EFL learners to create a test group of 112 students. The researcher adopted a cluster-sampling process to give all the study respondents an equal chance and reduce sampling biases. Mutually homogeneous, yet internally heterogeneous, groupings are evident in the population. The responses were collected from the respondents using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1-strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-neutral,3- 4-agree, and 5-strongly agree. The application of statistical tools and procedures to the information gathered from respondents is known as data analysis. The data collected from primary sources was examined using SPSS software to obtain relevant findings.

4. FINDINGS

Findings related to the first question of the study.

Table 2: Responses to the Culture-Loaded Words Test

Items	Meaning	Number of correct responses	Percentage of correct responses
Hundred-to-one shot	An unexpected winner	26	23.2%
Red-letter day	A day that is memorable	36	32.1%
Thumbs up	An indication of approval/satisfaction	36	32.1%
Last straw	The final source of irritation for someone to finally lose patience	40	35.7%
Black and blue	Badly bruised	40	35.7%
Hang Out	To spend time socializing	41	36.6%
Right around the corner	Very near/About to happen	44	39.3%
Thick and thin	Under all circumstances	48	42.9%
Inside out	To know things extremely well	49	43.8%
Eye-to-eye	Agreeing with someone.	49	43.8%
Break a Leg	Wishing good luck	52	46.4%
Bored to death	Extremely bored	55	49.1%
Break the ice	Do or say something to relieve tension	55	49.1%
Stroke of luck	A sudden event of good luck	55	49.1%
Pandora's box	A prolific source of troubles	60	53.6%
Piece of cake	Something easy to achieve	64	57.1%
Broke	Completely out of money	76	67.9%
Under the table	Secretly	82	73.2%
Short-tempered	Quick to lose temper	91	81.3%
Thank goodness	Used when happy and relieved that something bad did not happen	93	83.0%

Source: Primary Source, Compiled by the Researcher

Table 2 illustrates the responses of the participants to the Culture-Loaded Words test. The awareness of the cultural-loaded words amongst students recorded as hundred-to-one shot (23.2%), red-letter day (32.1%), thumps up (32.1%), last straw (35.7%), black and blue (35.7%), hang out (36.6%), right around the corner (39.3%), thick and thin (42.9%), inside out (43.8%), eye-to-eye (43.8%), break a leg (46.4%), bored to death (49.1%), break the ice (49.1%), stroke of luck (49.1%), pandora's box (53.6%), piece of cake (57.1%), broke (67.9%), under the table (73.2%), short-tempered (81.3%), and thank goodness (83%).

The results demonstrate that the respondents were generally unfamiliar with most of the vocabulary, were rarely introduced to these terms in English classes, and seldom had their meanings explained. Because of the curriculum, lesson time is limited, and less importance is placed on culture-loaded words. The numerous different spellings of culture-loaded words are an additional complicating factor when learning this vocabulary. Students are disinterested in learning culture-loaded words, and therefore, only a limited number of them study articles or books concerning this concept; however, some students educate themselves via independent study, which assists them in recognizing, using, and understanding culturally charged words

Findings related to the second question of the study.

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation of Strategies Employed by Respondents to Learn Culture-Loaded Words

Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
I attempt to understand the culture-loaded words through their cultural equivalents.	112	3.15	0.603
I translate the culture-loaded words to find their meaning.	112	3.90	0.805
I understand culture-loaded words through text clues and guessing.	112	3.02	0.684
I study the cultural connotations of words in textbooks.	112	3.97	0.607
I consciously procure cultural background knowledge and related words.	112	4.18	0.674
I translate the culture-loaded words through naturalization achieved in the class.	112	2.48	0.682
I understand and translate culture-loaded words using synonyms and paraphrasing.	112	3.80	0.352
The perspective taken through self-awareness helps me improve my understanding of the words.	112	3.64	0.701
I adopt lateral thinking and allow creativity to flow while learning the words.	112	2.21	0.514
Ethno-cultural empathy can help learners open up to each other, identify their shared values, and treat cultural differences to learn words.	112	3.02	0.715
I effectively use literature in the form of plays, novels, and poems in the classroom to learn culture-loaded words.	112	3.78	0.747
I share my experience with different cultures and reflect on the similarities and differences between my native culture and the target culture through discussions to enhance learning.	112	4.07	0.719
I make and highlight connections between language use and cultural values.	112	3.86	0.617
I adopt problem-based learning to help me understand other cultures using debates, role-plays, discussion groups, or literature.	112	4.18	0.584

Source: Primary Source, Output from SPSS

Table 3 shows the mean and standard deviation of respondents' strategies to learn culture-loaded words. The strategies considered in the study were cultural explanation, contextual learning, cultural context awareness, naturalization, vocabulary, cognitive flexibility, ethno-cultural empathy, and intercultural understanding. The mean and standard deviation of learners who can understand the culture-loaded words through their cultural equivalents were 3.15 and 0.603, respectively. Learners who translate culture-loaded words to find out their meaning recorded 3.90 and 0.805, respectively. Learners who understand the culture-loaded words through text clues and guessing reported 3.02 and 0.684, respectively, and learners who studied the cultural connotations of words in textbooks reported 3.97 and 0.607, respectively. In addition, learners who procure cultural background knowledge and related words consciously were 4.18 and 0.674, respectively, whereas learners who translate the culture-loaded words through naturalization, achieved in the class, were 2.48 and 0.682, respectively. Learners who understand and translate the culturally loaded words using synonyms and paraphrasing were 3.80 and 0.352, respectively; perspective taking through self-awareness helped improve an understanding of the words was 3.64 and 0.701, respectively. Further, learners who adopt lateral thinking and allow creativity to flow while learning the words were 2.21 and 0.514, respectively. Ethno-cultural empathy can help learners open up to each other, identify their shared values, and treat cultural differences to learn words. Learners who effectively use literature in the form of plays, novels, and poems in the classroom to learn culture-loaded words were 3.78 and 0.747, respectively. Learners who share their experiences with different cultures and reflect on the similarities and differences between the native culture and the target culture through discussions to enhance learning were 4.07 and 0.719. Learners who make and highlight connections between language use and cultural values represented 3.86 and 0.617, and learners who adopt problem-based learning to help them understand other cultures using debates, role-plays, discussion groups, or literature represented 4.18 and 0.584.

5. DISCUSSION

Language is a cultural carrier and means people express their thoughts, feelings, and exchanges. Different linguistic groups possess various modes of speech and thought. As a result, cultural distinctions eventually arise in multiple languages, which results in the emergence of words with cultural connotations. Throughout history, different ideologies, lifestyles, artistic forms, and religious beliefs have developed due to various nationalities' long-term existence and practice in diverse geographical and humanistic environments; combining these elements makes precise translation challenging.

This has led to fundamental differences between Western and Eastern traditional cultures. Following the results of the questionnaire, the most significant challenge in learning words with cultural connotations is that students do not fully comprehend Western cultural understanding or the distinction between Arabic and Western culture. The teaching curriculum, combined with inadequate teacher instruction, creates a scenario whereby students lack an understanding of what to learn as well as the correct methodology for doing so. Additionally, students do not have access to the relevant cultural materials and resources, which creates challenges for those attempting to understand cultural connotations in language. They have no real situations to communicate with native English speakers due to geographical barriers, which deprive them of opportunities to apply what they have learned; consequently, they lack a thorough understanding of implementing words with cultural connotations. The results of this study go with the results of [14, 21, 25, 28].

The study showed that Jordanian EFL students employ various learning strategies to learn and comprehend culture-loaded words. These strategies were contextual learning, where EFL learners rely on context to guess the meanings of culture-loaded words while adopting cultural exposure to different forms of media, such as movies, music, and literature, that assisted learners in understanding cultural nuances embedded in words. Engaging in conversations with native speakers or peers proficient in English facilitated the comprehension of culture-loaded words among Jordanian EFL learners. Learners used cognitive strategies like connecting the culture-loaded words with their personal experiences or cultural knowledge. This helped in creating memories for the new vocabulary. Ethno-cultural empathy and intercultural understanding helped draw parallels between words in English and words in the learners' native language that carry similar cultural connotations, which enhanced learning for the participants.

6. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that EFL learners are less proficient than expected, find translating culturally specific English idioms challenging, and lack effective strategies for translating words with cultural connotations. Although literal translation and guessing are common among EFL learners, some students were unaware of culturally loaded words and did not learn them as part of their curriculum due to ineffective education practices and teaching methods. This study proposes that EFL learners should receive focused instruction on translating culturally specific elements and

expressions and use effective translation techniques. Culture-specific expressions should be the focus of the class's translation exercises. They should be the primary theme of translation courses, so translators must show the importance of culture in translation to students. The study of mistakes and contrastive analysis in the field of cultural translation needs to be revived. University-level teaching and learning should use literary texts, proverbs, metaphors, idioms, and other inspiring elements. When considering the current deficit in translation education at the university level, faculty members must be instructed in all facets of translation culture and its associated strategies and approaches. Learners can incorporate visual aids, images, and multimedia materials related to the culture-loaded words to enhance understanding. Associating visual representations with these words can create vital memory cues for culturally loaded words.

Awareness of cultural differences and engaging in discussions about the cultural implications of words can help learners appreciate the depth of meaning in culture-loaded vocabulary. Like any vocabulary learning, repeated exposure and practice with culture-loaded words through various activities (writing, speaking, listening, and reading) contribute to retention and understanding. Creating engaging learning environments and demonstrating the practical importance of understanding culture-loaded words can motivate learners to invest effort in their acquisition. The outcome of this study has several practical implications for EFL teachers, curriculum designers, and policymakers.

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