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English Major Students' "Self-Reliance" and "Individualism" through British and American Culture Learning Course

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Abstract: Language applications are like one of the most powerful educational tools which assist humanity to identify the distinction of human virtues from other creators as well as among themselves. Studying language not only benefits people with their communication purposes, but it also widens human understanding of the world around as well as helps them to realize their individual values among communities. In other ways, understanding how to use a new language means learners can have more chances to explore the knowledge sea. Thus, this narrative qualitative case-study was to examine EFL major students' stance on their personal "self-reliance" and individualism" virtues through British and American Culture Learning Course. Hopefully, EFL learners, teachers, and educators may have a brighter image from the most persuasive outcome of this study. In addition, the findings of this work can be a prospective reference channel for those with concerns for their further language education goal and long-life learning journey in the future.

Keywords: Language Education, EFL Learning, Self-Reliance, Individualism.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Human evolution and language education may have unshakeable connections with the promotion of each individual culture value from time to time. Linguistics have expressed that the ability of language usage can somehow identify a person's individuality among their communities or in their society. Also, the concept of human values reflects people's language advances. Language, like the other culture factors, reflects the way human behavior as well as their values. Research forums have investigated the interconnection between language and virtues at the early time. And there is nothing to deny that language education plays a vital role in identifying a distinctive human value among society. Individual development depends on the way they express themselves through personal language capability. In the conclusion of O'Connor (2016), the author displayed that "language education and culture" should get more attentions to explore for the purposes of "students' academic and cultural identities" implications. Morris (2014) added that the existence of culture could be examined due to each individual performance among their communities varying on social networks, tradition, tribes, co-operation, point of views and the way they behave "in term of values". This means that each individual role is an undivided part in a community presenting daily by the language they used to communicate. The involvement of each person in culture

concepts might have been a close link to their language education and these two factors are in the same proof of culture studying. Or by the other saying, studying culture is not only about learning the cultural knowledge, but it can be learning to reckon themselves. And "Self-reliance" and "Individualism" are two fundamental values that every student should have their full understanding about these culture statements to be more self-reliant and better EFL learners.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to the previous studies, Schwartz (2013, p.6) mentioned that "the variance of people's values within a society refers to the heterogeneity of people's personal values, the values in their minds. This variance tells us about the consensus in each society regarding personal value priorities." By the other saying, Scruton (2017, p8) confirmed that "Accountability, as the British people understand and respond to it, originates in no particular person, no particular office, no particular procedure or institution: it grows in the place where we are." If each person can fully recognize their values, they will work out to contribute to their own life as their nations. They may bear in mind their voice by their own language to show their unique culture virtues. Oakland, (2020, p.488) concluded that Culture which is like "anthropologically" or all aspects of life relating to a human's development, reactions, communications,

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sharing “common values”, and creating “their own modes of expression.” This illustrates that everyone plays a key part in their nation’s culture concept by their personal voice. Further, Students’ daily language usages may have partly proved their personal characteristics; this can also inspire or oppose people’s mood instantly. Thus, language education and culture factors are always together and supplement each other in any circumstances. In addition, Hall (1976) said that “There is not one aspect of human life that is not touched and altered by culture”. Additionally, Norton (2013, p.26) suggested that research scholar should have more work on “on the topic of identity and language learning”. And a decade later, Husna & Nasrullah (2023) highlighted that “Language is a crucial aspect of cultural identity”. Moreover, Kazakov (2021) implied that language teachers’ role nowadays needs to focus on motivating and consulting language learners “in their self-studies”. East (2022) expressed that obtaining culture could be seen “a strand of knowledge” and it is as eminent as “language knowledge.”

Therefore, English major’s students study British and American culture subject, they have learnt about various aspects of these countries including people, land, climate, economy, customs, entertainment, government, culture values and language. This features in obtaining a connection between language and culture values because it is a precious opportunity for these language learners to look back on their personal language ability and their own culture values. Mirja and the co-authors (2024, p.15) have highlighted that the challenge for educators is to convince nations “to accommodate the increasing cultural and linguistic diversity of student populations.” Zhu and Gao (2021) study illustrated that it is “a great opportunity for intercultural education within the context of humanities and social sciences-related EMI courses”. Additionally, Ou and Gu (2020) implied that it is essential to adopt the enrichment of campus multilingual and multilingual language learning sources. Language and culture are two subsided factors that language educators and learners need to realize on lens of language education. Therefore, understanding these two senses “self-reliance” and “individualism” must be a beneficial for EFL students and foreign language learners as well.

Self-Reliance:

Referring to Cambridge Dictionary online version, “Self-reliance” can be understood as “the quality of not needing help or support from other people”, whilst the rooted of this American value was dated back to American frontier heritage. At that period if someone was self-reliant, based one Datesman and co-authors (2014, p.74) people “often constructed their own houses, hunted their own food, tended their own gardens, and made their own clothing and household items.” However, in this era of artificial intelligence (AI), people seem to depend too much on this application, and EFL learners are on the same boat.

And this may be the time to ring the warning bell to wake up EFL students and let them an opportunity to acknowledge this value in their learning process.

Individualism:

Cambridge Dictionary defines the definition “individualism” is the idea that freedom of thought and action for each person is the most important quality of society, rather than shared effort and responsibility” whereas Cheng and the co-authors (2020, p.3) confirmed that “an independent view of self”. Likewise, Ben-Dor (2022) added this term could be “a key component” including “individual autonomy, achievement, self-reliance, independence and the right to the right to privacy and the pursuit of happiness and financial security.” Based on the above literature studies, it is necessary for the teacher in charge to have a full image of the students’ acknowledgement about these virtues through the course. Course participants in this case had to work out EFL students’ “self-reliance” and “individualism.” Then, this was the valued opportunity for the students to re-evaluate if they have learnt to be truly self-reliant and have individual freedom referring to the lessons they have learnt from the course for their lifelong learning. *How can EFL majors’ students perceive their “self-reliance” and “individualism” values after British and American Culture course?*

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Approach:

Having conducted this study in a private university in Ho Chi Minh, Vietnam, teacher- researcher of this case-study implemented qualitative approach. As Merriam and Tisdell (2016, p.6) mentioned “Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences.” Employing descriptive case study strategy aimed at assisting the researcher “emerging data with the primary intent of developing themes from the data” (Creswell, 2003, p.18). Furthermore, this technique displayed the students’ self-reports about their “self-reliance” and “individualism” after learning the culture of language they are learning to adapt to their future working environment later in life. Further, Marrelli (2007) confirmed that “case studies” are the beneficial approach for helping researcher to select valued information and to be inside “the issues being studied” based on students’ self-reports.

3.2 Case-Study Participants:

Before closing the British and American Culture course, teacher-researcher in charge had asked the 36 students to report their take home lessons with illustrated examples about British and American culture basic values including this two “self-reliance” and “Individualism”. The data collected from the case was to analyze based on the excel category (Participants’ Number, Self-reliance Lesson Learnt, Illustrated

Examples, Individualism Lesson Learnt and Illustrated Examples).

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data collected from this case benefited both teachers in charge and students with a deeper point of view after the course. By the other saying, this work was to explore English majors’ students understanding and implemented abilities about the two core values “self-reliance” and “individualism” through the British and American Culture Course. The expectations from the course teacher finally have illustrated a clearer picture of the student’s insightful experience.

4.1 EFL Majors’ Students Take Home Lesson about “Self-Reliance” Value with Illustrated Examples:

Participants with different Code (BA18, BA19, BA 21 and BA 20) reported their different level of understanding about their “self-reliance”. However, this

proved that the subject has provided students with a good chance to look back on their own self-reliance to move forward on their lifelong education process besides their language learning purposes. This convinced these numbers of students to upgrade their knowledge to develop themselves to be more self-reliant, to target their learning outcome as well as their career goals and to be more mature to deal with situations occurring in their life. Importantly, the students were able to acknowledge their current “self-reliance” value by realizing “where they are standing and who they really are. (I can take care of my food expenses 20%, I am 50% self-reliant, I can take care of 15% of my food expenses, I am 50% self-reliant, I am self-reliant because I pay my own tuition and living expenses). The result helped students minimize their ego to learn to be humble adapting to their future working and learning environment. Especially, the benefit of culture and language learning played a vital role in assisting participants realize their own value among their peers.

No	Participants' Number	Self-Reliance Lesson Learnt	Illustrated Examples
1	BA181A140461	Living independently will make people more mature	Working part-time while in school
2	BA191A170138	Living independently will make you more mature	Work part-time at school
3	BA191A140100	Make your own decision and develop yourself because you cannot rely on someone forever	Create your own goal for yourself. Save what you have. Move forward in life without relying on anyone
4	BA191A140193	When I can be self-reliant, earn and spend money on everything without being supported by my family, I have the right to make the decision on my own and do not need permission from my parents because I am responsible for my life. Therefore, I have my individual freedom	Take care of ourselves
5	BA191A140004	Decide everything without being bothered by anyone	I can be responsible for myself
6	BA191A140247	Regulate ethnic behavior and take responsibility for my mistakes	I am a self-reliance because I pay my own tuition and living expenses
7	BA211A140451	Pursue their own aspirations, making independent decisions and take ownership of their lives without undue reliance on external authority or assistance	A girl embarks on a journey of self-discovery and personal growth
8	BA211A140467	Having abilities to do and pay for something without any helps	I do homework by myself
9	BA201A140272	Walking on two feet and following a predetermined plan	Working to earn money to pay for necessary expenses without depending on my family
10	BA201A140232	I express my own opinions and make my independent life	Solving their own problems, paying for food and tuition
11	BA201A140235	My abilities to pay fees and rent a house without help from my parents	You may do your own homework or chore without being reminded by your parents
12	BA201A140032	At home, fostering self-reliance could involve teaching children’s practical skills like cooking, cleaning, or managing finances, empowering them to take care of themselves and contribute to the household	Children are taught basic life skills such as cooking simple meals or doing laundry, empowering them to take care of themselves and contribute to

			household chores independently as they grow older
13	BA201A140332	Do it yourself without asking anyone else	I can make money myself
14	BA201A140037	Being independent	Take care of myself in college
15	BA201A140175	Financial independence from parents	I can take care of my food expenses 20%
16	BA201A140041	Freedom is highly valued; it comes at a cost self-reliance	Be responsible for your own finances upon graduation
17	BA201A140201	I can strive to the best of my ability to achieve the set goal	I can cover my daily living expenses and rent by spending time to work
18	BA201A140271	Self-reliance empowers individuals to take control of their lives, cultivate independence, and achieve success on their own terms	A student facing a challenging assignment decides to research and tackle it independently rather than seeking consultant help from others, demonstrating self-reliance.
19	BA201A140265	It gives me the confidence to tackle challenges and build a life on my own terms	Instead of Ealing a plumber for Icky faucet, I watch a YouTube tutorial to fix it myself
20	BA201A140141	It encourages people to pursue their own aspirations, make independent decisions, and take ownership of their lives without undue reliance on external authority or assistance.	Grow your own food
21	BA201A140080	When you pay for all the cost of living, you are self-reliance	I am 50% self-reliance
22	BA201A140082	Take responsibilities	Have a job with average salary
23	BA201A140222	Financially and emotionally independence from my parents	I take charge of my personal finances, saving for my future
24	BA201A140247	Pay a bill myself	Take care of myself and invest in education to be better
25	BA201A140297	Being independent about solving problems & paying for application needs	Having a part-time job to have an income
26	BA201A140251	Make my own decisions, achieve my goals without depending on others	An left his parents and lived alone. He does everything for himself
27	BA201A140068	Solve the problems in life without relying on anyone	I take good care of myself
28	BA201A1400237	Help you to do everything by yourself	Have an independent life at university
29	BA201A140373	To be self-reliance	I cannot pay my tuition, so I just take 40% for self-reliance
30	BA201A140086	Do it yourself with your strength	I always solve my own problems and find my self-solution
31	BA201A140274	Learn to be self-reliance	Currently I am not self-reliant, but I still rely on my parents. In the future, I will be financially independent to send money to my parents to rest, take care of myself, solve my own problems and be ready to stand firm to move forward
32	BA201A140312	I make my own money without depending on others	I own my own money to buy a phone, take a course and trave myself
33	BA211A140229	Getting a job and creating input source	I can buy whatever I want by my own money
34	BA211A140279	Stand on my bare feet & earn money for my expenses	Working and managing my money without relying on others
35	BA201A140029	Save money to buy pretty clothes	Attempt to earn money
36	BA201A140166	Being independent financially and emotionally from parents	I can take care of 15% of my food expense

4.2 EFL Majors’ Students Take Home Lesson about “Individualism” Value with Illustrated Examples

The collected information from 36 students reports about their “Individualism” acknowledgement

identified that students eager to be more independent to show their own voice about what they are expecting in their future. This is about many aspects of students’ life, from entertainment, fashion, education, career

perspective, freedom of speech, politic matters, and finances but mostly about their opinions and jobs they want or their own voiced decisions. Language and culture are two basic elements to distinguish personal values. In this case, the report task about the culture course not only helped the teacher in charge to achieve a fully image about the students' performance but also encouraged students to see themselves in the bigger

picture about these major values. EFL learners gained both their language improvement and personal education understanding, their understanding about this value would partly advance their personal development. This emphasizes the objective of culture learning is not to bridge the gap of learning others' cultures, more importantly, it is to educate a person to understand their individual culture value realization (Hall, 1976).

No	Participants' Number	Individualization Lesson learnt	Illustrated Examples
1	BA181A140461	Living freely will be happier	Freedom to choose the career you love
2	BA191A170138	Living freely will be happier	Freedom to choose the career you love
3	BA191A140100	Individual freedom helps us develop, innovate society and diversity ideas	I can decide what I want to do, buy what I like, do what I feel comfortable with. Live your own way of life without anyone interfering
4	BA191A140193	We can earn money so that we can have the right to speak out what we want.	we can have the right to speak what we want and have individual freedom on their own
5	BA191A140004	Right to be independent & not depend on anyone	Freedom to choose life the way you want without anyone' opinion
6	BA191A140247	I can do what I want, things make me happy with the acquaintances	I can decide what I want to do, buy what I like. I work to find a way to complete my course at university
7	BA211A140451	Making decisions about lives, beliefs, and relationships without hesitation	An artist displays their controversial artwork in a public gallery
8	BA211A140467	Expressing opinions and pursuing interests	You might do your own homework
9	BA201A140272	The ability to determine one's own actions and decisions without being subject to external forces or influences	I can do what I like and make my own decisions and choose my job as well as my future path without being affected by anyone
10	BA201A140232	I make money, save and own individual property	Freedom to express opinions in meetings & interviews
11	BA201A140235	I might feel more comfortable expressing opinions and pursuing interests	You might choose your own after school activities and decorate your own room
12	BA201A140032	This might mean allowing family members the freedom to express themselves, pursuit their interests, and make decisions that align with their values	Faily members are encouraged to express their opinions openly and make choices about hobbies, interests, and personal preferences without undue interference or judgement from others.
13	BA201A140332	Freedom of speech & go anywhere	I can voice my opinion
14	BA201A140037	Confidence in life	Do what I like
15	BA201A140175	Have your own fashion style that reflects your personality and lifestyle	Buy the items you like suitable for your age and style without having to ask your mother's opinion
16	BA201A140041	Feel free to pursue your interests and express your opinions	Freedom to choose profession religion
17	BA201A140201	Develop myself, create satisfaction in life, shape the world around me	In addition to studying, I can spend time learning to play guitar. This allows me to explore myself
18	BA201A140271	It allows people express themselves and contribute to their society on their way	An individual choosing to go against a government policy they disagree with demonstrates the exercise of individual freedom.
19	BA201A140265	It allows me to explore my passion and define my own success	I choose to spend my morning reading instead of working
20	BA201A140141	Emphasize personal autonomy and self-determination, allowing individuals to make	When opening a company, you can choose customers, recruit workers

		decisions about their lives, beliefs, and relationships without coercion or interference from others	
21	BA201A140080	Free to speak your own voice, free to show yourself to the world	Free to hang out with friends or choose what you like, love
22	BA201A140082	Show my idea	Having my own finance
23	BA201A140222	Desire to control their own destiny without outside interference whatever you want to, without being controlled or limited	I expressed my unique personal fashion style, celebrating the distinct preference and tastes
24	BA201A140247	I can do what I want, things make me happy with the acquaintances	Go everywhere in Vietnam on my own vehicle
25	BA201A140297	Do things that I like at an appropriate level & obey the rules and law	Discuss politic matter but never gone too far
26	BA201A140251	Freedom to make decisions about life, relationships without hesitation	A person sitting alone on a park bench, free to read, think, or simply enjoy the moment
27	BA201A140068	Get to do what you like	I got to choose the career I like
28	BA201A1400237	Have a confidence life	Do everything, we love
29	BA201A140373	Decide your life	If you are lazy, you will never get a good job
30	BA201A140086	Learn to speak your mind	Protect personal views and support good views
31	BA201A140274	Decide your own life	If you do not study, you will not have a high income in the future to help your family
32	BA201A140312	I am free to star an entertainment business and own my own property	I am allowed to operate a commercial center facility, named Sala Garden if I pay the fee
33	BA211A140229	Decide your own life	Live independently without relying on relative
34	BA211A140279	Create freedom to live my own life	I can decide on my career path, who I want to become
35	BA201A140029	I am allowed to speak my opinion	No answer
36	BA201A140166	Have your own fashion style that reflects your personality and lifestyle	Buy Items you like suitable your age without having to ask your mothers' opinion

As mentioned above, the positive outcome of this case study satisfied the course teacher’s expectations on the students’ reports about students’ application of “Self- reliance” and “individualism” after the course. However, the sampling of this work is the case in an abbreviation period only, so there needs to be more work done in this field. Then, teachers and educators or those with concern may have a necessary image for implications.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This qualitative work has displayed both the two sides of the interlinks between language education and personal-self assessment from the two personal values “Self-reliance” and “Individualization” learnt from British and American Culture course. The study offers more evidence with better understanding of language and culture learning in the way to benefit a human development, especially for EFL students in the case. These two attached values that students have perceived may be like gatekeepers to guard them not only on choosing their language approach daily for better

improvement but also for their personal promotion in the upcoming future learning journey. The object is to assist learners to be self-reliant in how to use their language in appropriate situations based on the culture contexts, in other words, they can select the most suitable language to communicate based on the culture environment independently. They can be more independent not only in language learning and performance but also in other economic fields in their lives. Besides, with their right notion about these virtues, they are more confident to make their own decisions and contribute more to their families, communities, nations and global.

If Oakland, (2020, p.13) concluded that “A mass popular culture (reflected, for example, in sport, television, music and fashion) now influences social patterns, behavior, economic consumption, and the adoption of diverse lifestyles.”, this work supported students recognize these individual core values “self-reliance” and individualism” in an ample way. Or Darwin (2020, p.258) expressed “While motivation research accounts for individual differences such as language

aptitude, learning styles, and capacity for self-regulation, investment examines the performance of multiple identities, the negotiation of linguistic and cultural capital, and the enactment of one's agency." Thus, it is eminent to apply these two virtues in language learning and culture education. Also, the need to have further research work about this field for EFL teachers, learners, and educators are advised.

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