



HIGH SCHOOL EFL TEACHERS' CHALLENGES OF USING CULTURAL CONTENTS IN THEIR TEACHING PRACTICESⁱ

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Abstract:

Integration and globalization require people an ability to use foreign languages, especially English. The new context may change the way English is taught. In practice, teaching English includes not only the basic skills of language but also intercultural communicative competence. However, the integration of cultural contents into teaching English can face many challenges. Those difficulties can influence the quality of English training both in terms of students' studying results and their real-life communicative competence. These two factors are influenced by the way students have been equipped. Therefore, an investigation into teachers' challenges in using cultural contents in the teaching process is necessary to improve the quality of teaching and learning English. This research was conducted to explore teachers' challenges in teaching culture. Data was collected by delivering five points-Likert questionnaires to 84 teachers and interviewing 10 teachers with semi-structured interviews. The age range of most participants distributed from 20-40 years old and the average of experience years was about 10 years. The results indicated that most teachers faced challenges in using cultural contents as limitation of time, lacking cultural knowledge and culture teaching pedagogy methods. The contents of the textbook and students' attitude toward culture learning were also difficult for teachers. It is recommended that educational managers should put cultural contents in a similar position to other basic skills while developing curriculum and teachers need to be trained in pedagogy skills for teaching culture in English class effectively.

Keywords: culture, perceptions, challenges, using cultural contents, teaching English

ⁱ THÁCH THỨC CỦA GIÁO VIÊN TIẾNG ANH TRUNG HỌC PHỔ THÔNG TRONG VIỆC SỬ DỤNG NỘI DUNG VĂN HÓA TRONG GIẢNG DẠY

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Tóm tắt:

Hội nhập và toàn cầu hóa đòi hỏi con người phải có khả năng sử dụng ngoại ngữ, đặc biệt là tiếng Anh. Bối cảnh mới có thể thay đổi cách dạy tiếng Anh. Trên thực tế, việc giảng dạy tiếng Anh không chỉ bao gồm các kỹ năng cơ bản về ngôn ngữ mà còn cả năng lực giao tiếp liên văn hóa. Tuy nhiên, việc lồng ghép các nội dung văn hóa vào giảng dạy tiếng Anh có thể gặp nhiều thách thức. Những khó khăn đó có thể ảnh hưởng đến chất lượng đào tạo tiếng Anh cả về kết quả học tập và năng lực giao tiếp thực tế của sinh viên. Hai yếu tố này chịu ảnh hưởng bởi cách học sinh đã được trang bị. Vì vậy, việc tìm hiểu những thách thức của giáo viên trong việc sử dụng các nội dung văn hóa trong quá trình dạy học là cần thiết nhằm nâng cao chất lượng dạy và học tiếng Anh. Nghiên cứu này được thực hiện nhằm khám phá những thách thức của giáo viên trong việc giảng dạy văn hóa. Dữ liệu được thu thập bằng cách gửi bảng câu hỏi cho 84 giáo viên và phỏng vấn 10 giáo viên. Độ tuổi của hầu hết những người tham gia phân bố từ 20-40 tuổi và số năm kinh nghiệm trung bình là khoảng 10 năm. Kết quả cho thấy hầu hết giáo viên đều gặp khó khăn trong việc sử dụng nội dung văn hóa như hạn chế về thời gian, thiếu kiến thức văn hóa và phương pháp sư phạm dạy văn hóa. Nội dung sách giáo khoa và thái độ học văn hóa của học sinh cũng là những khó khăn đối với giáo viên. Chính vì vậy, các nhà quản lý giáo dục nên đặt nội dung văn hóa ngang hàng với các kỹ năng cơ bản khác khi xây dựng chương trình và giáo viên cần được đào tạo về kỹ năng sư phạm để dạy văn hóa trong lớp học tiếng Anh một cách hiệu quả.

Từ khóa: văn hóa, nhận thức, thách thức, sử dụng nội dung văn hóa, giảng dạy Tiếng Anh

1. Introduction

Currently, English has been used as the most preferred language for communication, information updates and knowledge broadening. English is also the ground for the learners to expose to various cultural backgrounds. The role of English is more significant when there are more cooperative programs between countries. To help learners use English more effectively, educational managers have arranged English as an important subject in the curriculum. Unfortunately, they can get good certificates, but they sometimes cannot put their ideas into words that are suitable to real-life situations (Le, 2007, Tran and Dang, 2014) Some reasons behind this problematic practice can be the teachers' lack of cultural knowledge in teaching English. In practice, language is not only associated with teaching basic language skills but also with integrating cultural contents into the syllabus to prepare learners well for for-life communicative scenarios. According to Liu (2014), to teach a foreign language, it is necessary to combine culture and language. Besides, cultural content should be discussed to help learners build a good mindset of the target culture.

Facing the matter of the application of cultural knowledge in real situations, English teachers are expected to include enough cultural content in their lessons to

prepare learners to communicate in English effectively. However, it is not easy for teachers to integrate cultural content into their teaching process while they must also ensure the objectives of the curriculum. As Gonen (2012), teachers have limitations of time and lack cultural awareness of the target language. In addition, textbooks do not include cultural factors and teachers have no time to develop their own authentic materials as Gomez (2015) indicated. One of the challenges teachers can face is students' attitude toward learning culture. Sometimes, students have not realized the role of cultural knowledge in their English learning so they mainly focus on basic skills.

In Vietnam, studies investigating cultural contents, especially in English classrooms are still quantitatively limited. This research is conducted to investigate teachers' difficulties in integrating cultural content into their teaching practices. The research findings are expected to help the teachers recognize their obstacles in teaching culture and solve the problems, and accordingly, improve English teaching and contribute to reference sources about the cultural study.

The study finds the answer to the following question:

- What are the challenges they have faced in using cultural contents in teaching English?

2. Literature review

2.1 Definition of language

Language plays an important role in human communication. Language is a vehicle that helps people transport their information, exchange their experiences, express their thoughts and carry out their work smoothly. However, providing a precise definition of language is never an easy task. Patrikis (1988) defined language as the instrument to convey meanings. Similarly, Kramsch (2002) explained that language is not only an instrument to communicate but also a symbolic system. According to Noam Chomsky's (1965) definition, language is indicative of native speakers' ability to understand and produce grammatical sentences by mastering the rule system. In relation to culture, "language is a system of signs that is seen as having itself a cultural value. Speakers identify themselves and others through their use of language" (Kramsch, 1998, p.3). In general, language is seen as a formation of verbal and nonverbal actions to convey meanings.

2.2 Definition of culture

Ward Goodenough (1981) defined that "Culture is the various standards for perceiving, evaluating, believing, and doing that... [a person] attributes to other persons as a result of his experience of their actions and admonitions. A society's culture represents "what one has to know, or profess to believe, in order to operate in a manner acceptable to its members in every role that they accept for any one of themselves" (p.109)

Culture is mentioned as the beliefs, the rules of the society, the norms or even the choice of clothing, food or religious features. "Culture, like any other social or biological organism, is multidimensional and continually changing. It must be so to remain vital and

functional for those who create it and for those it serves" (Gay, 2000, p.10). According to Byram (2008), culture was defined as the standards of believing, treating, behaving and the worth that people in society admitted.

2.3 The relationship between language and culture

The mutual influences between language and culture have been argued as an intimate relationship (Brown, 1994; Damen, 1987; Kuang, 1998). In particular, Brown (2007, p.165) noted about culture and language relationship in second language acquisition as follows:

"Language is a part of a culture and culture is a part of the language; the two are intricately interwoven so that one cannot separate the two without losing the significance of either language or culture. The acquisition of a second language, except for specialized, instrumental acquisition (as may be the case, say, in the acquisition of reading knowledge of a language for examining scientific texts), is also the acquisition of a second culture."

According to Kramsch (1998), language expresses cultural reality, embodies cultural reality and symbolizes cultural reality. Through using language, people share knowledge, beliefs and opinions. Whether it is the verbal or non-verbal forms of language, language is still used to explain meaning and construct experience. One person is distinguished from another through their way of language use because language embodies the system of values of the society and culture where it is used. On the other hand, culture can influence on how people communicate and interact with others, and it is related to the implication of thought and activities in society.

In language learning, culture exists as an important constituent of learning a foreign language process (Kramsch, 2006; Byram, 2014). Most curricula of English subjects emphasize the goal of cultural knowledge besides the goal of general English skills such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Therefore, the curriculum was designed including cultural factors that are lifestyles, significant different features between various cultural patterns, and own culture in countries using English as a primary language.

2.4 Related studies

Teaching English is not easy and teaching English through cultural contents is even more difficult. Various studies have investigated the ways culture is integrated into teaching English (Gomez, 2015; Rahal, 2017; Yelietha, 2017; Sirid, 2017; Novia, 2018). In Vietnam, considerable attention was paid to teaching culture in English class in several studies (Ho, 2009; Nguyen, 2013; Chau and Truong, 2018).

Gomez et al. (2015), conducted research on the cultural contents in Colombia to examine the types of meanings (surface meanings or deep meanings) the contents had by analyzing textbooks. They found that most of the contents belonged to surface culture and the textbooks were lacking of deep culture factors. They also discussed how the

teachers can design their own materials including real events to help their students' exposure to different cultural environments.

Ho (2009) argued that the limitation of time in class was a serious problem in classes in Vietnam. Teachers do not have enough time to integrate the culture contents into classroom activities. Teachers often pay attention to teaching basic skills because they serve the objectives of the curriculum. Dang and Tran (2014) classified two types of teachers: teachers including culture and teachers excluding culture. Some teachers get obstacles in including the cultural contents in their classroom because they are not confident about their knowledge of the target language culture.

Novia (2018) carried out research about Teachers' perceptions about integrating cultural contents in English language teaching in junior high school, they found that students' acquaintance and ease in using their own culture can be difficulties in their learning English, especially culture in English.

3. Material and Methods

3.1 Research design

This research adopts the mixed method, including 2 phases: the quantitative phase, with the use of a questionnaire survey and the qualitative phase, using interviews to collect data for an insightful understanding of the investigated issues.

To have a statistic ratio of issues related to research questions, this research uses quantitative research in phase 1 to find out significant matters based on numeric data.

Finding out the main matters or main problems that can influence on integration cultural contents in English teaching, and capturing teachers' challenges, those can help researchers explore the significant results in reality. This data can be used to discuss major problems of research and give appropriate solutions in the future.

As stated in Cresswell (2014), qualitative research's function is "*exploring and understanding the meaning's individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem*". Therefore, phase two of this research will apply qualitative research to explore teacher's points of view about their teaching, they have a chance to speak out about their difficulties and the research can have a deep consideration to answer the research's question.

3.2 Instruments

3.2.1 Questionnaire

The questionnaire includes 30 items and will be designed using the 5 points Likert scale from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'. Each item will contain statements that indicate the specific matters of teaching culture and 5 levels to choose from by reflecting on how they agree with. The statements in the questionnaire are designed based on the variables that appeared in previous studies about culture in teaching English and a part of this instrument was adopted from Sercu et al. (2005).

Through synthesizing findings of previous research, the instrument will focus on five clusters, the first to the fourth cluster explore issues related to textbooks, curriculum, teachers and students.

3.2.2 Interview

In the second stage, this research will use a semi-structured interview to collect in-depth data to clarify some of the uncovered issues in the questionnaire. There are six open-ended questions in the interview, focusing on the cultural aspects and the reasons why they selected to teach, the ways teachers conveyed those cultural matters in their class, difficulties they faced in teaching and suggestions they raised to improve teaching culture in English. Data in this phase can be analyzed by using transcripts and finding out the themes. This stage permits teachers to demonstrate their own deep perspectives to find the research answers logically. There will be 10 teachers to be invited for interviews in a random systematic way.

3.3 Participants

According to Maxwell (2013), the sample selection root is *“particular settings, persons, or activities are selected deliberately to provide information that is particularly relevant to your questions and goals”*. (p.97)

This research will be conducted with 84 high school EFL teachers in various high schools. In phase 1, the questionnaire was planned to deliver to 88 high school EFL teachers in Mekong Delta to collect data by convenience sampling. By eliminating unsuitable samples, there were four samples that were dropped out of this research for not satisfying the criteria. A few participants did not answer the entire questionnaire or their answers were not consistent. In phase 2, 10 teachers will be selected randomly by picking from the participation list from phase 1 to avoid subjective choices.

3.4 Samples collecting procedure

3.4.1 Pilot study

The questionnaire was delivered to 20 teachers who ensured the sample selection criteria to carry out the pilot study. The pilot study helps to generalize the results of the study. In the next stage, both Google form and the paper form of the questionnaire were sent to all participants to conduct the official research. In the second stage, the participants were chosen from the list to interview.

3.4.2 Quantitative phase

In this phase, questionnaires were delivered to participants that satisfied the criteria of sample selection. The questionnaire was designed to collect numeric data to find the result through the evaluation of the percentage, frequency or mean of participants' agreements with the items in the questionnaire. Items were grouped into some clusters such as textbooks (four items), curriculum (three items), teachers (five items), and

students (two items). The results of the quantitative phase showed the most difficult aspects that teachers faced.

3.4.3 Qualitative phase

Six open-ended questions were used in this stage to explore in-depth insight from participants. Ten participants were chosen randomly to interview. Besides six official questions, the interview also contained some follow-up questions to make clear some contents.

3.5 Data analyzing

Data from this research will be analyzed by SPSS 20.0 software and statistically tested. In the pilot study, this research used Scale reliability Test to identify Cronbach's alpha coefficient to optimize the instrument and ensure the validity of results. In the quantitative phase, the data collected from the questionnaire were analyzed by using descriptive statistics to identify mean, and standard deviation of each item and cluster. In the qualitative phase, data was made into transcripts and analyzed by using the thematic model.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 General information of participants

Figure 1 shows that there was a decreasing tendency of the age group of high school teachers participating in this research. The age group of 20 to 30 years old is the highest, the age group of 30 to 40 years old is the second, the age group of 40 to 50 years old is the third and the age group of 50 to 60 years old is the lowest. Participants from different age group can have different perceptions and face different difficulties (Gomez, 2015; Novia, 2018).

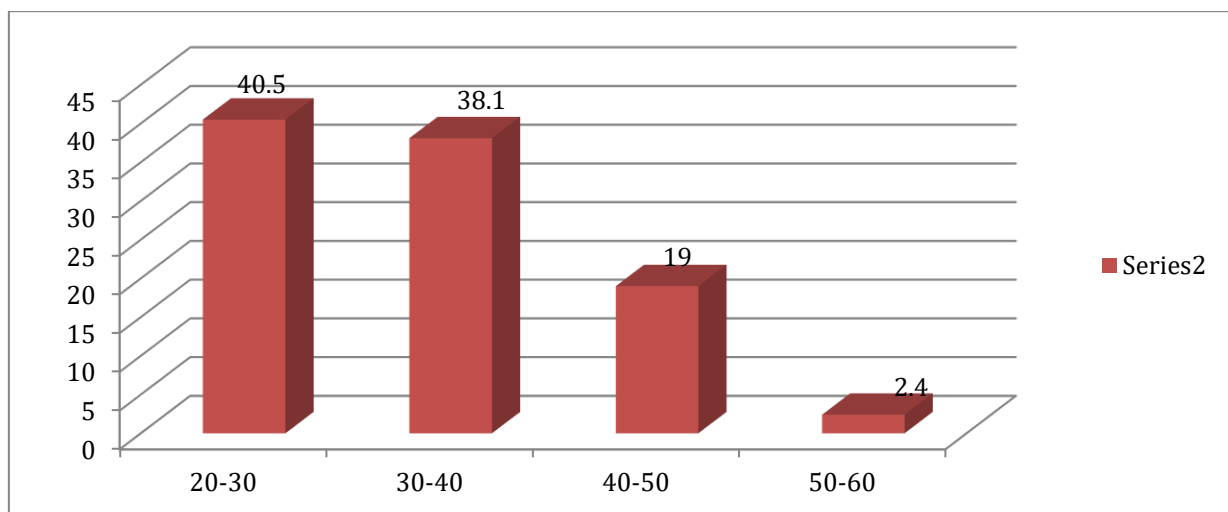


Figure 1: Distribution of age group

Table 1: Gender of participants

Items	Frequency	Percent (%)
Male	17	20.2
Female	67	79.8
Total	84	100.0

As Table 1 showed, there were 84 high school teachers that participated in this research, including 17 male teachers and 67 female teachers. Female teachers accounted for 79.8 percent, which was about four times higher than male teachers.

Table 2: Age and years of experience of participants

Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
Age	34.36	7.08
Experience	10.62	6.71

Table 2 showed that the average age of participants was around 34 years old (mean = 34.36) and the average age had a range of variation (Standard Deviation = 7.08). The teaching experience year was around 10 years (mean = 10.62) and the variation of teaching year was rather large (Standard deviation = 6.71). Teachers' teaching experience can affect how they teach cultural contents in English class and the lack of experience can become a challenge in integrating culture into the teaching process (Sercu, 2005).

4.2 Teachers' challenges: data from the questionnaire

4.2.1 High school teachers' challenges in using cultural contents in their teaching practices

a. Cluster 1 Textbook

Table 3: Mean score of difficulties related to textbook

Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. The cultural contents in textbooks are not enough interesting for learners to learn.	3.49	0.95
2. The textbooks did not include the Viet Nam culture	3.50	1.04
3. The textbooks did not provide various source of culture	3.46	1.06
4. The textbooks had no cultural contents	1.86	0.64

Table 3 showed the mean score of challenges related to textbook. Items 1, 2, 3 had the mean score ranging from 3 to 4. Besides, item 4 had the lowest mean score (mean=1.86). The range of data around the mean is fairly narrow, it means there is no significant variation of participants' responses. Most teachers had challenges in using cultural contents in teaching, especially they got difficulties related to textbooks. The difficulties in items 1, 2, 3 that teachers faced are rather similar, they include cultural contents in textbooks that are not interesting enough for learners to learn (mean = 3.49); textbooks did not include the Vietnamese culture (mean = 3.5); textbooks did not provide various

sources of culture (mean = 3.46). This indicates most teachers believed that the content in current textbooks was not rich and engaging. It can make teachers feel limited when they want to use the textbooks' content to integrate cultural factors in their teaching practices. The mean scores of items 1, 2, 3 are around 3.5, which mean most teachers have challenges in using cultural contents in textbooks to teach English but their agreements about difficulties related to those aspects are not so strong. A small part of teachers may be unsure or not face the difficulties posed by textbooks contents.

Item 4 is about textbooks with no cultural contents that had the lowest mean scores (mean = 1.86). It means most teachers did not agree with the absence of cultural contents in textbooks. It is obvious that there is an availability of cultural contents in textbooks; however, the richness of contents as target culture, the attractiveness of contents or lacking of source culture as Vietnamese culture can become challenges to teachers when they depend on textbooks to convey cultural contents.

The results are consistent with the findings in the research of Gomez (2015) that was carried out to investigate used cultural contents in Colombia. They found that there were cultural contents in textbooks however there were no rich sources and most contents focused on surface culture and there were no contents of deep culture. This can be difficult to attract learners.

Similarly, the results are in line with the findings of Rahal (2017), Yulietha (2017) about cultural problems in teaching and learning English as a foreign language in Tunisia. They also found that teachers' challenges related to textbooks were a lack of authentic materials, and poor contents in textbooks therefore those contents were not attractive for students to learn.

b. Cluster 2 Curriculum

Table 4: Mean score of difficulties related to curriculum

Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
5. The curriculum mainly focused on grammar, vocabulary or other skills more than cultural issues.	3.71	0.99
6. The curriculum had no objectives related to teaching and learning culture.	3.20	1.04
7. The limitation of time made teachers skip the in-depth cultural contents.	3.99	0.77

As Table 4 demonstrates, all items have mean scores higher than 3.0 but lower than 4.0. Regarding curriculum, the greatest challenges reported by the participants were "The limitation of time made teachers skip the in-depth cultural contents" (M = 3.99), followed by "The curriculum mainly focused on grammar, vocabulary or other skills more than cultural issues" (M = 3.71) and "The curriculum had no objectives related to teaching and learning culture" (M = 3.2). The range of data around means was relatively narrow, which means the variation of responses is not significant (Coefficient of variation < 1). In items 5 (The curriculum mainly focused on grammar, vocabulary or other skills more than

cultural issues) and 6 (The limitation of time made teachers skip the in-depth cultural contents), teachers had the tendency to agree that the current curriculum required more attention and time to teaching grammar, vocabulary or basic skills meanwhile cultural factors had not been attached much importance. Besides, they indicated that another challenge they faced is the limitation of time so they must focus on specific goals of the curriculum and skip cultural contents, especially deep culture. On the other hand, the majority of teachers shared that they did not find the apparent objectives of teaching culture in the curriculum or another part of teachers wondered if there are objectives of culture teaching or not (Item 6, $M = 3.2$).

The results are consistent with Lafayette (1988)'s research that the objectives of the curriculum mainly focused on grammatical and lexical contents and the objectives of teaching culture were not apparent. This research also found that the goals of culture teaching were not highlighted in the syllabus. As a result, most of the teachers in this research only paid attention to teaching the contents having obvious objectives as grammar or basic skills and skipped cultural contents, so they did not practice how to teach culture evenly.

In line with the findings of Yulietha (2017), they also indicated that the limitation of time was one of the reasons why the teachers cannot teach English including cultural contents effectively. Because they did not have enough time to introduce all aspects, they would spend more time teaching the main contents built into the curriculum and skip most of the cultural contents. This finding is consistent with teachers' challenges in Ho (2009)'s research, they also emphasized that the limitation of time in class is a serious problem in classes in Vietnam. As a result, the teachers must select the compulsory contents to teach and rarely integrate cultural contents.

c. Cluster 3 Teachers

Table 5: Mean score of difficulties related to teacher's problems

Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
8. Teachers faced challenges in teaching methods when they intend to integrate cultural content in their lessons.	3.52	0.92
9. Teachers have more limitations of general cultural knowledge	3.77	0.86
10. Teachers felt less confident to teach cultural contents than other skills, vocabulary or grammar.	3.62	1.02
11. Designing authentic materials containing cultural issues requires a lot of time.	4.24	0.61
12. The activities served for teaching cultural contents are so poor.	3.77	0.77

As Table 5 demonstrates, all items mentioned about difficulties related to teachers themselves had mean scores higher than 3. About teachers themselves, the most difficulties they encountered were "Designing authentic materials containing cultural issues requires a lot of time" ($M = 4.24$), followed by "Teachers have more limitations of general culture knowledge" and "The activities served for teaching cultural contents are

so poor" (Two items 9 and 12 had the same mean scores $M = 3.77$), followed by "Teachers felt less confident to teach cultural contents than other skills, vocabulary or grammar" ($M = 3.62$) and the lowest mean scores belonged to "Teachers faced to challenges of teaching methods when they intend to integrate the cultural contents in their lessons" ($M = 3.52$). The range of data around means was not large, and the variation of responses was not much (Coefficient of variation < 1). That means most of the teachers found their own issues in teaching culture including teaching methods, cultural knowledge limitations, lacking of confidence in culture teaching, authentic materials designing, and poor teaching activities. Especially, challenges of designing authentic materials were strongly agreed by participants ($M = 4.24$).

A small part of teachers rarely faced difficulties in the aspects related to teaching methods or their confidence in teaching culture ($M = 3.52$, $M = 3.62$, item 8, item 10 respectively).

The results about teachers' challenges related to teaching methods were consistent with Damen (1987)'s findings that teachers have fewer methods to teach culture due to their difficulties in approaching methodological textbooks or materials teaching the way to integrate cultural contents in their classroom. Similarly, Chau and Truong (2018) also found that the teachers were not trained in teaching pedagogy of intercultural integration and curriculum objectives should include cultural content.

Most teachers encountered challenges related to the limitation of their own knowledge therefore they were not confident to teach culture in their English classes. This finding is consistent with what the previous studies of Tafaroji and Raesi (2015), Hanna Bergh et al, Dang & Tran (2014) indicated in their results. They also found that teachers did not comprehend cultural aspects clearly so they felt embarrassed to intend to combine cultural factors in teaching. A part of teachers lacked cultural knowledge even surface culture so they were worried about which contents they should use and they were not willing to use cultural contents in the teaching process.

This research also found that designing authentic materials in terms of culture was one of the big challenges for English teachers. The result of this research was in line with the finding in prior investigations of Yulietha (2017), Chau and Truong (2018) that the lack of necessary authentic materials in teaching culture made teaching activities not rich and interesting.

d. Cluster 4 Students

Table 6: Mean score of difficulties related to students' attitude

Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
13. Students have not realized the role of culture.	3.68	0.79
14. Students paid more attention to the knowledge or skills that can help them get good marks in the examination.	4.29	0.63

As Table 6 mentions, teachers' challenges in using cultural contents in their teaching practices can come from students, especially students' attitudes. Most participants agreed

that they encountered challenges that were lacking in students' realization about the role of culture learning, students' attention to basic knowledge or skills to get good marks. Two items had the mean scores higher than 3 and the range of data around the mean was not large (Coefficient of variation < 1). It means that most of the participants agreed with the statements that students' attitude towards culture learning is one of the challenges. Regarding students' attitude, the most difficult teachers faced that was "Students paid more attention to the knowledge or skills that can help them get good marks in the examination" (M = 4.29), followed by "Students have not realized the role of culture" (M = 3.68). That means the majority of teachers found that students wanted to get good marks by learning basic knowledge and skills; therefore, they put cultural contents in a lower position. Furthermore, most teachers perceived that students were not aware of the role of culture in their learning so they paid more attention to learning other skills instead of focusing on cultural contents.

The results in this research are in line with Novia's (2018)'s findings that student's attitude could be challenging towards teachers in using cultural contents in teaching practices. Students were not aware of the importance of culture and therefore they did not have the motivation to learn about culture.

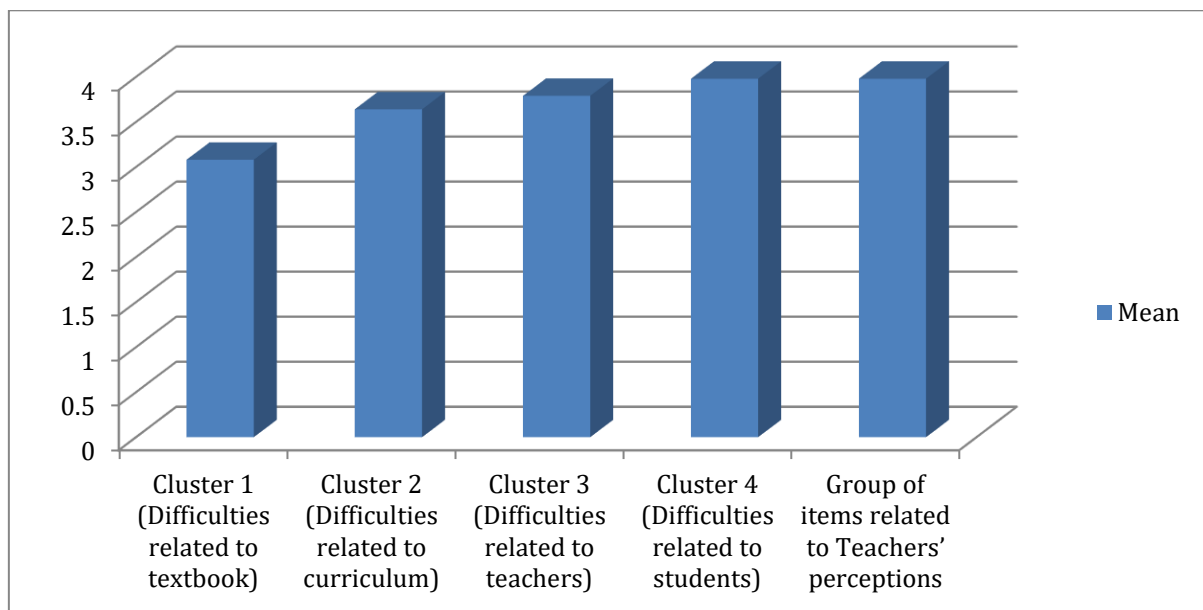


Figure 2: Mean scores of clusters related to teachers' challenges in using cultural contents in their teaching practices

Table 7: Descriptive of clusters

Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
Cluster 1 (Difficulties related to textbook)	3.08	0.70
Cluster 2 (Difficulties related to curriculum)	3.64	0.75
Cluster 3 (Difficulties related to teachers)	3.79	0.60
Cluster 4 (Difficulties related to students)	3.98	0.61

Figure 2 and Table 7 demonstrate that there was an ascending trend of mean score from cluster 1 to the group of items related to teachers' perceptions (M1 = 3.08, M2 = 3.64, M3 = 3.79, M4 = M5 = 3.98, mean of cluster 1, cluster 2, cluster 3, cluster 4, Group of items related to teachers' perceptions respectively). That means it seemed that teachers had significant challenges themselves including teaching method, and authentic materials designing. Another obvious challenge was issues related to students' attitude, followed by difficulties related to the curriculum. With mean scores 3.08, cluster 1 related to textbook was the lowest mean score, it indicated that aspects of textbook could influence how teachers integrated cultural contents but it seemed not to be a significant challenge.

Paired samples T-Test was run to test which cluster of teachers' challenges received the most agreement. As Table 10 demonstrates, in pair 1, including cluster 1 and cluster 2, there was a statistically meaningful difference between challenges related to textbooks and curriculum, the results indicated that two means were observed that had the statistic meaningful difference ($t = -6.94$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$). Teachers faced challenges of the curriculum more than challenges of textbooks (Mean 2 - Mean 1 = 0.56).

Table 8: Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Cluster1 - Cluster2	-.55786	.73597	.08030	-.71757	-.39814	-6.947	83	.000
Pair 2	Cluster2 - Cluster3	-.15048	.64229	.07008	-.28986	-.01109	-2.147	83	.035
Pair 3	Cluster3 - Cluster4	-.19643	.69758	.07611	-.34781	-.04505	-2.581	83	.012

In pair 2, including cluster 2 and cluster 3, there was a statistically meaningful difference between challenges about curriculum and teachers themselves. As table 10 pointed out, two means were observed that had a difference statistically ($t = -2.14$, $p = 0.035 < 0.05$). It means teachers encountered more challenges in using cultural contents by their own problems than challenges of curriculum (Mean 3 - Mean 2 = 0.15)

In pair 3, including cluster 3 and cluster 4, there also was a statistically meaningful difference between the challenges of teachers' and students' attitudes. The results in table 10 indicated that a statistically meaningful difference between cluster 3 and cluster 4 had been found ($t = -2.58$, $p = 0.012 < 0.05$). It means teachers got more obstacles related to students' attitudes than difficulties about their own problems as a teaching method, authentic materials designing, lacking of cultural knowledge or less confidence in teaching culture. (Mean 4 - Mean 3 = 0.19)

In general, a pair sample T-Test was used to point out the differences between the groups of clusters relevant to teachers' difficulties in teaching culture. This result showed that teachers had the most challenges with students' attitudes, followed by teachers' skills and knowledge, curriculum and textbooks. Those clusters of challenges had differences statistically with a confidence interval percentage of 95%.

4.2 Teachers' challenges: data from interviews

4.3.1. Teachers' challenges related to textbooks in using cultural contents in their teaching practices

By interviewing 10 teachers and thematically analyzing, there was one teacher (Teacher 6) who raised that contents in textbooks can be a challenge in teaching culture. It seemed that textbooks cannot include much cultural contents so teachers only taught some compulsory parts with a limited amount.

T6 mentioned *"I only mention about cultural contents if those contents are included in the textbooks. If the contents in the textbooks do not require those parts, I rarely add them in my teaching process. The percentage of integrated contents is also not very high, about 30%"*.

4.3.2 Teachers' challenges related to curriculum in using cultural contents in their teaching practices

There were 2 teachers among 10 teachers indicated that their challenges in using cultural contents in teaching practices were related to the syllabus. They supposed that the curriculum contained a lot of compulsory contents however those contents rarely included cultural factors. Besides, the design of the syllabus made teachers not to have enough time to teach basic skills as well as cultural contents.

T2 said: *"I do not integrate many cultural elements into the lesson because time is limited and the compulsory contents are too much. I think the vital things are knowledge and skills so I don't focus much on culture. In addition, I teach based on the syllabus, I cannot teach according to the flexible lesson. However, towards the contents are simple and easy to understand or the important contents, the teacher still mentioned such as the differences in greeting, asking age or contents related to politeness or impoliteness)..."*

T4 said: *"I try to combine the culture according to the contents in the textbooks however I cannot integrate a lot of contents related to the culture throughout lectures due to the limitation of time. The percentage of time that I teach culture is about 10-20%"*.

4.3.3 Teachers' challenges related to teacher's knowledge and skill in using cultural contents in their teaching practice

By interviewing 10 teachers, there were 5 teachers who got challenges with their own knowledge and skills. They pointed out that they had a limitation of foreign culture knowledge, they sometimes felt less confident to teach about cultural topics that were rather sensitive as religious or complex as behavior of the ethnic group. Moreover, lacking practical experience could be the barriers that made teachers got challenges in teaching culture in English classes. On the other hand, the method and techniques to

teach culture were equipped for teachers, not enough so they could feel confused when teaching cultural content.

T1 said: *"Yes, I have taught culture in my lesson but I think I integrate in a limited time, my knowledge of foreign cultures is also limited so sometimes I am not confident to introduce about foreign countries' culture"*

T7 said: *"My challenges about cultural topics are the behavior of an ethnic group or countries. In order to understand those topics, I need to refer to a lot of documents and take a lot of time. Regarding to religious factors, I find it quite sensitive. Although those religious factors affect culture and it is necessary to introduce them, I am not confident to deploy"*

T8 said: *"Personally, I got challenges related to contents of religion because the teachers themselves do not clearly understand the religions of other countries and the vocabularies in this aspect are not familiar so it is difficult for students to understand. Another challenge is teachers need to approach authentic materials about specific situations to understand to teach students. Besides, teachers do not have a lot of knowledge about culture topics. It is necessary for teachers to research about cultural contents on Internet or authentic materials."*

T9 said: *"In my opinion, every topic has its own difficult side. It is a bit difficult to cover a topic because the teachers evenly do not have enough experience in culture to be able to explain for students clearly. One of challenges is how to convey to students to understand without causing confusion."*

T10 said: *"Personally, beliefs are one of the most challenging topics to teach. Another difficult cultural topic in my opinion is the culture of languages and codes of conduct, how to behave appropriately. Besides, finding out one action why in this country is accepted and supported, but in another country is not. Teaching about behavioral culture is quite interesting but it requires teachers to invest time and sometimes need practical experience, not just reading through books."*

4.3.4 Teachers' challenges related to students' attitude in using cultural contents in their teaching practices

Three teachers had challenges with students' attitude toward teaching culture. One teacher stated that students were not interested in learning culture. It seemed that they were not aware of the role of culture and they mainly focused on how to get good marks by learning grammar, vocabulary or basic skills. As a result, both teachers 2 and 3 rarely taught culture, and only focused on the contents that helped students get good marks in the examinations.

T2 said: *"... Another challenge is young students can feel boring because it is difficult to understand."*

T3 said: *"I rarely integrate cultural content in my lesson plans because I often spend a lot of time teaching grammar and vocabulary to serve students' tests."*

T5 said: *"Most of the time, I teach contents for students in order to do tests well, however, I only introduce cultural matters about 20%."*

In general, most of the challenges of teachers were found by analyzing qualitative data that were in line with prior researches. Teachers' challenges were mentioned

difficulties related to textbooks (Gomez, 2015; Rahal, 2017; Yulietha, 2017). Another teachers' challenge was there is no important role of culture teaching in the curriculum (Lafayette, 1988). One serious challenge for teachers was the limitation of time making them skip culture contents (Yulietha, 2017). Lacking of culture teaching methods, and cultural knowledge were also the challenges that teachers faced in their teaching practices, therefore, they are not comfortable integrating cultural factors into English class (Damen, 1987); Chau and Truong, 2018; Tafaraji and Raeesi, 2015; Dang & Tran, 2014). Another aspect related to students that can become a challenge with culture teaching procedure was students' attitude towards culture learning (Novia, 2018). Lacking full awareness of the importance of culture in English learning can make teachers get challenges. Students don't realize the benefits of culture so they do not have enough motivation to love learning culture. As a result, they will mostly focus on which contents directly help them get good results instead of exploring cultural contents to achieve long-term values.

5. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this research, specific suggestions were stated to contribute more solutions. The textbooks should be revised to supply a diversity of cultural contents. The curriculum should dedicate to culture a clear position to gradually increase awareness of culture. Besides, the teaching hours for culture in the syllabus should be considered to arrange suitably. Teachers themselves should be the first persons that must understand the role of culture not only in teaching English but also in daily life. They need to improve their knowledge and skill related to cultural contents, and have a flexible strategy in teaching culture. They should realize that designing authentic materials is a helpful way to operate their teaching process. Additionally, teachers should create their own motivation about culture teaching and help their students to motivate for learning culture. Above all, educational managers need to give chances for teachers to participate in training program for teaching culture in English classes.

6. Conclusion

Language and culture are two intertwined aspects of a close relationship. Learning a foreign language cannot separate language and culture. Language plays an important role to form and develop culture. Besides, culture demonstrates its content and value through using language in communication, production, and convention, especially education. To develop English skills adequately, the learners are required to investigate not only new cultural information but also culture awareness to deal with strange aspects related to culture in different situations.

Besides teaching basic skills such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing skill, teachers have an important role to provide cultural knowledge for their learners. Moreover, it is necessary to build awareness of cultural differences for the learners to

understand and respect those differences in various contexts, especially in the current globalized context.

This research found that most of the participants get challenges in teaching culture. They face on problems related to available textbooks that only include general contents but are less relevant to cultural factors. The curriculum is also a challenge to teachers when it distributes the majority of time for grammatical and lexical contents, the role of teaching culture is less prominent than the others. The prominent issue is a limitation of time that can inhibit teachers to integrate cultural content into lessons. Teachers themselves also get challenges due to their own knowledge and skills. They are not trained in the pedagogy method for culture teaching basically, they have no background in culture so they are not confident to teach cultural contents in English class. On the trend of modern education, it seems that students immediately want to get visible results as good marks, certificates, and degrees rapidly so they underestimate the role of culture in language learning. On the other hand, the benefits culture bring to language learning cannot be mentioned seriously. As a result, students' attitude is also a challenge for teachers if students have no valid evaluation of culture role.

In conclusion, according to the findings of this research, the challenges should be considered to give suitable solutions. Improving cultural teaching in English class requires not only positive perceptions of teachers but also gradual elimination the challenges as the barriers limit teachers' cultural teaching.

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Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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