



**PERSPECTIVES ON PERCEPTIONS AND PRACTICE
THROUGH LEARNING CULTURES OF ENGLISH-SPEAKING
COUNTRIES OF HIGH-QUALITY ENGLISH STUDIES PROGRAM
STUDENTS, SCHOOL OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES,
CAN THO UNIVERSITY, VIETNAM**

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Abstract:

The overall goal of the project is to understand the awareness or perceptions and practice of students of the High-quality English Studies program, School of Foreign Languages (SFL), Can Tho University (CTU), Vietnam when studying cultures of English-speaking countries (CESCs) to improve intercultural competence. The research on the perspectives or opinions of 200 High-quality English Studies students, 12 of them joining the semi-structured interview, about their awareness and practice through learning CESCs. The analysis would help the researcher understand the difficulties of students when studying cultural modules from English-speaking countries at SFL, CTU. The research results would suggest solutions to overcome the difficulties that students encounter, and at the same time provide factors that contribute to improving the intercultural competence of language students. Also, through the research results, despite many obstacles in the process of absorbing culture from cultural modules, students still retain their interest and love for the course-CESCs. However, it can be seen that the difficulty that many students often encounter is still cultural differences, thereby raising awareness of the need to learn

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cultures for students. Next is to design teaching materials to become more attractive and attractive, proactively find opportunities to communicate with foreigners.

Keywords: cultures of English-speaking countries (CESCs), perspectives, perceptions, practice, high-quality English studies program, Can Tho University

1. Introduction

Over the past few decades, intercultural communication (ICC) has become the subject of much research and interest and has increasingly become a field of study with great influence among developing countries - developing at a time when but the trade and interaction between countries are gradually being opened, emphasized, and included in teaching in schools and classrooms. According to Do Ba Quy (2013), the diversity of relationships between language and knowledge allows us to say that language plays a key role in creating knowledge through human language, giving the ability to discover, perceive, and master the nature of the natural and social world. Today, students' awareness or perceptions of cultural factors are still vague and ambiguous. Learning a language is essentially learning about culture, but most EFL students are only learning the language and are not exposed to the actual culture of the language they are studying.

Research can consider the goals that students set when learning about the culture of English-speaking countries. These goals may include improving language skills and understanding the history, society, and culture of those countries. In addition, lecturers teach the cultures of English-speaking countries (CESCs) in the training program. Which method should be used to help students not only master language knowledge but also gain a deeper understanding of the culture of these countries? Students have the opportunity to practice interacting with culture through activities such as participating in cultural exchanges, learning about holidays and traditional customs, and learning how to interact with foreigners.

Learners can reflect on how learning the cultures of English-speaking countries promotes an awareness of cultural diversity in the world. They can share their feelings about how this knowledge has broadened their perspectives and views on life and society. Research can also consider how understanding the culture of English-speaking countries can be applied in students' future, for example in work, further study, or in international communication. Through studying this topic, students and faculty can together learn more deeply about the importance of language learning combined with cultural understanding, and how this can influence each person's thoughts and life.

This study focuses on exploring how learning the English language is closely related to understanding English-speaking cultures and practicing awareness of cultural diversity.

1.2 Problem statement

Along with the development of globalization, English has become one of the popular languages, bringing more learning and development opportunities for students. In the process of learning a language, culture is an important foundation for acquiring linguistic competence and for understanding the lives and behavior of the people who speak that language. Without understanding the culture of the target language, it is difficult to understand what native speakers say and do. Therefore, in addition to the ability to absorb the target language culture, English as a foreign language (EFL) students also need to improve intercultural capacity for international integration and to access diverse cultures.

Therefore, learning the culture of English-speaking countries is an extremely urgent issue for language students in the current period of strong integration. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct research and propose practical solutions to help support and create favorable conditions for students to learn and develop better in the language learning process.

1.3. Research objectives

The study attempted to:

- 1) to study about awareness and practice through studying the cultures of English-speaking countries of High-quality English Studies program students, School of Foreign Languages, Can Tho University, and
- 2) to discover the practice through learning the cultures of English-speaking countries of High-quality English Studies program students, School of Foreign Languages, Can Tho University.

1.4. Research questions

The study tried to answer the following questions:

- 1) To what extent do High-quality English Studies program students, School of Foreign Languages, Can Tho University, perceive themselves through studying the cultures of English-speaking countries?
- 2) How do High-quality English Studies program students, School of Foreign Languages, Can Tho University, practice learning the cultures of English-speaking countries?

1.5. Significance of the study

The research, first, would contribute to improving the capacity of scientific research of the researchers themselves. Then, the research results would help researchers understand more about the cultures of English-speaking countries. Also, for students, they could refer to and develop future research topics on learning the cultures of English-speaking countries and improving the intercultural capacity of language students. In addition to the classroom lecturers, they could consult in providing teaching strategies for English-

speaking country culture modules for students' better perceptions and better learning results from these cultural modules.

2. Literature review

2.1 What culture means

Dan, T.C. et al. (2018) expressed that the term "culture" is defined in many different ways depending on different approaches and research fields. According to UNESCO, for example, culture is defined as a *"complex whole encompassing knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs and any other abilities and habits that a person is as a member of society."* Therefore, it is difficult to define exactly what culture is, because culture is the synthesis of different aspects of life.

When learning a language, students only learn the grammar rules and vocabulary of that language and a theoretical understanding of the language is not enough. Because it does not reflect all the essential characteristics of the target language and teachers cannot ignore integrating cultural knowledge into the language for learners, language represents the most important aspects of a culture, such as traditions, history, politics, life, religion, etc. Culture is an important foundation for acquiring linguistic competence and for understanding the lives and behavior of the people who speak that language. When learners do not understand the culture of the target language, they will not be able to understand the meaning of what native speakers say. They will also not be able to read and understand most of the documents related to that language if they do not have a grasp of the culture, because the documents contain many important facts that the culture entails (Holliday, 1999).

2.1.2. Cultural significance

Because culture is a complex and multidimensional concept, several definitions exist. The popular definition of culture is tied to the concepts of ethnicity and nationality to explain the behaviors of foreigners in prescribed terms, which is likely to cause cultural bias due to the overgeneralization of foreign peoples and societies (Holliday, 1999).

We can clearly see that learning a combination of English and culture is necessary and important. Because language and culture are inseparable, today's education should let students learn how to communicate with cross-cultural understanding. Because cultures are so different, it is difficult to fully understand the cultures of English-speaking countries. Everyone understands the need to treat others with respect, but they may do something that offends someone from another culture simply because they don't know that what they are doing is objectionable (Vaccarino, 2009).

2.1.3. Perceptions of teaching and learning culture and cultural practices of students

EFL students should be guided to develop their intercultural sensitivity, knowledge, awareness, and behavior and should be provided with appropriate learning materials,

guided activities, and opportunities to practice practical practice (Chao, 2013). Many students participating in this study appreciated the intercultural course and showed marked progress in developing intercultural motivation, attitudes, knowledge, and awareness. They perceive themselves as learning how to address and manage emotional challenges, such as conflict and prejudice, during the process of intercultural learning. They also reported their acquisition of cultural knowledge, understanding, and explaining problems or difficulties in specific intercultural situations.

They claimed increased self-awareness and a different awareness of cross-cultural issues (e.g. racism) and mentioned discovering and understanding different English dialects after watching the film and engaging in relevant intercultural activities (i.e., guided discussion, analysis, and reflection). Some participants said they had become aware of cross-cultural differences in communication styles and others expressed gratitude for the course, believing it had improved their language abilities. Their English, knowledge of verbal and nonverbal communication strategies, and development of negotiation skills.

In higher education, Sung and Chen (2018) conducted a study on the views of some university students in Taiwan, which found that students had positive attitudes toward intercultural integration. famous English into their English learning. Additionally, Tsai (2016) interviewed 12 university students in Taiwan to explore students' perspectives on cultural aspects of EFL teaching. The study found that all participants expressed more interest in learning literature, but considered lacking cultural aspects in EFL teaching due to the focus on linguistic components, test-oriented learning environment, and lack of concern for other countries. Teachers' limited knowledge of cultural teaching, and the influence of students' parents. As far as teachers' lack of knowledge about how to teach culture is concerned, it has also been found in many studies on teachers' perceptions (Cheng, 2006; Cheng, 2012; Lai, 2006; Stapleton, 2000; Sung & Chen, 2009; Wu, 2015; Yang, 2004; Yo, 2007; Young & Sachdev, 2011).

It is difficult to argue against this belief because there is growing evidence that cultural learning contributes to language learning success (Byram & Morgan, 1994; Chung & Chow, 2004; Ho, 1998; Lin, 2004; Sung & Chen, 2014; Tavares & Cavalcanti, 1996). It is also often noted that the need to integrate cultural learning into language learning is becoming increasingly apparent under the influence of globalization and that the focus of language learning is shifting from developing communication capacity to developing intercultural communication capacity (Kai, 2019).

English teachers in English as a foreign language (EFL) classes should consider that successful intercultural communication is more complex than conveying messages between people using fluent English; it also involves the exchange of ideas and the maintenance of appropriate social relationships between people of different linguistic or cultural backgrounds. Therefore, intercultural learning should be given high priority in academic contexts (Chao, 2013). Instead of withdrawing from direct cross-cultural

interactions, students become eager to navigate and negotiate within and between cultures to achieve future mutual understanding.

When developing an EFL curriculum, English teachers should address language and culture equally from an intercultural perspective. In addition to teaching language knowledge and skills, English teachers should prepare their students to become sensitive and proficient users of EFL in multicultural environments (Chao, 2013), the course intercultural provides participants with appropriate strategies to prepare for future encounters that cross cultural or linguistic boundaries based on four-phase activities, thereby promoting understanding intercultural literacy and develop their empathy and cultural awareness. To improve students' language abilities and raise their awareness of intercultural competence, the “five Cs” (communication, culture, connection, comparison, community) are introduced as standards for learning foreign languages (communication, cultures, connections, comparisons, communities). According to these standards, students who want to speak the target language well must communicate with a practical purpose, recognize cross-cultural and international issues, connect with other fields and learn new things, compare with their own culture and language, and interact with the community in different languages (Lear and Abbott, 2008).

An intercultural course uses foreign films as a teaching tool to examine the perceptions of EFL learners (Chao, 2013). Since films are a rich source of intercultural learning, EFL learners can benefit from foreign films as teaching tools when selecting suitable films from the courses offered. It has also been suggested that courses or activities, such as interacting with intercultural pen pals (Liaw, 2006), or attending international cultural events (Klak & Martin, 2003), which provide EFL learners with authentic practice opportunities, are helpful for enhancing behavioral development in intercultural communication.

In addition, the use of more interesting materials on the part of the teacher is also somewhat important. Teachers need to adopt a learner-based approach to use dynamic activities to enhance cultural understanding (Prodromou, 1992). In Murray and Bolinger's (2001) study, practical activities enhanced intercultural competence such as email interactions with target language speakers, interviews with people from target cultures, and projects. Videos and internet research also help students better understand the target language culture and compare them with the values of their own target culture to achieve intercultural awareness.

2.2. What intercultural conveys

In a century where the interaction between cultures is gradually becoming more diverse, intercultural communication (ICC) (or cross-cultural communication) is a term that is now widely popular with people. 2 contents. First, it is the process of connection between individuals from diverse cultures. Second, research works for this process. “Intercultural communication analysis” (ICA) is a term that is appropriate to be approached rather than

treated as a theory. Besides, there is another term called "Cross-cultural Communication". The above two terms are sometimes used interchangeably.

However, according to author Nguyen Hoa (2011), "intercultural communication" is used to refer to the study of communication methods of different cultural groups and is comparative in nature, while the term "intercultural communication", "intercultural" is used to refer to the study of communication between different cultural groups in mutual interaction, such as Japanese people communicating with Vietnamese people in English or Japanese. Intercultural communication has existed for a long time, but in the 21st century, globalization and information technology have made intercultural communication an increasingly important role (2018). Byram (1997) is one of the leaders in the field of intercultural communication competency research. According to him, the cognitive foundation, attitudes, and behaviors are what create intercultural communication competence. From there, author Nguyen Thi Thu Hang (2022) found that the above intercultural communication model is divided into 4 groups: knowledge, skills, attitudes and critical thinking.

Intercultural communication is the culturally related cognitive, emotional, and behavioral process of giving and receiving verbal and nonverbal messages in an interactive manner between people of different interests. different cultural backgrounds in the context of communication between individuals, groups, or community organizations (Satoshi Ishii, 2006).

2.2.1. Cultures of English-speaking countries (CESCs)

To learn the language of a target country well, understanding the culture of that country is extremely important because culture represents a set of behaviors and behaviors of that group. Understanding culture is understanding language.

In the article "Bringing the culture of English-speaking countries into the English classroom" by Lázaro Gómez (2017), it is mentioned that in American culture: in everyday situations, American communication culture is often not formal, because they can call each other by their first names even with people they don't know or their teachers. But in other communication situations, a person with a higher status often dominates the conversation. Americans are very comfortable in everyday communication; they often hug or shake hands to express greetings and attach great importance to eye contact.

In British culture, unlike Americans who tend to be generous and comfortable, British people tend to be more reserved, it is not easy to have a small conversation with them. When introducing yourself to British people, you should not shake hands because they consider it culturally inappropriate. They usually only hug and kiss relatives and close friends. Because they tend to be discreet, not making eye contact and being too close to them is most appropriate. They have a rather polite behavior culture and do not like to be bothered. They are very appreciative of punctuality and thank you notes. In complete contrast to Americans, British people are not too welcoming when meeting

strangers, nor do they call other people's names too early in the conversation, nor do they leave the recipient of a phone call wondering who is on the other end of the line.

It cannot be denied the importance of learning the culture of English-speaking countries in the language learning process, this learning process helps students more easily access the acquisition of the target language, as well as easy integration during the period of intercultural integration.

2.2.2. Learning and teaching Cultures of English-speaking countries

Teachers at universities are increasingly aware of the importance of teaching culture and applying it to student learning. According to Bui Thi Bich Diep (2019), to help students have an interest in the process of learning a foreign language, teachers need to create awareness of the differences between the two cultures for students, through learning activities. and specific teaching such as using jokes; use idioms and proverbs; describe the painting; create communication situations; cross-cultural angle such as learning about a certain cultural aspect of a country.

According to Long Nguyen, Sharon Harvey, and Lynn (2016), Spanish EFL teachers also agree that in teaching culture, it is important for students to understand daily habits, value systems, and beliefs. of the target language culture, along with learning activities such as watching movies and reading literature are extremely important. They are responsible for raising students' attitudes and awareness of intercultural differences.

2.2.3. Students' perceptions of the cultures of English-speaking countries

Today, students' awareness of cultural factors is still vague and ambiguous. Learning a language is essentially learning about culture, but most EFL students are only learning the language and are not exposed to the actual culture of the language they study. That's why there are many cases where many Vietnamese people speak English quite well, but cannot communicate with native speakers naturally, because there is still something very different between Asian and European cultures. For example, asking about age and occupation is normal for Vietnamese people, but for Westerners, this is one of the actions that lack respect for privacy in communication.

As mentioned in "Cultural Diversity in English Language Teaching: Learners' Voices", a Nguyen Duc Chinh (2013) said that in the current context of globalization, cultural understanding is essential for learning. Studying the cultures of English-speaking countries serves as a window to expand our own language students' vision of each country's unique culture and identity.

From the perspective of students at the University of Da Nang, the majority of participating students think that it is important to raise EFL students' awareness and vision of culture that needs to be improved through teaching and learning. cultural practices in Vietnam. Cultural components are often forgotten when teachers teach

English, instead key skills such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing are often more important.

2.2.4. Improving Intercultural through perceptions and practices

Today's students all have the same way of thinking: as long as they are fluent in a foreign language, they can work in environments that use foreign languages. This is absolutely true, but many other aspects need to be considered. When working in a culturally diverse environment, students really need to be aware that just being good at foreign languages is not enough. It is necessary to equip and cultivate more knowledge and intercultural communication capacity.

Nguyen Thi Thu Hang (2022) believes that students need to be conscious of improving their own cultural knowledge and proactively participate in in-class and out-of-class activities. The most important thing is that you need to overcome the fear of saying the wrong thing, being laughed at, and overcoming yourself so you don't become closed off during English lessons.

Accordingly, the school needs to have plans and projects to promote the establishment of clubs as well as build group activities related to language use. Inviting foreign teachers or friends to create a multicultural and ethnically diverse environment should also be one of the projects that universities here should have to help students interact with each other. and help them get along better and overcome common psychological barriers.

2.2.5. Teaching and learning cultures of English-speaking countries in higher education institutions in Vietnam

In addition to recognizing the importance of cultural learning, colleges and universities in Vietnam have proposed ways to make cultural learning reach their students more effectively. According to Bui Thi Bich Diep (2019), teachers can use bilingual jokes and proverbs so that students can guess the meaning and create excitement for students. In addition, they also let students work in groups to learn about a cultural aspect of an English-speaking country that they love. Learning a language is actually learning about culture, but we only teach language, not culture. Teachers at Ha Long University have recognized the importance of cultural elements in the teaching process. They believe that integrating cultural elements into learning can help the school's students access culture. the language you learn most effectively. A number of other methods are applied by universities to improve the quality of students' cultural learning. According to Si Thang Ho Si Thang Kiet (2009), native teachers from English-speaking countries are invited to teach for a short time at universities in Vietnam. This type of cultural simulation will promote learners' interest in exploring the unique cultures of countries.

In general, there have been many methods integrated to bring cultural elements of English-speaking countries into the curriculum, which further confirms the awareness of Vietnamese teachers and students about the relationship between English and English-

speaking countries. The inseparable and mutually dependent relationship between language, culture, and teaching.

2.2.5.1 Teaching and learning CSECs at School of Foreign Languages, Can Tho University

In the curriculum, theoretical foundations related to research are introduced. The first three parts cover the content of modules such as Intercultural Communication, Cultures of English-speaking countries, and an overview of modules with multicultural elements (Introduction to Literature, Introduction to Language, English and American literature).

Understanding the importance of culture and language acquisition are closely related, at the same time with the desire to help language students have the opportunity to improve intercultural capacity and global integration. The training program of School of Foreign Languages, Can Tho University from Year 2, subjects related to language and culture include An Introduction to Language with the course code XH 383 (General program) - FL 201H (General Program), An Introduction to Literature with module code XH 478 (General Program) - FL 205H (High-quality Program), Cultures of English Speaking Countries (CESCs) with course code SG 201 (General Program) - FL 207H (High-quality Program), English and American Literature with course code XN 334 (General Program) - FL 403H (High-quality Program), Intercultural Communication with course code FL 212 (General Program) - FL 405H (High-quality Program) has been included in the curriculum to teach students.

Teaching methods such as presentations, group work discussions, drama, etc. have been used. Thanks to that, students can cultivate and develop their presentation skills, critical thinking, sense of responsibility, and professional ethics, always knowing how to preserve and appreciate literary values, as well as having a foundation for in-depth language courses, applying language knowledge in learning and communication. The purpose of including subjects with literary and cultural elements in the curriculum is to guide the output standards to train English language students with important professional knowledge in the field of language, literature, and cultures as well.

A. Content of the Intercultural Communication module

The module "Intercultural Communication" focuses on studying and understanding how different cultures interact, communicate, and understand each other in multicultural environments. This is an important topic in today's world, when the interference and interaction between cultures takes place more and more in all areas of life, from economics to society and politics.

Below are some important contents often presented in this module:

- Concepts of culture and multiculturalism: Learners/Students will learn about the concept of culture, including factors such as language, religion, values, customs, thinking, and how they affect communication. They will also explore cultural diversity and how many cultures interact with each other.

- Intercultural communication: Learners know how to communicate effectively in multicultural environments, from how to use language, expressions, and gestures to how to read and understand and convey messages accurately, and the presence of different cultural elements is important content that students need to grasp and understand.
- Cultural understanding and cultural awareness: Students will be encouraged to develop the ability to read other people's cultures and understand the attitudes, values, and behaviors originating from other cultures.
- Intercultural Conflict and Conflict Resolution: In this context, students learn about potential conflicts between cultures and how to resolve them effectively. This includes understanding and respecting other people's perspectives, having constructive discussions, and finding common working solutions.
- The impact of media and technology: Learners will examine how media and information technology influence intercultural communication, by creating new opportunities and challenges.
- Multicultural leadership skills: Learners get to know how to work in a multicultural environment and become culturally knowledgeable leaders, capable of promoting cooperation and solidarity in work groups.

This module can be applied in many fields such as international business, diplomacy, social fields, teaching and research, and also in daily life to enhance communication and interaction skills in multicultural environments.

B. Contents of Cultures of English-speaking Countries Module

After mastering the basic knowledge of culture in communication, in the next school year students will learn more deeply about the culture of English-speaking countries through the module Cultures of other Countries. The course includes 45 lessons, through which students are specifically introduced to the key elements that shape the behavior, living, and culture of a nation (America, England, Australia). Thanks to that, students have the opportunity to be provided with basic knowledge related to cultural studies and culture-related factors in the context of native English-speaking countries

The program also directly teaches students how to apply knowledge about cultural elements to handle related situations and recognize linguistic characteristics reflected through elements or aspects. culture in rural areas, helps students have the ability to self-orient, make decisions related to their respective careers, and specifically grasp work activities related to culture in an international environment. After completing the program, students can clearly identify cultural elements that exist in British, American, and Australian society, understand types of culture in general and popular culture in the UK, America, and Australia in particular, thereby, also helping students identify linguistic characteristics through aspects of culture, partly helping students expand and accumulate knowledge in the field of cultural studies as well as culture in other regions. speaking English.

In addition, students also hone related skills such as being able to explain the influence of culture in people's lives in the UK, US, and Australia, compare and contrast cultural issues in the mentioned regions, helping students accumulate more vocabulary and English in publications as well as related linguistic features. Also, students can also explore cultural issues in-depth according to their own preferences. With the self-study process, students can recognize how culture affects the daily language usage habits of native speakers, which will therefore be very helpful to students. much in overcoming obstacles in their language ability.

In addition to the content and knowledge learned in class, students also gain a high sense of autonomy and responsibility through the process of self-learning about local culture. Having a spirit of self-discipline while working in groups as well as self-discovery helps students become fully aware of cultural diversity, thus avoiding common mistakes in daily conversations as well as in a foreign working environment.

C. Modules with multicultural elements (Introduction to Literature, Introduction to Language, English-American Literature)

During the course of studying specialized modules, students will be exposed to foreign literature, expanding their understanding of Western culture through literary works in the module (An Introduction to Literature. Literature), English, and American Literature. Through 45 lessons, students will acquire basic knowledge of literature, practice reading, and writing skills, and analyze British-American literary works. Through this, students will recognize the writing style of foreign authors and understand part of their country's culture through their works. In addition, extracurricular activities are organized to hone students' soft skills through group reports, presentations, or plays about famous works. The goal of the module is to train students to be diligent, critical thinking, responsible, and professional ethics, and always know how to preserve and appreciate literary values.

Similar to the course "An Introduction to Language", it will equip students with general knowledge of linguistics, with 30 -theory periods and 60 self-study periods. Through the process of learning culture, specifically language, students majoring in English Language will be provided with basic concepts in the field of language including phonetics, phonology, magnetism, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics. This is considered an introductory course, helping students have a foundation for in-depth language courses, and applying language knowledge in learning and communication.

3. Research methodology

3.1 Research objectives

The study attempted to

- 1) to study about awareness and practice through studying the cultures of English-speaking countries of High-quality English Studies program students, School of Foreign Languages, Can Tho University, and

- 2) to discover the practice through learning the cultures of English-speaking countries of High-quality English Studies program students, School of Foreign Languages, Can Tho University.

3.2. Research questions

The study tried to answer the following questions:

- 1) To what extent do High-quality English Studies program students, School of Foreign Languages, Can Tho University, perceive themselves through studying the cultures of English-speaking countries?
- 2) How do High-quality English Studies program students, School of Foreign Languages, Can Tho University, practice learning the cultures of English-speaking countries?

3.3 Participants

Below was the respondents' information to the research.

Table 3.1: Statistical information of students participating in the study (n=200)

Gender		Academic year (Courses)		
Male	Female	45	46	47
96	104	110	90	0

As shown in the table above, the research participants included 200 students majoring in English Studies (High-quality Program), including 96 males and 104 females from Courses 45 (seniors) and 46 (juniors). During this research survey, 200 coupons (free websites learning English) were distributed to students who have studied cultural courses including Intercultural Communication, Cultures of English-speaking countries, English-American Literature, Introduction to Language, and Introduction to Literature. Because they have completed the module Cultures of English-speaking countries, most students have general knowledge about cultures and the importance of learning how culture affects intercultural communication.

3.4 Research instruments

The study used a questionnaire for only students (n=200 students) combined with semi-structured interviews (n=12 students).

3.4.1 Questionnaire

The questionnaire was designed based on information collected from domestic and foreign research studies, especially from Chapter 2. From the theoretical basis, a questionnaire was created with two main parts: Part I is the personal information of students participating in the survey, and Part II is the detailed survey. Part II is divided into 2 sub-parts: Part 1 is an overview of cultural modules that have been included in the

training program for students majoring in High-quality English Studies Program, and Part 2 is perceptions, practices with difficulties and solutions for students when studying the modules of cultures of English-speaking countries. This section is designed in the form of multiple-choice questions and a 5-level Likert scale from (1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Neutral, (4) Agree (5) Strongly Agree (*See Appendix A*). It is combined with open-ended questions at the end of each section for students to express their views or other opinions to objectively collect students' feelings from many perspectives when approaching the text.

3.4.3 Interview

Besides the survey questionnaire, this study also used a semi-structured interview. The researchers invited 12 students to participate in interviews to learn more about the process of learning cultural modules in the training program. The purpose of this interview is to learn about students' perceptions and listen to their sharing about the process of studying cultural modules. This interview is conducted after completing the survey data entry using the questionnaire.

4. Findings and discussion

4.1. Overview of cultural modules

Table 4.1: Cultural modules studied

Cultural modules	% students studied	% students not studied
Intercultural Communication	27%	73%
CESCs	71%	29%
American-English Lit	78%	22%
Introduction to Language	99,5%	0,5%
Introduction to Lit	99%	1%

Table 4.1 describes the proportion of modules that students have learned in the training program. Of these, the majority of students have studied the courses Linguistic Introduction (99.5%) and Literary Introduction (99%). Next is English-American Literature module (78%) and Cultures of English-speaking countries (71%). The survey also shows that the number of students who have not taken the Intercultural Communication module up to 73%, which is a quite high number compared to the figures in the table. Because this is a subject included in the elective subjects when registering for a graduation essay, the remaining students who choose to do a thesis will not need to study this module.

4.2. Results of students' perceptions and practices when studying CSECS

4.2.1. Students' perceptions of cultural learning

Question 7 was set out to survey the awareness of language major students about cultural aspects. Specifically, "In your opinion, which of the following activities is the expression of culture demonstrated?" The results obtained are as follows:

Table 4.2: Level of perceptions of cultural aspects

No of Questions (Q)	Yes (%)	No (%)
Q7.1	98%	2%
Q7.2	97,5%	2,5%
Q7.3	99%	1%
Q7.4	98,5%	1,5%
Q7.5	99,5%	0,5%
Q7.6	95,5%	4,5%
Q7.7	96,5%	3,5%
Q7.8	65,5%	34,5%
Q7.9	75,5%	24,5%
Q7.10	75,5%	24,5%
Q7.11	97%	3%
Q7.12	99%	1%

The results from the questionnaire show that most students have a high awareness of how culture is expressed in daily learning, living, and entertainment activities, for "Music", "Cuisine", "Lifestyle", "Speech", "Manners", "Literature", "Architecture", "History", "Language." Students all show their agreement above 95%. This shows that students' awareness of the culture associated with daily activities, especially art and language, is very high because the above activities all represent the typical culture of a country.

Usually, before learning about a certain country's culture, we tend to observe the daily life and behavior of the people there, then learn through literary works, architectural works and history, musical styles, typical culinary flavors of that country, and most importantly, perhaps understanding the voice of the people here to be able to deeply understand people and cultures. Besides, a notable point is that 34.5% of students disagree with the idea that "Religion" is one of the manifestations of culture. Because the category of religion is beyond what students are interested in when studying culture. But, in fact, religion is one of the important components that form a country's culture. When mentioning a certain belief, people can imagine the lifestyle and customs of a country.

When receiving a survey question about students' awareness of the meaning of specific cultural learning in Q8 "What is the meaning of cultural learning?", most students agreed with opinions: Language and culture are always linked together, international integration, showing respect for international partners, easily exchanging and negotiating with other countries, and it is necessary for language students when studying abroad and working at international companies. In general, students agreed and

understood the basic meaning of learning the cultures of English-speaking countries; and knowing its importance for students majoring in linguistics. That is clearly shown in each answer, showing that students are culturally aware. Since then, they have given positive responses to the group's survey.

Table 4.3: Students' perceptions of cultural learning

No	SD (%)	D (%)	N (%)	A (%)	SA (%)	M	SD
Q10.1	49,5%	32%	14,5%	2%	1,5%	1.7	0.888
Q10.2	2%	3%	4,5%	56%	34,5%	4.18	0.813
Q10.3	0,5%	25,5%	41,5%	24,5%	8%	3.14	0.908
Q10.4	0,5%	25%	50,5%	22%	2%	3.00	0.757
Q10.5	0%	1%	3,5%	56,5%	39%	4.33	0.595
Q10.6	0%	0,5%	3,5%	56,5%	39%	4.38	0.572
Q10.7	53%	37,5%	6,5%	2,5%	0%	1.59	0.725
Q10.8	47%	42%	8,5%	2,5%	0%	1.67	0.739
Q10.9	50,5%	40%	5,5%	2,5%	1%	1.63	0.785
Q10.10	0%	0%	2%	55%	43%	4.41	0.532
Q10.11	0%	0%	3,5%	49,5%	47%	4.44	0.563
Q10.12	22%	45%	27%	4,5%	1,5%	2.18	0.880
Q10.13	0%	1%	3,5%	55,5%	40%	4.35	0.598
Q10.14	0,5%	24%	32,5%	31%	12%	3.30	0.982

Note: Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D), Neutral (N), Agree (A) Strongly Agree (SA).

The table above represents the cognitive ability of high-quality English Studies Program students to learn the cultures of English-speaking countries. Specifically, in Q10.2 "I find that learning culture is very important in improving language skills." The above opinion has an average score of M=4.18, SD=0.813, and has received agreement from 56% of students and 34.5% of students with strong agreement. It proves that language students attach great importance to cultural learning in addition to language learning and are aware of cultural learning. They believe that a thorough understanding of culture will help them communicate more effectively with foreigners, limiting cultural conflicts and rude situations that would occur without understanding the cultures (Dao Thi Dieu Linh & Do Nhu Quynh, 2019), which are perceptions of students at the University of Foreign Languages, Hanoi National University, Vietnam on intercultural communication competency.

This is also seen from the survey results in other comments such as Q10.10 "Understanding culture helps me understand the people, customs, and practices of that country." (M=4.33, SD=0.595) and Q10.11 "Cultural modules help me improve my intercultural competence." This is an unexpected result for the group because currently, many language students are aware of the importance and benefits of learning the culture of English-speaking countries through the modules in the program, specifically, the Modules-Intercultural Communication, Cultures of English-speaking countries, English-American Literature, etc.

In addition, demographic factors are also included to consider the influence on major students' perceptions when studying cultural modules. The results obtained through the survey are as follows:

Table 4.4: Relationship between demographic factors and student perceptions

		Value	df	Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	Q10*Q3	17.349 ^a	18	0.499
	Q10*Q4	20.237 ^a	18	0.320

The table above shows Sig. (2-sided) of gender and age factors have no relationship with students' cognitive level with Sig.(2-sided) index >0.05. This shows that whether male or female, regardless of age, major students are aware of the culture of English-speaking countries, they all understand the importance of culture as well as the knowledge in learning about the customs and traditions of the target language countries.

4.2.2. Cultural practices of students

Table 4.5: Frequency of participating in cultural practice activities inside and outside the classroom

No	Never (%)	Rarely (%)	Sometimes (%)	Often (%)	Always (%)	M	SD
Q11.1	0%	1%	4%	50,5%	44,5%	4.38	0.615
Q11.2	0%	2%	2,5%	51,5%	43,5%	4.36	0.658
Q11.3	1%	2,5%	10%	48,5%	38%	4.20	0.796
Q11.4	0%	1%	32%	44%	23%	3.89	0.762
Q11.5	3%	4,5%	36%	32%	24,5%	3.70	0.986
Q11.6	0%	1%	6%	25,5%	67,5%	4.59	0.650
Q11.7	0%	32,5%	41,5%	23,5%	2%	2.95	0.803
Q11.8	1,5%	27%	46,5%	24,5%	0,5%	2.96	0.772

The frequency of students participating in cultural activities inside and outside the classroom is shown in Table 4.5. The activities organized for students to practice culture are very diverse and are used in practice when studying subjects. cultural learning, such as "Acquiring knowledge through reading, listening, movies, TV shows, skits" (Q11.1), "Collaborate with classmates in pairs or groups to learn about culture" (Q11.2), "Participate in role-playing activities, simulated situations" (Q11.3). The results obtained on the frequency of participating in the above activities all give average data, higher than level 3. Among them, the majority of students like Q11.6 "Making group presentations about other countries' cultures" with an average value of M=4.59, SD=0.650, very high compared to the opinions in the table.

The percentage of students expressing the opinion that they strongly agree with this is 67.5%. It proved that for students, participating in presentations about the cultures of English-speaking countries brings many benefits, being impressed and interested in them when studying cultural modules. Learning together and sharing each student's

perspective on each country's civilization could stimulate excitement when learning and increase the learning quality. On the other hand, the survey discovered that students are not very interested in activities such as Q11.7 "Consolidate and expand cultural knowledge through writing exercises and personal projects" and Q11.8 "Conduct interviews and film with foreigners to learn about cultures." Because personal projects create a feeling of difficulty and laziness in researching for young people; moreover, finding and interviewing a foreigner is really rare and it would be difficult to avoid causing troubles and discomforts to foreigners and some tourists.

On examining the relationships between gender and age of students and the level of participation in cultural activities. The group results obtained during the data collection process are expressed as follows:

Table 4.6: Relationship between demographic factors and cultural practices of students

		Value	df	Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	Q10*Q3	16.962 ^a	18	0.499
	Q10*Q4	12.962 ^a	18	0.320

Based on the table above, the group commented that demographic factors (gender, age) do not affect students' participation in cultural practices of cultures of English-speaking countries (Sig.(2)-2-sided)>0.05). Practical activities organized during the study of cultural modules are attended without any exceptions. In addition, students can participate in sharing knowledge and experience useful cultural activities throughout the training process.

To answer the question, are students' cultural awareness and practice interrelated? Let's see the table below.

Table 4.7: Degree of correlation between cultural perceptions and practices

Correlation			
		Q10	Q11
Q10	Pearson Correlation	1	0.135
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.056
Q11	Pearson Correlation	0.135	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.056	

Through the two tables above, the group realized the connection between awareness and practices of students. Assuming that students had no awareness, was it possible to practice culture? According to the results obtained from the survey and the table above, the data in both awareness (Q10) and practice (Q11) have not changed (Sig.(2-tailed)=0.056).

The results obtained confirm that students' cognitive ability to learn culture does not affect their participation in cultural activities. Supposing students did not have cultural awareness and were forced to complete the program because this is a required

subject for their major, but they would still participate in cultural practice activities in class. This also helps them improve their intercultural communication skills through classroom subjects, without requiring cultural awareness to learn and absorb.

4.2.3. Students' approaches to culture

Table 4.8: Levels of cultural approaches

No	Never (%)	Rarely (%)	Sometimes (%)	Often (%)	Always (%)	M	SD
Q12.1	0.5%	29%	43.5%	26%	1%	2.98	0.783
Q12.2	0%	0%	4.5%	58.5%	37%	4.33	0.558
Q12.3	0%	1.5%	7.5%	45.5%	45.5%	4.35	0.685
Q12.4	1%	1.5%	4%	47.5%	46%	4.36	0.723
Q12.5	0%	8.5%	27.5%	44%	20%	3.76	0.871
Q12.6	0%	0.5%	6.5%	54.5%	38%	4.29	0.632
Q12.7	2%	27.5%	39%	29%	2.5%	3.03	0.865
Q12.8	12.5%	31%	40.5%	14%	2%	2.62	0.943
Q12.9	0%	2.5%	30%	37.5%	30%	3.95	0.837
Q12.10	0%	10%	44.5%	42%	3%	3.38	0.712
Q12.11	0%	7.5%	42%	47%	3.5%	3.47	0.686
Q12.12	2%	5.5%	31.5%	39%	22%	3.74	0.932
Q12.13	2.5%	6.5%	25%	34%	32%	3.87	1.021
Q12.14	1%	1.5%	4.5%	41.5%	51.5%	4.41	0.738

Table 4.8 shows the frequency with which students used cultural approaches. Specifically, in Q12.2 "I watch movies to learn about culture"; (M = 4.33, SD = 0.783) in which 58.5% of students agree with this choice. It can be seen that learning about culture through movies is very popular among students. From the data obtained, the researchers hypothesized that students could easily access cultural learning through the use of entertainment media. Therefore, it shows that students' cultural learning is also somewhat affected by the approach. This is also consistent with the observation that (more from other studies). Similar to the approach in question Q12.14 "I listen to music to explore and learn more about the culture of English-speaking countries" with (M = 4.41, SD = 0.738) 41.5% of students agree with this approach often and 51.5% always. The above results all give average figures higher than level 3. It can be revealed that in terms of culture, the majority of students are more interested in accessing entertainment such as watching movies and listening to music.

This is also seen from the results of the survey on approaches in question Q12.4 "I learn culture through literary works" with M = 4.36, SD = 0.723, and Q12.6 "I am taught by teachers" share cultural knowledge" with M = 4.29, SD = 0.632. This is an unexpected result for the group because currently students are exposed to cultural resources through studying and materials provided by teachers in class, specifically. Maybe, when studying modules such as Intercultural Communication, Cultures of English-speaking countries, English-American Literature, etc. Besides, a method that is not quite popular among

students is Q12.8 "I read many idioms and proverbs to support cultural learning" with $M = 2.62$, $SD = 0.943$. It can be found that learning idioms and proverbs causes many difficulties for students in accessing culture, especially for students who are not completely proficient in English, which can hinder students in the process of understanding meanings of idioms as well as absorbing cultural context.

Demographic factors were also included to examine whether they had any impact on students' approaches to culture. The results obtained through the survey are shown in the following table.

Table 4.9: Demographic factors and cultural approaches of students

		Value	df	Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	Q12*Q3	17.516 ^a	18	0.499
	Q12*Q4	22.473 ^a	18	0.320

The table above shows Sig. (2-sided) of Q12*Q3 and Q12*Q4 are both > 0.05 , so it can be shown that demographic factors have absolutely no effect on the ways of approaching the culture of language students. This shows that regardless of gender or age, students apply the same diverse cultural approaches, not limited by biological factors, and at the same time shows that students always be free to choose ways to learn the culture of the target language.

4.2.4. Solutions to overcome difficulties when learning cultures

Table 4.10: Difficulties in learning culture

No	Yes (%)	No (%)
Q13.1	76.5%	23%
Q13.2	68.5%	31.5%
Q13.3	27.5%	72%
Q13.4	74%	26%
Q13.5	65.5%	34.5%
Q13.6	67.5%	32%
Q13.7	74.5%	25%
Q13.8	61%	39%
Q13.9	88%	11.5%

Table 4.10 describes the proportion of students having great difficulty with 9 difficulties when studying culture modules. In general, students face common difficulties such as cultural differences (76.5%) and teaching materials are not attractive enough (68.5%). There are not many extracurricular activities to supplement the curriculum (74%), and the lack of practical skills (65.5%), the lack of reference materials (67.5%), confusion between grammatical knowledge of mother tongue and target language (74.5%), few opportunities for communication and interaction, and collaborate with people from English-speaking countries (61%).

In particular, the lack of situations to resolve cultural conflicts is the barrier that most language students encounter, accounting for the highest 88% in the table. Besides, the survey shows that the difficulty of not being interested in the cultures of English-speaking countries does not account for a large proportion of the difficulties that students encounter, only 27.5% compared to the average level of the questionnaire. Therefore, the table above shows that even though students encounter many obstacles in the process of absorbing culture from cultural modules, they still retain their interest and love for the culture of other English countries.

4.2 Findings from qualitative data

There are 5 interview questions to understand the feelings of students majoring in English Language of the High-quality training system about learning culture through relevant modules and subjects (skills and practice) related to culture. With the question "How do you perceive learning culture through modules and subjects (skills and practices) related to culture?" The students' answers all showed that this is a necessary and very important thing. Besides, culture is also expressed through many aspects.

Student A said: *"This way of learning culture helps supplement cross-cultural knowledge."* Student B put his idea: *"This is necessary because it helps increase knowledge and improve soft skills for learners."* Student C said straightly: *"I see that culture is expressed through music, food, and lifestyle."* Student D added: *"Culture is an interesting subject and the knowledge about it is quite large to be able to explore and learn."* Student E raised her opinion: *"Learning culture is very interesting and practical."* Student F added: *"Learning culture is very important because it is a factor that helps learners integrate with other countries."* Student G strongly spoke out: *"It is an indispensable subject in the study of language major students."* Student H also said, *"It is a necessary subject to participate in the international integration process"* and Student I added: *"This is a subject that attracts attention because as a student majoring in English, the culture of English-speaking countries is what I care about the most."* Student J showed his idea: *"It helps to better understand the field of study and increase interest in that language."* Student K continued stating: *"Learning culture helps speed up language learning progress and helps learners love that language more."* while Student L posed: *"It is vital, crucial, significant, and it is very important for foreign school's students."*

When asked "Please clearly state which cultural point you like to study and its importance (British/American Festivals/Holidays, Costumes, Music, Fashion,)," 12 students were interviewed and gave out many different opinions. Among them, 2 students said that their favorite thing about culture is Fashion, 3 students chose Culture, 3 students chose Music and 4 students voted for Festivals.

Student A said confidently: *"Traditions and taboos are important things to know to avoid silly incidents when communicating,"* and Student B stated: *"Music culture because of its sounds and messages is a catalyst to integrate more easily with other countries."* Student C said: *"Music. Because I love music and it helps me be more interested and not bored in the process of learning my language and culture."* While Student D said differently: *"British Festivals."*

Because festivals clearly show the living culture of a place and the excitement it brings also increases the interest in absorbing culture - a vast knowledge to absorb." Student E directed another piece of culture: *"Fashion. Because for me, different countries will express their culture through different daily clothes. Some places are free to explore; others preserve long-standing traditions through fashion. For someone who loves fashion like me, this makes me feel like learning culture is more interesting."* Student F expressed: *"American Festivals. Because it creates an opportunity to learn about the history and traditions of English-speaking countries."* While, like Student C, Student G said: *"Music. Because it conveys a lot of information and emotions. Music is something that touches others through melody even though they are not in the same language."* Student H added: *"American Festivals. Because I love this country so much, watching and learning about the festivals here helps me learn the culture much better."* Then, Student I replied: *"You have to learn about customs and traditions to be able to communicate and interact with many people."* At the same token, Student J stated her viewpoint: *"American Festivals. Because I love festivals and the civilizational meanings they bring."* while Student K loved to say: *"I love American culture, because the US culture is very lovely. It's related to eating and living which it's about American lifestyle."* Student L smiled and said: *"To me, fashion is the element that deeply represents a country's culture because it shows the trends and characteristics of that country."*

Through these answers, it can be seen that for each person, culture is clearly expressed through different factors (living customs, fashion, music, architecture,) but overall, these are all outstanding aspects when one country looks at another country.

With the question "Do you actively participate in practical activities and exercises about Culture in class?" (Example: Watching videos, role-playing, giving presentations,)", only 2 students answered, "Not participating". The rest all responded that they participated in various activities. It proves that High-quality English Studies Program students, SFL, CTU are quite active in participating in practicing these culture-related modules.

Student B posed his involvement: *"Actively participate in hands-on activities by watching cultural videos and participating in presentations."*, and Student D said: *"Participate by role-playing."*, and Student E said: *"Participate actively by giving presentations."* Student H: *"Actively participate in presentations about the cultures of other countries. Besides, watching videos about countries' cultures is my favorite activity because through it I can see their beauty."* Student K explained: *"I watched the video and participated in the presentation. These are also my two favorite activities because they are easy to learn."* He added, *"Besides, outside of class, I also learn about the culture of other countries in many different ways such as reading newspapers, listening to music, reading books, etc."*

In the fourth question: "During the process of studying modules and subjects related to culture, what difficulties did you encounter and offer solutions?", the answers given were quite different. The answers show that national cultures really have many difficult things to learn, especially for language learners. Each person will have a different difficulty and come up with different solutions.

Student A said immediately: *“Cultural differences. The solution is to learn how to adapt every day.”* While Student B posed her idea: *“There are too many documents. Therefore, I think it is necessary to find resources that can condense knowledge to make it easier to read and understand.”* Student D showed her opinion: *“Too many documents cause dilution. You should ask your teacher for help to find official resources.”* Student E added: *“The information sources are many, strange and difficult to remember. You need to take the time to learn more and ask about trustworthy websites.”* Also, Student F expressed: *“Sources for finding information about other countries’ cultures on the Internet are limited or have little information and lack authenticity. The solution proposed here is to ask teachers to get a reliable search source.”* Student G explained: *“Because the culture is different, it is difficult to understand its meaning. You should ask for more help from teachers.”* Student H replied: *“I don’t know how to choose a topic to present because the amount of information is too broad. I need to ask for the teacher’s opinion.”* Then Student I raised her remarks: *“The material is not interesting. To find excitement by watching videos or listening to music because these are the most popular and easiest ways to learn.”* From this respect, it can be seen that students put their trust in teachers when they have difficulty studying. Teachers are always the best solution for them.

In the last question, "What would you say is an "ideal" lesson when participating in a class about English-American culture?" The answers received were a class with music and lessons, showing about culture or literary works, games, videos promoting culture, taking questionnaires, and participating in presentations. An ideal lesson depends not only on the teacher's level of understanding and communication ability but also on other external factors. It needs to create excitement for learners. And those excitements come from simple activities that often appear in lessons at school.

4.2.3. Recommendations from the findings

From the research results, the researchers proposed solutions to solve the difficulties that High-quality English Studies Program students, SFL, CTU encounter in the process of studying modules on culture and intercultural communication. After analyzing the results, the researchers gained an objective view of the difficulties students are facing. Since then, the group has made recommendations for each issue to minimize the challenges that students face when exposed to cultural modules in the training program.

First, regarding the comments in Q 13.1 (Cultural differences), students can directly learn and cultivate a culture with native people. According to Ho, to discover the cultural values of indigenous people, conducting ethnic interviews with them is very necessary. This can help build learners' cultural learning model. One of the most common methods today is that students often participate in courses with native teachers, or more simply, use social networking platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Omegle, etc. to connect and chat directly with native people to learn and improve their knowledge of those countries.

Directly exchanging information with native speakers is a good opportunity for students to absorb effectively. Besides, students can compare their own country's culture

with English-speaking countries, thereby finding similarities and differences. This can make a deep impression, helping students take notes and remember information in a long and simple way. Students should filter useful information and learn good things from the cultures of those countries, which can develop more outward and progressive thinking. According to Ho, M.C (1998), cultivating the culture of English-speaking countries and comparing those cultures is a way to broaden learners' horizons. Because they have been exposed to culture objectively, this is quite easy for them. Next in Q13.2 (Teaching materials are not attractive enough) and Q13.6 (Lack of reference materials), the researchers have come up with some solutions: students can learn culture through cuisine, visit museums in other places when they have the opportunity to travel to some countries and learn about the cultures of English-speaking countries through internet sources such as YouTube, movies, music, news, etc. With resources from the Internet, newspapers, magazines, or TV, students can discover a wider variety of cultural information (Chlopek, 1986).

Besides, the opinion that (there are not many extracurricular activities to supplement the curriculum) in Q13.4 also received much agreement from the survey results. The group also came up with a few solutions to help students have more opportunities to participate such as: creating inspiration to learn culture by participating in foreign festivals, participating in many exchange activities with foreign students, visiting museums elsewhere if travel opportunities arise, and participating in intercultural project groups. Every year, School of Foreign Languages organizes cultural exchange programs and events, students can follow and register to attend to gain more extracurricular experience for the purpose of developing cultural knowledge and intercultural communication. Furthermore, students can also participate in cultural exchange community activities in groups, clubs at school, or on social forums. Learning about culture will be truly effective when students actively learn and participate in extracurricular sessions. According to Chlopek (1986), students can organize a presentation or a cultural party at school in many different ways, or a competition on behalf of the teacher to make learning more interesting because they are very creative and rich in imagination.

According to Chlopek (1986), teamwork is an extremely useful technique in accessing culture, problems are often thoroughly solved when working on projects together or through presentations. Whether learning about culture is effective or not depends on whether students can balance theory and practice, when students have experience applying into practice the information they have learned in the courses on culture. Only culture can learning be called complete. From the results collected through the survey process, the research team has proposals to raise awareness and practice for high-quality English Studies Program students, SFL, CTU while studying cultural modules of cultures of English-speaking countries. To improve students' intercultural competence, Liddicoat (2005) believes that it is necessary to go through 4 stages including (1) Awareness-raising, (2) Skills development, (3) Production, and (4) Feedback. For the

stage of raising learners' awareness, according to the results obtained, have basic knowledge about culture, the level of cultural awareness of learners. Nguyen Thi Thuy Lan (2020) stated that to improve cultural awareness, learners should be encouraged to compare and explore the differences between different cultures. Therefore, support from teachers in solving cultural practice tasks will bring good results. This is also shown in the group's interview results, students also shared that when they encounter problems or difficulties when participating in cultural practice, the first thing they do is to find a teacher, especially students response *"Because the culture is different, it is difficult to understand its meaning. I should ask for more help from teachers", "I don't know how to choose a topic to present because the amount of information is too broad. I need to ask for the teacher's opinion"*

In addition, the researchers believe that although students have difficulties, a few of them still boldly ask questions. This problem is largely due to students' lack of initiative in finding teachers. Therefore, it is recommended that the lecturers, SFL, CTU can encourage students to ask questions and at the same time assist in answering students' questions during the process of studying cultural modules. In addition, teachers with intercultural experience will be able to bring culture into discussions in classroom practice about the meanings, explanations, and significance of culture (Byram, 1991).

Also, Göbel & Hesse (2008) also argue that teachers' intercultural experiences and learning outcomes during the practice of cultural modules are strongly related to each other. In this regard, the researchers propose that SFL board can arrange teachers with high intercultural competence and experience to improve learning outcomes and stronger intercultural contacts through studying the cultures of English-speaking countries from any international workshops, conferences, and training sessions.

According to Ho, S. T. K. (2009), exchange participants will be exposed to certain cultural aspects by talking and observing. After the exchange course ends, students can report on what they have discovered to develop students' cultural vision and cultural exchanges. This is similar to communication exchange; appropriate activities should also be designed to share information and knowledge with other learners. This is considered stage 4 (Feedback), Liddicoat (2005) in the process of developing students' intercultural competence.

In short, for language learners to develop intercultural competence, specifically in cultural awareness and practices, the main decisive factor lies in teaching the cultures of English-speaking countries. Furthermore, language teaching is inseparable from understanding the culture of that language. Therefore, cultural teaching needs to be properly applied in classrooms to improve learners' awareness, skills, and attitudes. Both now and in the future, this is also considered the foundation for more effective intercultural communication.

4.3. Discussion

The research results have shown opinions about awareness and practices through learning the cultures of English-speaking countries of High-quality English Studies Program students at SFL, CTU. Many students understand the importance of learning culture and practicing cultural understanding through modules in the training program such as: Intercultural communication, Cultures of English-speaking countries, English-American Literature, Introduction to Language, Introduction to Literature, etc. Therefore, students are also aware of the influence of intercultural communication on themselves, current needs, and future development. *"We need more intercultural engagement, more understanding of and empathy with others who speak different cultures."* (Kim, 2020, p.12).

In addition, when looking deeply into the cognitive abilities of High-quality English Studies Program students in learning the cultures of English-speaking countries, we believe that language modules attach great importance to learning culture. Besides learning a language and being aware of cultural learning. *"Foreign language learning couldn't be completed if cultural learning is neglected; she argued that teaching culture to students is vital and it furnishes a sophisticated context for learners to use the language"* (Aldawood & Almeshari, 2019, p.25). For them, intercultural communication can greatly support effective communication with foreigners, help them be more confident, and know the communication rules of other countries. different, avoiding situations that cause cultural conflicts and rudeness in communication.

What's more, they also value learning about the specific customs and habits of English-speaking countries because when applying that knowledge in an important cultural exchange event, they believe that this will make a good impression on partners. *"Learning another language and culture is an opportunity to gain critical distance from others and oneself."* (Kim, 2020, p.23). These benefits are summarized specifically through modules such as: Intercultural Communication, Cultures of English-speaking countries, English or British-American Literature, etc. Besides, students also realize that culture is closely related to living and learning activities in life such as: music, cuisine, literature, architecture, history, etc. They understand the value and meaning of cultural learning, specifically socializing international entry, work, negotiation and communication. However, many students think that they have difficulty learning about cultures.

Learners' initiative also plays an equally important role. It is even the biggest motivation for students to learn and absorb knowledge about Intercultural Communication. The survey results showed that many students agreed with this opinion. Going deeper into students' cultural learning practices, the researchers learned about the frequency with which students participate in cultural activities inside and outside the classroom. *"Cultural learning and linguistic knowledge are essential elements in achieving success, whether inside or outside the classroom."* (Aldawood & Almeshari, 2019, p.16). Activities organized for students to practice culture are said to be very rich, diverse, and used in practice when studying cultural subjects/modules. From these respects, it is found that there is a relationship between the awareness or perceptions and practices of

language major students, confirming that students' cognitive ability in learning culture does not affect their participation in cultural activities. This can be understood that, in cultural subjects, it is mandatory for language students. To complete the program, they must participate in cultural practice activities even if they do not recognize it. cultural awareness. This also has a positive meaning, helping them improve their intercultural communication skills through classroom subjects, without having to be culturally aware to learn and understand.

Through the research results, it can be confirmed that, despite many obstacles in the process of absorbing culture from cultural modules, students still retain their interest and love for the subject. cultures of English-speaking countries. However, it is likely that the difficulty that many students often encounter is still cultural differences, thereby raising awareness of the need to learn cultures for students. Next is to design teaching materials to become more attractive and attractive, proactively find opportunities to communicate with foreigners, and increase grammatical knowledge.

From those difficulties, the researchers have come up with solutions to help understand students' agreement with each method. *"Language learners should be provided with various activities that assist them to locate themselves, as well as others, in the language learning process so that they can develop adequate and coherent understandings of their cultural experiences."* (Pourkalhor, 2017, p.43). Students' priority choice is still *"Learn about foreign cultures through YouTube, movies, music"*. This proves that students find that forms of entertainment such as watching YouTube, watching movies, and listening to music do not make them have too many difficulties in absorbing English culture, on the contrary, they also create interest in learning because Activities that are not too dry and boring. Next are solutions such as role-playing, class discussions, and participating in cultural festivals and intercultural projects. Very few students agree with visiting museums to improve their cultural knowledge, a solution that students find not very feasible, because most students do not have many conditions to directly make trips. Travel abroad to learn about a country's culture.

The researchers also hypothesize that demographic factors do not affect the solutions and methods of overcoming difficulties when linguistics students study cultural subjects. This means that, regardless of age or gender, students will still have to face certain difficulties and obstacles when learning about culture. However, they will need to find their own methods that best suit each individual to be able to overcome and achieve a good result when learning the target language culture. Therefore, students conducting the survey can apply some of the methods given and agree with them.

5. Conclusions

The research has carried out the following contents below.

First, it covered the levels of awareness and practices through studying the cultures of English-speaking countries of students majoring in High-quality English Studies Program, School of Foreign Languages, Can Tho University.

Second, it was designed with a questionnaire and conducted a survey of 200 students 12 of them with interviews to survey the cognitive status and practice exercises through studying cultural modules of cultures of English-speaking countries, based on the linguistics approach and related theoretical sources from previous articles and research.

Finally, it proposed necessary directions to raise students' awareness when studying subjects related to intercultural communication thoroughly and help students overcome barriers when having cultural practices in class and in reality.

5.2 Pedagogical implications

The results of the project will provide information to help lecturers in School of Foreign Languages, Can Tho University, understand the difficulties that students often encounter when studying intercultural communication subjects.

This study focuses on exploring how learning the English language is closely related to understanding the cultures of English-speaking countries and how the awareness of cultural diversity of High-quality English Studies Program students often practice while studying English-speaking cultural subjects at School of Foreign Languages, Can Tho University. In addition, the topic also proposes the most radical solutions to improve teaching methods, helping to reduce the difficulties that students often encounter when approaching these subjects, depending on their needs and abilities.

5.3 Limitations

Although the proposed goals have been basically achieved, the research still has certain limitations. First, the group only focused on research subjects who were students majoring in High-quality English Studies Program, course 45 (-seniors, the majority) and course 46 (juniors). Second, the researchers were not confident with the data analysis with SPSS. Thus, it was not convenient to ask for help with the upcoming deadline. Finally, it should be included with the voices of classroom teachers, who would give more reliable ideas to the students' perceptions and practices towards cultural learning.

5.4 Recommendations

The next research topics will be considered to the implementation on a larger scale than at the school level. Future research will explore more closely the intercultural communication competence applied in teaching by lecturers. The difficulties of teachers in finding suitable teaching materials and teaching environments for multicultural subjects, along with finding out more deeply about students' opinions to come up with more suitable solutions.

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Conflict of Interest Statement

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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