PART A: INTRODUCTION

1. Rationales

Nowadays, researchers claim that foreign language learning is comprised of several components, including grammatical competence, communicative competence, language proficiency, as well as a change in attitudes towards one’s own or another culture. For scholars and laymen alike, cultural competence, i.e., the knowledge of the conventions, customs, beliefs, and systems of meaning of another society, is indisputably an integral part of foreign language learning. This assumption seems to fit well with Bachman’s view (quoted in Brindley) of language competence – that language competence comprises not only language knowledge but also pragmatic competence, of which cultural knowledge is a part.

With this view, educators in Vietnam have made it a priority to incorporate the teaching of culture into the classroom curricula. Cultural knowledge is one of the three goal areas of English Language Instruction in schools:

“To enable students to become aware of their own culture and/ or cross-cultural differences in order to be better overall communicators and to better inform the world of the Vietnamese people, their history and culture.” (“Curriculum goals for English Language Instruction in Vietnamese schools”, 1999)

But how can we “teach” culture to the non-major students in Vietnam who usually do not have close contact with native speakers of English and have little opportunity to discover how these speakers think, feel and interact with others in their own peer group? How can we stimulate their curiosity about the target culture when, sometimes, they do not even have sufficient time to learn the formal properties of the language? One of the ways of doing so should be by applying culture-based activities, which focus on culturally behaviours arising out of the language material being study, so that students can be helped to move beyond the classroom into the living culture of English-speaking countries.

This job is easier said than done especially with the English curriculums for the first-year non-major students (the first-year students) at National Economics University (NEU). In theory, there has not been any research on this field with NEU teaching and learning
situation. In teaching practice, those curriculums have not paid serious attention to cultural teaching as well as developing additional teaching and learning materials that take into account English speaking countries’ cultural values.

All the reasons above have driven the researcher to her study thesis, namely “A study on culture-based activities in developing cross-cultural awareness for the first-year students at Hanoi National Economics University”.

2. Objectives of the study

The study aims to fulfill two objectives as follows:

(1) to assert that the teaching of culture is an integral part of English language teaching, and cultural knowledge should be incorporated into English language curricula for the first-year students at NEU.

(2) to prove the effectiveness of culture-based activities in raising cross-cultural awareness for the first-year students at NEU.

3. Scope of the study

In this paper, this discussion is limited to:

(1) The application of culture-based activities to raising cross-cultural awareness for the first-year non-major students at National Economics University.

(2) British and American culture in language use and communication contexts.

4. Research questions

This study is carried out to find the answers to the following research questions:

(1) What value is culture to the English language learning of the first-year students at NEU?

(2) How effective are culture-based activities to the development of cross-cultural awareness for the first-year students at NEU?
5. Methods of the study

In order to reach the goals mentioned above, the study is implemented in the most common procedure with the use of both quantitative and qualitative methods as follows:

- Reading relating books and materials from different sources (library, the Internet…) to gather useful information for the research.

- Consulting the supervisor and lecturers of the Postgraduate Department and discussing with colleagues to get guidance and insightful ideas in the field of the study.

- Administering two tests with the same student population to collect data. These test have the same content, one at the beginning and the other at the end of the course.

- Administering two questionnaires to 30 NEU teachers and experimental students.

- Analyzing and interpreting data and responses
PART B: DEVELOPMENT

Chapter I: Literature review

1.1. The importance of culture in second language/ foreign language education

1.1.1. The relationship between language and culture

In this section, we will briefly examine the relationship between language and culture and see why the teaching of culture should constitute an integral part of the English language curriculum.

1.1.1.1. Culture defined for L2/FL education

This part will discuss an important issue, “What is culture?” As Nemni (1992) and Street (1993) suggest, this is not an easy question to answer, particularly in an increasingly international world. Some time ago, Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1954) found over three hundred definitions of culture in their study, which underlines the difficulty and scope of the issues involved in communicating and teaching about culture. Nonetheless, the development of culture teaching in L2/FL education has led to a current understanding of culture, which I will briefly summarize here.

On a general level, anthropologists define culture as “...the whole way of life of a people or group. In this context, culture includes all the social practices that bond a group of people together and distinguish them from other” (Montgomery and Reid-Thomas, 1994:5). Based on this definition, it is widely recognized that the language classroom context is an example of a cultural group and by being so, is an excellent phenomenon to be analysed and observed. In fact, some researchers have already investigated the language classroom settings under two complementary viewpoints: social interaction and language learning. These two viewpoints have led some investigators to realize that culture is not only present in the classroom setting but also in the language that is being taught.

Adaskou, Britten & Fahsi (1990, pp. 3-4) help us define culture on a more specific level by outlining four meanings of culture. Their aesthetic sense includes cinema, literature, music,
and media, while their sociological one refers to the organization and nature of family, interpersonal relations, customs, material conditions, and so on. Their semantic sense encompasses the whole conceptualization system which conditions perceptions and thought processes, and their pragmatic or sociolinguistic sense refers to the background knowledge, social and paralinguistic skills, and language code which are necessary for successful communication. While not necessarily all-inclusive or mutually exclusive, these aspects of culture provide more substance to the general definition above and reflect culture's many dimensions. These four senses of culture outline the substance of our culture teaching as we discuss, model, and teach the L2 or FL culture in our classes.

While it is natural for us to speak of and define culture at both general and specific levels because of the inherent complexity of the concept, another aspect of our definition reflects the dynamic nature of culture. It never remains static, but is constantly changing. As a result, Robinson (1988) rejects behaviourist, functionalist, and cognitive definitions of culture and recommends a symbolic one which sees culture as a dynamic "system of symbols and meanings" where "past experience influences meaning, which in turn affects future experience, which in turn affects subsequent meaning, and so on" (p. 11).

The different levels and aspects of culture briefly outlined here clearly show that our understanding of what culture means in L2 and FL education is varied. In L2 and FL teaching and learning, the issue of defining culture is best viewed as a continuum. This provides the ability to stress various dimensions of culture at different points, and allows for major differences between L2 and FL contexts. For L2 or FL teachers and learners in varied contexts, different aspects of culture may well be more or less important at various levels of language proficiency.

1.1.1.2. The relationship between language and culture

When writing about the relationship between language and culture in 1949, Sapir tried to separate them. Up till now many attempts have been made to describe this complicated and sophisticated relationship; the exact answer has not been found. Nevertheless, it is agreed that language is a reflection of culture. Words, of course, always reflect detached cultural
elements, but the relationship between the form of language and the form of cultural elements (thought and activity) is practically impossible to detect.

Claire Kramsch asserted that language is the principal means whereby we conduct our social lives (Claire Kramsch, 1998:3). When it is used in contexts of communication, it is bound up with culture in multiple and complex ways.

To begin with, the words people utter relate to common experience. They express facts, ideas or events that are communicable because they refer to a stock of knowledge about the world that other people share. Words also reflect their authors’ attitudes and belief, their point of view that are also attitudes, belief and point of view of others. In both cases, *language expresses cultural reality.*

But members of a community or social group do not only express experience; they also create experience through language. According to Claire Kramsch (Claire Kramsch, 1998:3) “They give meaning to it through the medium they choose to communicate with one another, for example on the telephone or face-to-face, writing a letter or sending an e-mail message, reading the newspaper or interpreting a graph or chart. The way in which people use the spoken, written, or visual medium itself to creates meanings that are understandable to the group they belong to, for example, through a speaker’s tone of voice, accent, conversational style, gestures and facial expressions.” Through all its verbal and non-verbal aspects, *language embodies cultural reality.*

Thus, language and culture can be seen as the faces of a sheet of paper (Nguyen Van Do, 2006). Language cannot exist outside the social context; language is a social institution, both shaping and shaped by society at large (ibid.). This relationship can be expressed in the following trio relation diagram:
1.1.1.3. Cultural awareness and cross-cultural awareness

a) Cultural awareness

*Cultural awareness* is a term we have used to describe sensitivity to the impact of culturally-induced behaviour on language use and communication (Barry Tomalin and Susan Templeski, 1993: 5).

As presented in the previous section, the forms and uses of a given language reflect the cultural values of the society in which the language is spoken. Linguistic competence alone is not enough for learners of a language to be competent in that language (Krasner, 1999). So cultural awareness should be viewed as an important component informing, so to speak, and enriching communicative competence. Language learners need to be aware, for example, of the culturally appropriate ways to address people, express gratitude, make requests, and agree or disagree with someone. They should know that behaviors and intonation patterns that are appropriate in their own speech community may be perceived differently by members of the target language speech community. They have to understand that, in order for communication to be successful, language use must be associated with other culturally appropriate behavior. This idea is strongly supported by Jan Gaston as he assumes that “To really absorb and ‘feel’ the language, one needs to understand native speakers and as much as possible, enter into the culture.” (Tracy Henninger-Chiang, 1999).

b) Cross-cultural awareness

Depending on how culture is defined and which discipline one comes from, various terms are used to refer to communication between people who don’t share the same nationality, social or ethnic origin, gender, age, occupation, or sexual preference.

The term “cross-culture” usually refers to the meeting of two cultures or two languages across the political boundaries of nation-states (Claire Kramsch, 1998:81). They are predicated on the equivalence of one nation-one culture-one language, and on the expectation that a “culture shock” may take place upon crossing national boundaries. In foreign language teaching, a cross-cultural approach seeks the ways to understand the Other in the other side of the border by learning his/her national language and culture.
Being aware of the differences that exist between cultures and knowing how to act when we are faced with puzzling cross-cultural situations are important skills for harmonious intercultural relations. In other words, cross-cultural awareness is very important in helping language students lessen the difficulties in mastering the language and communicate effectively.

1.1.2. Conclusion

As presented above, culture shapes our view of the world and language is the most representative element in any culture. Any item of behavior, tradition or pattern can only be understood in light of its meaning to the people who practice it. Knowledge of the codes of behavior of another people is important if today’s foreign language student is to communicate fully in the target language. Without the study of culture, foreign language instruction is inaccurate and incomplete. For foreign language students, language study seems senseless if they know nothing about the people who speak it or the country in which it is spoken. Language learning should be more than the manipulation of syntax and lexicon.

Regarding teaching culture in language training, it is important to mention the conclusion of Robert Politzer, who says in the Georgetown University Report of the Fifth Annual Round Table Meeting on Linguistics and Language teaching: “As language teachers, we must be interested in the study of culture (in the social scientist’s sense of the word) not because we necessarily want to teach the culture of the other country but because we have to teach it. If we teach language without teaching at the same time the culture in which it operates, we are teaching meaningless symbols or symbols to which the student attaches the wrong meaning; for unless he is warned, unless he receives cultural instruction, he will associate British and American concepts or objects with the foreign symbols” (1959:100-1).
1.2. Culture teaching in second language/ foreign language education

1.2.1. When should the study of culture begin?
Should culture be postponed until students can study it in the target language? Will special emphasis upon culture be wasteful of precious class time? Should cultural materials be postponed until students have greater maturity and greater language competence? Ideally, the study of culture should begin on the very first day of class and should continue every day there after. With this view, Deborah Peck (Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute: 27) asserted that the concept of culture should be communicated to students in the earliest phases of their instruction in order to lessen their difficulties in mastering the language, and help them communicate effectively.

1.2.2. What type of culture should be taught in the L2/FL classroom?
As Tomalin and Stempleski (1993:7) suggest, it is difficult to identify a detailed syllabus for the study of culture in language classroom. So before answering the question “what type of culture should be taught in the L2/FL classroom?”, let’s consider the opinions of researchers.

The distinction has been made between “Culture with a Capital C” – art, music, literature, politics and so on – and “culture with a small c” – the behavioural patterns and lifestyles of everyday people. Gail Robinson (1985), an American researcher in the area of cross-cultural education, reports that when teachers are asked, “What culture means to you?” the most common responses fall into three interrelated categories: products, ideas, and behaviours. The broadening of “little c” (behaviour culture) can be expressed through the following diagram.

![Elements of culture diagram](image-url)
Discussing this issue, Nelson Brooks (1983) identifies five meanings of culture: growth; refinement; fine arts; patterns of living; and a total way of life. He believes that patterns of living should receive the major emphasis in the classroom. It is patterns of living that are the least understood, yet the most important in the early phases of language instruction. He labels this meaning of culture as culture 4 and defines it as follows: “Culture 4 (patterns of living) refers to the individual’s role in the unending kaleidoscope of life situations of every kind and the rules and models for attitude and conduct in them. By reference to these models, every human being, from infancy onward, justifies the world to himself as best as he can, associates with models around him, and relates to the social order to which he is attached.” (Brooks, p. 210).

From the point of view of language instruction, culture 4 can be divided into formal culture and deep culture. Formal culture, sometimes referred to as “culture with a capital C”, includes the humanistic manifestations and contributions of a foreign culture: art; music; literature; architecture; technology; politics. However, with this way of looking at culture, we often lose sight of the individual.

The most profitable way of looking at culture is to see what it does. Deep culture, or “culture with a small c,” focuses on the behavioral patterns or lifestyles of the people: When and what they eat; how they make a living; the attitudes they express towards friends and members of their families; which expressions they use to show approval or disapproval. In this sense, culture is a body of ready-made solutions to the problems encountered by the group. It is a cushion between man and his environment. If we provide our students only with a list of facts of history or geography and a list of lexical items, we have not provided them with an intimate view of what life is really like in the target culture.

In short, the type of culture that we teach in language classroom includes both “Big C” (achievement culture) and “little c” (behaviour culture) on condition that culturally-influenced elements “should arise out of the language material being studied, but should nevertheless be clearly identified and systematically treated as a regular feature of the language lesson.” (Tomalin and Stempleski, 1993:7).
1.2.3. How to introduce culture into the L2/FL classroom

Now that the questions of why, when and what to incorporate culture in the foreign language classroom have been established, a focus on the how is needed. Better international understanding is a noble aim, but how can the transition be made from theoretical matters to the active, crowded, and sometimes noisy foreign language classroom? One problem in all classroom work is the involvement of students’ interest, attention, and active participation. Learning activities which focus on active rather than passive learning are the best.

Traditional methods of teaching culture in the foreign language classroom have focused on formal culture and passive learning. Students do need both geographical and historical perspectives in order to understand contemporary behavior patterns but this can be done with “hands on” activities. Foreign language beginners want to feel, touch, smell, and see the foreign peoples and not just hear their language.

1.2.3.1. Guidelines for the English language classroom

With this background, it is helpful to review present guidelines for culture teaching within English language education.

a) Goals

First, our goals for British-American culture teaching must reflect the general, specific, and dynamic aspects of culture. Since Tomalin and Stempleski (1993:7-8), Seelye (1993), Hammerly (1982, pp. 522-524), and Stern (1992, pp. 212-215) have dealt elsewhere with cultural goals in the L2/FL class, the teaching of culture has the following goals:

- To help students to develop an understanding of the fact that all people exhibit culturally-conditioned behaviours.
- To help students to develop an understanding that social variables such as age, sex, social class, and place of residence influence the ways in which people speak and behave.
• To help students to become more aware of conventional behaviour in common situations in the target culture.
• To help students to increase their awareness of the cultural connotations of words and phrases in the target language.
• To help students to develop the ability to evaluate and refine generalizations about the target culture, in terms of supporting evidence.
• To help students to develop the necessary skills to locate and organize information about the target culture.
• To stimulate students’ intellectual curiosity about the target culture, and to encourage empathy towards its people.
• To help students develop an understanding of the dynamic nature of the target culture, as well as their own culture.

Certainly, the goals for culture teaching and learning may vary between English language contexts.

b) Methods

Second, in terms of the methodology of culture teaching, a laissez-faire approach is not adequate. Just as we are intentional in terms of what grammatical structures we teach and how, we must also be systematic about our culture teaching. A whole range of techniques exists (see Damen, 1987; Fantini, forthcoming; Rivers, 1981; Seelye, 1993; Stern, 1992; Tomalin & Stempelski, 1993; Valdes, 1986; and other resources are outlined in Lessard-Clouston, 1994), but our learners benefit most when our culture lessons and the cultural aspects of our language teaching are well planned and developed. Little benefit will result from merely displaying a cultural document or artifact in class. Students need to be trained to extract appropriate information from the materials.

c) Evaluation

Third, just as we evaluate our students' language learning, evaluation of their culture learning provides them with important feedback and keeps us accountable in our teaching. Culture learning assessment has been neglected in L2/FL education, and this is something that must be addressed if we are to enable students to truly understand and profit from this

**d) Teaching Culture Without Preconceptions**

Cultural information should be presented in a nonjudgmental fashion, in a way that does not place value or judgment on distinctions between the students’ native culture and the culture explored in the classroom. Kramsch (1993) describes the “third culture” of the language classroom—a neutral space that learners can create and use to explore and reflect on their own and the target culture and language.

Some teachers and researchers have found it effective to present students with objects or ideas that are specific to the culture of study but are unfamiliar to the students. The students are given clues or background information about the objects and ideas so that they can incorporate the new information into their own worldview. An example might be a cooking utensil. Students would be told that the object is somehow used for cooking, and then they would either research or be informed about how the utensil is used. This could lead into related discussion about foods eaten in the target culture, the geography, growing seasons, and so forth. The students act as anthropologists, exploring and understanding the target culture in relation to their own. In this manner, students achieve a level of empathy, appreciating that the way people doing things in their culture has its own coherence.

It is also important to help students understand that cultures are not monolithic. A variety of successful behaviors are possible for any type of interaction in any particular culture. Teachers must allow students to observe and explore cultural interactions from their own perspectives to enable them to find their own voices in the foreign language speech community.

**1.2.3.2. Practical Techniques for Teaching Culture in the EFL Classroom**

Cultural activities and objectives should be carefully organized and incorporated into lesson plans to enrich and inform the teaching content. Some useful ideas for presenting culture in the classroom are described in this section.
Oxford (1994) has used the term “cultural texture” to describe the many aspects of culture that we need to teach to our students. To achieve this texture, we need to vary three different parameters: (1) Information Sources; (2) Activity-types; (3) Selling-points

**a) Information Sources**

In order to get a comprehensive picture of the target culture from many angles, we need to present our students with different kinds of information. The list below shows some possible sources of information which can be used as materials for teaching culture. By using a combination of visual, audio and tactile materials, we are also likely to succeed in addressing the different learning styles of our students.

- Video
- CDs
- TV
- Readings
- Internet
- Stories
- Students own information
- Songs
- Newspapers
- Realia
- Fieldwork
- Interviews
- Guest speakers
- Anecdotes
- Souvenirs
- Photographs
- Surveys
- Illustrations
- Literature

**b) Activity Types**

Many books that attempt to teach culture offer only 'discussion' activities. Discussion is a valuable form of learning in culture, but we cannot expect all students to be able to discuss complex issues at a high level in a foreign language. Often, even high-level students need some preparatory activities with clear goals before they can proceed to discussion. Some of our favourite activities are discussed below.

**Quizzes**

We have found that quizzes are one of the more successful activity types. Quizzes can be used to test materials that you have previously taught, but they are also useful in learning new information. For example, look at the simple true/false quiz about the US and the UK below.
With a partner, answer true or false to the following questions.

1. People always have to leave a tip in New York.
2. Wall street is a shopping center in London.
3. Businesspeople give gifts to colleagues and customers.
4. In the USA you can’t smoke in most public places.

You should ask the students to answer true or false to each of the questions in pairs or groups. They will share their existing knowledge and common sense to give answers. It is not important whether students get the right answer or not, but by predicting, students will become more interested in finding out the right answer. The right answers can be given by the teacher, through a reading, listening, or video. At this point, extra information can be provided.

You can also ask students to quiz their partner about readings or other materials. Quizzes offer a high-interest activity that keeps students involved and learning.

**Action Logs**

An action log is a notebook used for written reflection on the culture stimulating activities done during class which also provides useful feedback for the teacher. Students write it up after each class or at the end of each class. By requiring students to evaluate each culture stimulating activity for interest usefulness and difficulties they must reconsider what they have learnt. Each student also records their target for learning culture, what they think they actually achieve, and their own comments on the culture stimulating activities. Some students get so interested in the target culture that they write several pages in comments each week.

**Reformulation**

When students have done an activity or listened to a story, you may like to use reformulation to allow them to check what they have learned and to reinforce it by retelling it to a partner. Reformulation simply means: 'Explain what you just learned to your partner in your own words.' It is a very simple technique, but has proved very successful for learning both culture and language. We often give readings for homework and require
students to take notes on the content. These notes can be in the form of pictures, keywords, or mind-maps.

In the next class, we ask the students to reformulate the content of the reading with a partner using their notes without looking at the original paper. Reformulation is also effective after watching a short video extract or listening to a story. Through reformulation, students check what they have learnt, find out things that they have missed from their partner, and improve their language by noticing gaps in their own ability to explain.

• **Noticing**

As students watch a video or are engaged with some other materials, you can ask them to 'notice' particular features. For example, they could watch a video of a target-culture wedding and note all the differences with their own culture. Asking students to 'notice' gives a focus to the materials by making it into a task, rather than simply passive viewing or listening.

• **Prediction**

As mentioned above, prediction can be a useful tool in quizzes, but it can be equally useful in using almost any materials. Like 'noticing', prediction can engage the students more actively. For example, when you are telling a story, you can stop at a certain point and ask the students to predict how it will continue. Or, when you are giving out a reading for homework, first give the title of the reading and ask students to predict what they will learn. This will force them to review their existing knowledge of the topic and raise their curiosity about whether their prediction is correct or not.

• **Research**

Student research is one of the most powerful tools that we can use with college students because it combines their interests with the classroom. For example, after the first class, we ask students to search the Internet or library and find information on any aspect of the target-culture that interests them. In the following class, students explain to their group what they have learned and answer any questions about it. This can lead to poster-sessions or longer projects. For some students, it can even lead to a long-term interest in the target-culture.
Some other types of activity that we have found useful include the following but with a bit of thought, most standard EFL activities can be easily adapted for use in the culture classroom. The most important point is to ensure that the students are actively engaged in the target culture and language.

- Games
- Role Play
- Field trips
- Reading activities
- Listening activities
- Writing activities
- Discussion activities
- Singing

\textbf{c) Selling Points}

In order to create cultural texture, we must be careful not to portray the culture as monolithic, nor to only teach the pleasant aspects. Activities and materials should portray different aspects of the culture. In other words, we need to 'sell' different views of the culture to our students. Introducing deliberate contrasts within a culture can be useful. Some different 'selling points' are contrasted below.

- Attractive vs. Shocking
- Similarities vs. Differences
- Dark aspects of culture vs. Bright
- Facts vs. Behaviour
- Historical vs. Modern
- Old people vs. Young people
- City life vs. Country life
- Stated beliefs vs. Actual behaviour

\textbf{1.2.3.3. Culture-based activities towards teaching culture}

The aim of culture-based activities is to increase students' awareness and to develop their curiosity towards the target culture and their own, helping them make comparisons among cultures. These comparisons are not meant to underestimate any of the cultures being analysed, but to enrich students’ experience and to make them aware that although some cultural elements are being globalized, there is still diversity among cultures. This diversity should then be understood and respected.
Culture-based activities are derived from language material being taught and learnt and constitutes a minor but important part of the language lessons. They are characterized by co-operative learning tasks in which students
- work together in pairs or small groups to gather precise segments of information;
- share and discuss what they have discovered, in order to form a more complete picture;
- interpret the information within the context of the target culture and in comparison with their own culture.

In their own teaching the teachers and researchers have found that, when students have understood the language being used in a situation and then go on to gain an understanding of the culture at work, this is for them one of the most absorbing and exciting parts of any language lesson. Studying culture with culture-based activities and co-operative learning approach may add a new dimension of achievement and understanding of the students and teachers as well.

1.2.4. Conclusion

The idea of teaching culture is nothing new to English language teachers. In many cases, teaching culture has meant focusing a few lessons on holidays, customary clothing, folk songs, and food. While these topics may be useful, without a broader context or frame they offer little in the way of enriching linguistic or social insight—especially if a goal of language instruction is to enable students to function effectively in another language and society. Understanding the cultural context of day-to-day conversational conventions such as greetings, farewells, forms of address, thanking, making requests, and giving or receiving compliments means more than just being able to produce grammatical sentences. It means knowing what is appropriate to say to whom, and in what situations, and it means understanding the beliefs and values represented by the various forms and usages of the language.

Culture must be fully incorporated as a vital component of English language learning. English language teachers should identify key cultural items in every aspect of the language that they teach. Students can be successful in speaking English language only if cultural issues are an inherent part of the curriculum.
CHAPTER II: SITUATION ANALYSIS

The analysis focuses on the current situation of teaching and learning British-American culture for the first-year students at National Economics University (NEU).

2.1. The teaching and learning materials

The official teaching and learning materials for the majority of the first-year non-major students at National Economics University (NEU) includes a Course Book, a Study Book and cassettes among the Powerbase series, which mainly focuses on business communication, written by David Evans, an American ELT writer. This course has been specially written for adults who need English for work, travel and everyday situations. With Powerbase, students can

- start speaking immediately with clear, structured speaking activities in each lesson;
- revise basic grammar and learn to speak confidently about the past, present and future;
- learn the survival phrases and key words that they need in their working life;
- practise essential listening and pronunciation skills.

Although being designed to be flexible, these materials draw heavily on English-speaking countries’ cultures while all teachers and students are Vietnamese who share the same cultural background. Furthermore, it hardly has any culture-based activities ready made for teaching and learning in order to help students have cultural awareness, an integral part of English learning. In teaching practice, English teachers have not focused serious attention to cultural teaching in order to develop additional teaching and learning materials that take into account English-speaking countries’ cultural values.

2.2. Learners

The majority of first-year non-major students are aged around 18 coming from rural areas in the North of Vietnam. They had 3 to 7 years of learning English at secondary school and/or high school. It should be made clear that they are supposed to have general
knowledge of English grammar and vocabulary. However, when entering NEU, they are almost beginners in English speaking because they were only exposed to the language in classroom before and hardly had any communication skills in English. Almost none of the students have explicit awareness of or experience with English-speaking cultures. The English language teaching for first-year non-major students at NEU thus need to enhance their cultural awareness; English teachers need to stimulate their curiosity about English-speaking cultures.

2.3. The culture teaching

This section will deal with the teachers’ methods of introducing cultural knowledge into the classroom to raise cross-cultural awareness for students and stimulate them learn culture.

By discussing with teachers at NEU, who have at least two years in teaching NEU students, the researcher collects a lot of information in terms of their ways to incorporate cultural knowledge into English class. Almost of the teachers talk explicitly about cultural elements arising from the language material; only some raise issues and organize class discussion in the form of pair work or group work and provide students with a more complete picture. Some others assign homework for students to do research at home (students are asked to search information on the Internet, make summary and teacher give them marks). A little percentage of the teachers ask students to play roles and compare with cultural elements in Vietnamese culture to find out the similarities and differences between cultures.

With the use of such methods of teaching culture, students are knowledge receivers, listening and taking notes of the information the teacher provides them. This activity derives from the traditional methods in language teaching and learning, where teachers are knowledge transmitters and learners are passive and receptive. Nearly all teachers frequently and eagerly satisfy their students’ requirements instead of letting them discover the issues themselves. In short, in culture teaching, apart from a small number of teachers applying activities that stimulate students’ self-study, most teachers still led their students by traditional methods.
CHAPTER III: THE RESEARCH PROCEDURES

In this chapter, I present an experimental research in which I use culture-based activities to develop cross-cultural awareness for students. It is followed by a presentation of the data analysis, discussion and the findings.

3.1. The research questions

The research aims to answer two questions as specified at the beginning of the thesis:

1. *What value is culture to the English language learning of the first-year students at NEU?*

2. *How effective are culture-based activities to the development of cross-cultural awareness for the first-year students at NEU?*

3.2. The subjects

The study is conducted with the participation of 123 students (from English classes K47B9, K47B27, K47B36 and K47B50) who are in the second term of the first-year at NEU. They are aged around 18, both male and female. They are supposed to be at elementary level of English language ability. Students in four classes belong to two groups: the experimental (classes K47B9 and K47B27) with 60 students and the control (K47B36 and K47B50) with 63 students.

3.3. The experimental research design

The experiment, which was performed for a 3-month English course (60 class hours), included the following steps.

3.3.1. Before the course

The researcher designed and attached a supplementary course syllabus (see appendix 1) to the course syllabus for the second semester. The supplementary syllabus, which includes cultural knowledge content and the aims of culture teaching, was distributed to all experiment students.

Based on proposed activities designed by Barry Tomali and Susan Templeski in “Cultural Awareness” and the teaching material titled “Powerbase”, the researcher developed
culture-based activities (see appendix 2) in light of task-oriented approach and accordingly a cultural-awareness assessment test (see appendix 3).

3.3.2. During the course

Culture-based activities were done in English classes of the experimental group (classes K47B9 and K47B27). Each activity took 5 –10 minutes out of 180 minutes of a four-class hour each week. The control group (classes k47B36 and K47B50) was taught without the introduction of cultural knowledge by means of culture-based activities.

3.3.3. After the course

At the end of the course, a cultural-awareness assessment test with the same content as the beginning-of-course one is conducted for both groups. By comparing the test scores of two groups, then, if the group which has had the benefit of culture-based activities does better than the other; analyzing students’ responses, we can investigate how effective are those activities that have been applied in culture teaching.

A questionnaire (see appendix 4) was conducted to find out the students’ attitudes towards culture-based activities and culture learning.

The expected result was that culture-based activities are effective in raising cross-cultural awareness for students.

3.4. Data collection procedures

The study is implemented with the use of both quantitative and qualitative methods in which the data is collected by means of questionnaire and test.

3.4.1. Test

A cultural-awareness assessment test was administered twice before the course and after the course.

3.4.2. Questionnaire

A questionnaire was conducted to discover the students’ attitude towards culture-based activities and perception towards culture learning.
3.5. Data analysis

3.5.1. Cultural-awareness assessment tests

This part of the paper will focus on analyzing students’ cultural-awareness assessment test results.

Firstly, with reference to the begin-of-course test, the researcher realizes that students from both the experimental and the control groups have poor knowledge of culture and their culture knowledge, even very little, is the same. This is demonstrated in the graph below:

![Graph 1. Students’ cultural-awareness test results before the course](image)

*Note:* Poor: scored below mark 4; average: scored marks 5 and 6; good: scored marks 7 and 8.

Secondly, with the end-of-course test results, it can be easy to realize the difference made by the experimental groups after a 3-month course of applying the culture-based activities. The scores students achieve are much better than that in the begin-of-course test as well as higher than that of the control students. The graph below demonstrates the mentioned difference.

![Graph 2. Students’ cultural-awareness test results after the course](image)
For more thorough study, we can see the following table, which presents the test scores of two groups after a 3-month course.

**Table 1. The results of the end-of-course test**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Experimental group</th>
<th>Control Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(K47B9 and K47B27)</td>
<td>(K47B36 and K47B50)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Score</td>
<td>Number of tests</td>
<td>Total scores</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>395</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The graphs and table above have shown a general view on the tests results of two groups. A comparison of average test scores of the beginning-of-course and end-of-course tests has been made; for experimental group 3.2 and 6.5 respectively; for control group 3.3 and 4.3 respectively. Comparing the end-of-course test results, it can be easy to realize that there is a big difference between two average scores. In order to have a thorough look at what entails the difference, the researcher is going to analyze students’ test results in detail as follows.

**3.5.1.1. Recognizing culture image and symbols**

The aim of this section is to test students’ awareness of popular images and symbols in the US and the UK cultures. A secondary aim is to consider if students can identify and
compare the images and symbols in British and American culture, and then contrast these with the images and symbols in Vietnamese culture. The result is presented in the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Correct answers</th>
<th>Control</th>
<th>Experimental</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percent (%)</td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.1. Famous people</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.2. Newspaper</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.3. National sports</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.4. Street scenes</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 2: Recognizing culture image and symbols*

*Source: Exercise I, cultural-awareness assessment test*

As it can be seen, the number of students who have correct answers in the experimental group is much more than that in the control. Almost of experiment students can realize and identify personalities; 46% of them can identify and compare street scenes in Britain and that in Vietnam; 70% can distinguish newspapers of Britain and the US; 63% can realize the national sports of these two countries. This proves that they have become exposed and accustomed to several images and symbols embedded in pictures, places and customers. Familiarity with these images helps students to feel more confident and to become fluent in using English. So, it can be concluded that the culture-based activities help students recognize culture images and symbols.

### 3.5.1.2. Examining patterns of everyday life

Students’ information about the lifestyle current in English-speaking cultures and the patterns usually followed by members of these cultures has been tested in this part. Again, the table below indicates the difference between test scores of the experiment and the control. In every field of patterns of everyday life, the control students get more correct answers than the control ones. This can only be resulted from the fact that they did culture-based activities while the control didn’t. In other words, culture-based activities help to develop the students’ awareness of patterns of everyday life.
Table 3: Examining patterns of everyday life

Source: Exercises II and III, cultural-awareness assessment test

The result shows that the experiment students have been aware of some distinct patterns associated with some areas of everyday life. In this way, students arrive at a deeper understanding of English-speaking cultures, and they are better prepared to communicate with native speakers and handle everyday situations they are likely to encounter in English-speaking countries. This will be useful for them when they have the opportunity to work and communicate with people from English-speaking countries, or more than that, to travel, work, and study in those countries. From all reasons above, it can be asserted that culture-based activities are very effective in raising students’ cultural understanding of patterns of everyday life.

3.5.1.3. Examining cultural behaviour

This section of the test aims to evaluate students’ sensitivity to culturally different modes of behaviour. More specifically, students are asked if they know what native speakers of English say and do in specific social situations. They have different reaction towards five situations. The experiment students get more correct answers than the control ones. Almost of them have culturally-appropriate responses to an introduction and the question “How are you?” in communication. Most of them they express their praise in a direct way. Majority of them have appropriate behaviour in the classroom. In contrast, most of the control students do not have culturally appropriate behaviour. Comparing the test scores, the researcher realizes the culture-based activities helped students to become more aware of what people say and do in specific social situations, which would help them make progress.
in English learning and be successful in communication with English speakers in the future.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Control</th>
<th></th>
<th>Experimental</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percent (%)</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percent (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV.1. Response to the question “How are you?”</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV.2. Praising</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV.3. Response to an introduction</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV.4. Behaviour for being late for class</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV.5. Behaviour when the teacher comes in class</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Examining cultural behaviour

Source: Exercise IV, cultural-awareness assessment test

3.5.1.4. Examining cultural behaviour and comparing with that in Vietnamese culture

This section tries to test students’ awareness of English-speaking cultural behaviour as well as their self-awareness of Vietnamese behaviour. As the general trend, the experimental also outscores the control, which must be resulted from the fact that the experiment students’ culture knowledge has been expanded and they were quite familiar with comparing behaviour in English – speaking cultures with that in Vietnamese culture. These are performed in the classroom in the form of culture-based activities. The result has been presented clearly in the table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Control</th>
<th></th>
<th>Experimental</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percent (%)</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percent (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V.1. Greeting</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V.2. On the phone</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V.3. With a customer</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5: Examining cultural behaviour and comparing with that in Vietnamese culture

Source: Exercise V, cultural-awareness assessment test

So why do learners need to develop their self-awareness? If learners of English are to communicate successfully on a personal level with individuals from English-speaking cultures, they need not only to recognize the different cultural patterns at work in the
behaviour of people from English-speaking countries; they also need to become aware of the ways in which their own cultural background influences their own behaviour, and to develop a tolerance for behaviour patterns that are different from their own. For this reason, students need to be oriented towards experiential leaning and the growth of self-awareness.

In short, the test results and the analysis above have affirmed the effectiveness of culture-based activities towards the development of cross-cultural awareness for the students especially in terms of culture images and symbols, everyday patterns of life and cultural behaviour.

3.5.2. Survey questionnaire

The experiment students’ attitudes towards culture-based activities are collected by means of questionnaire. The result of the survey questionnaire has been summarized in the following table

**Table 6: Result of the survey questionnaire after the experiment**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>Strongly agree (%)</th>
<th>Agree (%)</th>
<th>Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Strongly disagree (%)</th>
<th>Don’t know (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Culture-based activities are interesting and attracting.</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Culture-based activities help me improve my British-American cultural knowledge.</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Culture-based activities make English lessons more lively, interesting and stimulate me to learn English.</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Culture-based activities inspire me to learn about British, American and Vietnamese cultures.</td>
<td>28.5</td>
<td>47.5</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Apart from helping me develop cultural awareness, culture-based activities also assist me to improve</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>39.5</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statements</td>
<td>Strongly agree (%)</td>
<td>Agree (%)</td>
<td>Disagree (%)</td>
<td>Strongly disagree (%)</td>
<td>Don’t know (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>language knowledge, language skills and working skills.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Culture-based activities help me compare and find out the similarities and differences between British-American cultures and Vietnamese culture.</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>55.8</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I would like to continue culture-based activities in the next semester.</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. In my opinion, British-American cultural knowledge is an important part in English learning.</td>
<td>46.6</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. British-American cultural knowledge help me make progress in learning English and feel confident in using it.</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Cultural knowledge of English-speaking countries should be introduced into the English classroom.</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>59.5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students’ responses are restructured and analyzed as follows.

**Graph 3: Sts’ general comments on culture-based activities**

**Source:** Statement 1, survey questionnaire

![Graph Image]

Most of students agree that culture-based activities are interesting and attracting. With the use of different audio and video aids such as pictures, photos in colors, cassette tapes,
newspapers, magazines, there is no wonder that culture-based activities interest and attract almost of the students. However, culture-based activities need to be improved to attract more students to English lesson in class.

**Graph 4: The role of culture-based activities towards their cross-cultural awareness**

*Source: Statement 2, survey questionnaire*

There is 95% of students agree that culture-based activities help them improve their British-American cultural knowledge. With the aim of raising cross-cultural awareness for students, the researcher designed the activities with a serious attention on cultural elements. So, it is little wonder that these activities can provide students with more knowledge about British and American cultures.

**Graph 5: The role of culture-based activities towards English lessons**

*Source: Statement 3, survey questionnaire*

The responds received from statement 3 prove that English lessons become more lively and interesting with the inclusion of culture-based activities, which stimulate them to learn English. 85% of the students agree with this statement, in which 26% of them show their
strong agreement. However, the number of students who disagree or don’t know is still many (8% and 7% respectively). Perhaps, these activities have not satisfied all students’ needs and desires.

**Graph 6: The role of culture-based activities towards students’ curiosity and desire to explore British – American and Vietnamese cultures.**

*Source: Statement 4, survey questionnaire*

Nearly 80% of the students are stimulated to explore cultural elements of the UK, the US and Vietnam as well. Culture-based activities have motivated them in learning about English-speaking and Vietnamese cultures. This proves that there has been an attitudinal changes among students.

**Graph 7: The role of culture-based activities towards language knowledge, language skills and working skills. (Source: Statement 5, survey questionnaire)**

With reference to the assistance of culture-based activities to language knowledge, language skills and working skills, 86% of students agree that these activities are useful. When doing these activities, they have to work together in pairs or small groups to share
and discuss the information, learn new vocabulary and grammar structure to express their ideas in an effective way. It is no wonder that they are helped to develop language knowledge, language skills and working skills together with culture knowledge.

**Graph 8: The role of culture-based activities towards cross-cultural awareness**

*Source: Statements 6 and 7, survey questionnaire*

80% of students agree that with culture-based activities, their cross-cultural awareness has been improved because they are helped compare and find out the similarities and differences between British-American cultures and Vietnamese culture. Most of the students then not only learn about the target culture but also perceive more about themselves and their own cultural perspectives.

When being asked about the application of culture-based activities in English classroom in the next semester, 68% of the students agree that these activities should continue to be used. This proves a fact that almost of the students have found them useful and helpful in their English learning.

**Graph 9: The role of culture learning in English learning**

*Source: Statement 8, survey questionnaire*
To this stage, most of the students (90%) have realized the important role of culture learning in English learning. This marks the students’ attitudinal changes and may encourage them to try to learn more about culture. Then their English learning will be much more interesting, motivating and easier.

**Graph 10: The affect of cultural awareness towards English learning and using.**

*Source: Statements 9 and 10, survey questionnaire*

54% of the students disagree with or have no opinions about this statement. Perhaps, in their view, there are a lot of other factors help them make progress in English learning and feel confident in using it such as language knowledge and language skills, which can only be developed dramatically by language learning activities. However, 46% of the students think that culture-based activities can support them develop their English.

For all above-mentioned reasons, there is 80% of the students agreed that culture knowledge should be introduced into the English classroom. This proves a fact that they have perceived the importance the culture in English language learning. As a matter of fact, the learning of English not only includes language (grammar and vocabulary) and language skills (listening, speaking, writing and reading) but also communicative competence in which culture knowledge plays an important part.
3.6. Findings

In light of above discussion and data analysis, the findings of the study aiming at giving answers to the research questions can be drawn out as follows.

Firstly, the teaching of culture is an integral part of English language teaching and learning at NEU. This finding is drawn out from the above analysis on students’ responses to survey questionnaire. The assumption seems to fit well with the view of researchers and linguists that language is the most representative element in any culture; knowledge of the codes of behaviour of another people is important because it help foreign language learners communicate effectively in the target language. Without the study of English-speaking cultures, English instruction is inaccurate and incomplete.

The students supposed that being aware of cultural knowledge, the similarities and differences between cultures helped them make progress in learning English and feel confident in using it. The culture knowledge makes them love to learn English. By way of conclusion, the main premise of the study should be reiterated that: the teaching of culture should become an integral part of English teaching in general and for the first-year students at NEU in particular.

Secondly, culture-based activities are effective to the development of cross-cultural awareness for the first-year students at NEU.

Almost of the students in experimental classes has a positive attitude towards culture-based activities because of benefits it brought to them.

First of all, culture-based activities help improve their British-American cultural knowledge and cross-cultural awareness, that is the similarities and differences between English-speaking and Vietnamese cultures. The experimental students were realized to be highly motivated by and interested in culture-based activities, from which they derive curiosity and desire to discover new land – culture. When students have understood the language being used in a situation and then go on to gain an understanding of the cultural factors at work, this is for them one of the most absorbing and exciting parts of any language lesson. Studying culture with a task-oriented and cooperative learning approach adds a new dimension of achievement and understanding for the students – and for us as
teachers! Also, with the use of culture-based activities in English classroom, the language final test results of the experimental have, on average, outscored the control.

In addition, most of students supposed that these activities, apart from improving their culture understanding, helped to develop their language knowledge (grammar and vocabulary), language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) and working skills (individually, pair-work, group-work, discussion, etc.).

Furthermore, some of culture-based activities, in the form of lead-in or follow-up of other language-based activities, made the English lesson more interesting, lively and attracting. This motivates them a lot in English learning.

These outcomes have proved the effectiveness of culture-based activities in raising cultural awareness for the first-year students at NEU.
PART C: CONCLUSION

This final part of the thesis would present several limitations of the study, suggest issues for further research and draw out the conclusion.

1. Limitations of the study

Although the effectiveness of culture-based activities has been proved and asserted, there remain several limitations as follows:

- Only 60 first-year non-major students at National Economics University with limit of English proficiency took part in the experiment. Furthermore, culture-based activities are designed based on the teaching material, namely “Powerbase”. For these reasons, further investigation is needed for the carrying out culture-based activities on larger student population from one year to the next; culture-based activities should be improved to be easily adapted to other teaching materials.
- Because the access to modern equipment such as video recorders was limited, video-based activities cannot be applied for teaching culture.
- The study mainly based on the results of questionnaire and tests. In order to measure the students’ attitudinal changes, other objective means like observation and interview should have been used.
- The study dealt with the development of cross-cultural awareness for the first-year non-major students in general but has not focused on business communication and language context.

2. Suggested issues for further research

Beyond current research, several areas need to be investigated in order to further improve our teaching culture and develop cross-cultural awareness for students.

One of the areas that need to be addressed involves studying strengths and weaknesses of culture-based activities in order to restrict the bad side and improve the good one with the aim of maximizing the effectiveness of these activities.

A second major area for research involves studying the current culture teaching practice of English language teachers at higher levels of language ability. What methods do teachers
use, and how successful are they? How do students respond to such lessons? What aspects of their culture teaching do they want to improve? Which areas are most difficult? What resources do teachers need to teach more effectively?

Beyond what is currently being taught is the issue of research on the most effective assessment techniques for culture learning and teaching? Do such evaluation methods transfer easily to other classes or language learning contexts?

Clearly, a final issue is the continued development of a theoretical framework for culture learning in the future English class, particularly based on research in the areas outlined above. These issues and questions require future research in order to guide us towards a more effective way of raising cross-cultural awareness for students in English education.

3. Conclusion
The study has centered on culture in English language teaching and learning with an effort to provide an understanding of culture in English language education for the first-year students at NEU. After providing background on culture in the classroom and the pedagogical literature, it was argued that current English teaching is indeed culture teaching and the teaching of culture should become an integral part of foreign language instruction. Beyond outlining present English teaching guidelines, culture-based activities were designed based on learning and teaching materials “Powerbase” and applied as an experimental research aiming at developing cross-cultural awareness for the first-year students at NEU. The effectiveness of these activities was affirmed based on the analysis of the cultural-awareness test results conducted at the end of the course and the participants’ responses through questionnaire. Culture-based activities were effective in developing cross-cultural awareness for the students, stimulating them in English learning and making English lesson more interesting. The application of these activities entails students’ attitudinal changes in which they realized the necessity of introducing culture knowledge into English lessons. In the end, it is clear that we need not be wary of culture in English language context, even though it is also evident that there are still aspects of culture in English language education that do need further research and understanding. It is hoped that the current research has contrived to clarify most of the issues it set out to study, and has, to some extent, helped develop additional activities to introduce cultural knowledge into English classroom.
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