



Teacher's Perceptions and Expectations of Cultural Contents in Fundamental English Coursebooks

Wanvisa Kaewsakul

Nakhon Si Thammarat Rajabhat University, Thailand

pheung_be@hotmail.com

Adisa Teo

Prince of Songkla University, Thailand

adisa.s@psu.ac.th

Abstract

This study aimed to examine teachers' perceptions and expectations of cultural contents in the Fundamental English coursebooks in Nakhon Si Thammarat Rajabhat University, Thailand. Cultural contents were analyzed in terms of two themes of culture—Big “C” and Small “c”, and three sources of culture—Source, Target, and International Culture. The participants of this study were 25 teachers including Thai teachers and native English teachers of the Fundamental English courses in the university. Data were collected through questionnaire administration. The findings of the study show that, as a whole, most of the teachers perceived the themes under Big “C” culture as cultural contents. They expected contents under Big “C” culture to be presented in the Fundamental English coursebooks to a greater degree than those under Small “c” culture. Regarding the teachers' expectations of sources of culture, the findings show that all three sources of culture were expected to be presented in the Fundamental English coursebooks. This study sheds light on the needs for raising teachers' awareness of teaching culture in English classes. In addition, the findings of the teachers' expectations of cultural contents can be used as a guideline for the inclusion of cultural contents in materials, coursebooks and curricula.

Key Words: language and culture, English as an international language, intercultural communicative competence, themes and sources of culture, cultural contents, English coursebooks, teachers' perceptions and expectations

Introduction

In this globalization age, English has become an international language. It is used in countries categorized as Inner Circle countries where English is spoken as the first language such as the United Kingdom, the United States of America, and Australia; Outer Circle countries where English is used as a second language such as the Philippines, India, and Singapore; and Expanding Circle countries where English is studied as a foreign language such as Japan, Germany, and Thailand (Crystal, 1997; Kachru, 1986; Jenkins, 2003). At present, non-native English speakers outnumber native ones (Graddol, 1997 cited in McKay, 2002; Strevens, 1980). English is used in cross-cultural encounters among people from many different linguistic and cultural backgrounds (Kramsch, 1998). The goal of teaching English as an international language is then to create understanding and avoid misunderstanding among its users when they communicate with both native and non-native English speakers.



To teach English as an international language and to develop intercultural communicative competence which is the ability to recognize and understand one's own and other cultures by communicating effectively and appropriately on a number of cultures (Byram, 1997; McKay, 2000; Moran, 2001), teaching a variety of cultural contents should be promoted and cultural diversity should be accepted in the classroom.

According to Byram (1997) and Kramsch (1993), knowing about other cultures does not necessarily mean that one must accept them. Learners' own culture should never be neglected. Learners should be encouraged to reflect upon and appreciate their own culture in relation to other cultures. To create intercultural communicative competence does not involve a mere presentation of facts but also to promote the learning of a critical and social process of trying to understand other cultures in relation to one's own. Consequently, in order to develop learners' intercultural communicative competence, various themes and sources of culture should be included in English classes. Especially learners should be equipped with ability to reflect on their own culture and identity when they use English in the global context (Jin & Cortazzi, 2002; Kramsch, 1993; McKay, 2002; Peterson & Coltrane, 2003; Strevens, 1980).

In this world of internationalization, learners require not only linguistic competence, but also intercultural competence since language and culture cannot be separated. As far as people use language as a tool to reflect their thoughts, ideas, feelings, values, attitudes, identity, cognition, and the way they live through the process of internationalization (Byram, 1988, 1997; Duranti, 1997; Kramsch, 1998; Moran, 2001; Smith, 1988), language cannot be taught separately from culture. Moreover, in order to prepare students for communication in this international setting, teaching only native English speakers' culture is not adequate. Cultural knowledge from various sources and of various themes should be integrated into English courses.

Teaching English as an international language aims to develop the learners as intercultural speakers who are able to engage with multiple cultures and identities. The students need some intercultural attitudes, knowledge, and skills. According to Byram (1997), Intercultural attitudes mean the speakers' curiosity and openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief of one's own. Intercultural knowledge can be defined as the knowledge of social process, products and practice in one's own and in one's interlocutor's culture. Intercultural skills mean the ability to interpret the difference from another culture, to explain it and relate it to one's own and other cultures. Effective intercultural communication requires intercultural skills of discovery and interaction and critical cultural awareness/political education. Intercultural skills of discovery and interaction are the ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture and cultural practice and to operate attitudes, knowledge and skills under the limitations of real-time communication and interaction. Critical cultural awareness/political education refers to the ability to evaluate critically and on the basis of explicit criteria perspectives, practices and products in one's own and other culture. Thus, the role of language teachers in promoting intercultural communicative competence is to develop the learners' intercultural attitudes, knowledge, skills and awareness of values just as much as to develop the knowledge of a particular culture and their own to communicate accurately and appropriately (Byram, 1997; Kramsch, 1993). To enable the learners of English to engage in intercultural communication, the teachers should teach them not only other cultures but also how to share their own and handle cross-cultural problems. To this end, it is necessary to include both the learners' own culture and others' in the lesson to create



the link between cultural contents in the textbook and the promotion of cross-cultural understanding and intercultural communicative competence. There are many important elements in language classroom such as teachers, learners, and instructional materials. In the context of the university in Thailand, teachers play a very essential role. Their knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs about the nature of language teaching as well as linguistic and cultural diversity may profoundly influence their instructions, methodology choices as well as their performance in the classrooms. Coursebooks are one of the important materials used in the language classroom as a resource for the contents of language and culture (Cunningsworth, 1995; Richard & Schmidt, 2002; Sheldon, 1988). Since the aim of teaching English as an international language is to develop students' intercultural communicative competence, it is vital to carefully consider what cultural contents should be included in coursebooks. Bearing in mind the fact that teachers have a role to play in choosing coursebooks, their perceptions and expectations of cultural contents in coursebooks are important and cannot be ignored. Hence, a study in which teachers' perceptions and expectations of cultural contents in the Fundamental English coursebooks are explored is significant in that it provides information on the teachers' awareness of teaching and integrating cultural contents which helps develop students' intercultural communicative competence and enables them to communicate with people in cross-cultural situations with mutual understanding.

Ding and Teo (2014) investigated teacher perceptions and confidence in teaching cultural content in English courses. Questionnaire administration and semi-structure interviews were used with 314 teachers of English in 155 Islamic private schools in five southern border provinces of Thailand. Three sources of culture—Source Culture including Thai Melayu and Thai Culture, Target Culture, and International Culture, as well as three cultural dimensions—products, practice, and perspectives were analyzed. The findings in this study show that the teachers perceived that they should teach cultural content from all dimensions. They strongly agreed to teach Thai Melayu cultural practice and perspective along with Target culture perspective. Moreover, the teachers were confident to teach Thai Melayu, Thai, Target, and International Cultures respectively. In this study, the teachers mentioned that they were most confident to teach cultural products followed by cultural practice because cultural products were more concrete than cultural perspectives and they created a much clearer picture of a culture which is different from students' own culture. This finding agreed with the study of Lee (2009), Teo and Kaewsakul (2016) and Xiao (2010) which show that cultural contents under Big "C" culture were mostly presented while those of the Small "c" culture were presented with a much lower frequency. This is probably because the Big "C" culture is easily seen and it is easy for the teachers to address in the class. Cultural products or Big "C" culture require less detail to talk about and less time and material to make sure that students understand than cultural practices/perspectives or Small "c" culture. As presented in the semi-structured interviews in Ding and Teo's (2014) study, the teachers perceived that they can teach cultural perspective of Thai Melayu Culture because it is their own culture. This finding supports Cortazzi and Jin's (1999) claim that teachers will be most confident to teach culture of their own because they have background knowledge. However, Ding and Teo (2014) found that the teachers were not confident to teach International Culture even this dimension was very important in teaching English as an international language.

The purpose of this study, therefore, is to investigate teachers' perceptions and



expectations of cultural contents in three coursebooks used for the three Fundamental English courses in Nakhon Si Thammarat Rajabhat University in terms of themes and sources of culture. It also aims to explore teachers' problems of and suggestions for teaching cultural contents in the Fundamental English courses.

Definition of Terms

Themes of Culture: Big "C" and Small "c" Cultures

Adapted from Lee (2009), Big "C" and Small "c" cultures are defined as follows:

Big "C" culture refers to the cultural contents which focus on a set of facts and statistics relating to the following 22 themes: 'Race', 'People', 'Region', 'Geography/Historical sites/History', 'Weather/Season', 'Art/Artifact/Craft/National treasure', 'Literature', 'Agriculture', 'Medicine/Science', 'Education', 'Business/Shopping/Currency/Market/Industry', 'Metropolitan/Infrastructure', 'Style/Dress/Food/Housing', 'Festival/Celebration/Ceremony/Party', 'Holiday', 'Telecommunication/Postal system/Mass communication', 'Various social customs', 'Traffic/Transportation', 'Leisure/Music/Dance/Sport', 'Family', 'Nonverbal behavior', and 'Government/Politics'. This type of culture is easily seen, readily apparent and easy to understand by learners (Lee, 2009).

Small "c" culture refers to the invisible and deeper sense of culture relating to the following 21 themes: 'Freedom', 'Individualism/Privacy', 'Equality', 'Competition', 'Materialism', 'Hard work', 'Confrontation', 'Self-improvement', 'Nurture', 'Personal control over environment', 'Control over time', 'Informality', 'Directness/Openness/Honesty', 'High involvement', 'Experiment', 'Novelty-oriented', 'Future-orientation', 'Rules/Regulation-oriented', 'Result-oriented', 'Consciousness of social face', and 'Self-reliance'. This type of culture refers to a deeper sense of cultural knowledge such as the norms of appropriateness and politeness which is important for the prevention of pragmatic failure in the case of interaction between people from different cultures (Lee, 2009; Paige et al., 1999; Tomalin & Stempleski, 1993).

Sources of Culture: Source Culture, Target Culture, and International Cultures

According to Cortazzi and Jin (1999) and Crystal (2003), sources of cultural contents in language coursebooks and materials are classified as Source Culture, Target Culture, and International Culture. Source Culture in this study refers to Thai Culture. Target Culture refers to the culture of countries where English is used as the first language, namely the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand. International Culture refers to the culture of countries around the world excluding Thailand, the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and Ireland.

Methodology

Subjects

The participants of this study were selected by purposive sampling. They were 25 teachers including 20 Thai and five native English teachers in Nakhon Si Thammarat Rajabhat University who teach the three Fundamental English courses at the time of the study or have experience in teaching the courses.

Data Collection

Data were obtained through questionnaire administration. The questionnaire consists of three parts. The first part covers general information about the teachers. The

second part elicits the teachers' perceptions and expectations of cultural contents relating to two themes of culture—Big “C” and Small “c” cultures which were modified from Lee's (2009) model consisting of 22 and 21 themes respectively. In addition, the second part elicits the teachers' expectations of cultural contents in the Fundamental English coursebooks, in terms of those two themes of culture as well as three sources of culture—Source, Target, and International Cultures which were adapted from Cortazzi and Jin (1999) and Crystal (2003). The last part of the questionnaire elicits the teachers' problems of and suggestions for teaching cultural contents in the courses.

To develop the questionnaire, the first version of the questionnaire was checked by a panel of three experts for content validity and revised. After that, it was tried out with 36 teachers of the Fundamental English courses in another university in which commercial coursebooks were used and then it was revised again. Finally, the revised questionnaire was administered to the participants of this study.

Data Analysis

Adapting Lee's (2009) framework of Big “C” and Small “c” cultural themes as well as Cortazzi and Jin's (1999) and Crystal's (2003) framework of sources of culture, data were analyzed using frequencies, percentages, and rank orders. Moreover, the qualitative data were referred to for discussion of the findings of the teachers' perceptions and expectations of cultural contents in all three Fundamental English coursebooks as well as their problems of and suggestions for teaching cultural contents in the courses.

Findings and Discussion

Teachers' Perceptions and Expectations of Cultural Contents in Fundamental English Coursebooks

The findings of the teachers' perceptions and expectations of cultural contents in the Fundamental English coursebooks are presented in terms of Big “C” and Small “c” cultures, Big “C” and Small “c” cultural themes, and sources of culture.

Big “C” and Small “c” Cultures

Table 1 shows the teachers' perceptions of cultural contents in the Fundamental English coursebooks. Under Big “C” culture, 19 (86%) themes were perceived by the teachers as cultural contents while three (14%) were not. Under Small “c” culture, 12 (57%) themes were perceived as cultural contents whereas nine (43%) were not.

Table 1. Teachers' Perceptions of Cultural Contents

Teachers' Perceptions of Cultural Contents	Frequencies and Percentages of Responses	
	Big “C” Culture	Small “c” Culture
Perceived as cultural contents	19 (86%)	12 (57%)
Not perceived as cultural contents	3 (14%)	9 (43%)
Total	22 (100%)	21 (100%)



Table 2 reveals the teachers' expectations of cultural contents in the Fundamental English coursebooks. Under Big "C" culture, 19 (86%) themes were expected by the teachers in the Fundamental English coursebooks whereas only three (14%) were not. Under Small "c" culture, only nine (43%) themes were expected in the coursebooks while 12 (57%) were not.

Table 2. Teachers' Expectations of Big "C" and Small "c" Cultures in Fundamental English Coursebooks

Teachers' Expectations of Cultural Contents	Frequencies and Percentages of Responses	
	Big "C" Culture	Small "c" Culture
Should be presented in Fundamental English coursebooks	19 (86%)	9 (43%)
Should not be presented in Fundamental English coursebooks	3 (14%)	12 (57%)
Total	22 (100%)	21 (100%)

To sum up, the findings of the teachers' perceptions and expectations of cultural contents in the Fundamental English coursebooks indicate the majority of themes under Big "C" culture were perceived as cultural contents and their presence in the coursebooks were expected. Probably, this type of culture could be easily seen, readily apparent and easy to understand by learners. Therefore, most teachers easily perceived these themes as cultural contents and preferred them to be presented in the coursebooks to a greater extent than those themes under Small "c" culture.

However, Lee (2009) suggested that the contents relating to Big "C" cultural themes need to be presented with some explanations in relation to how particular Big "C" cultural themes reflect the underlying socio-cultural values, norms, and beliefs of particular countries or particular groups. Therefore, under Big "C" culture contents should be taught in-depth to promote the learning of culture for mutual understanding.

Big "C" and Small "c" Cultural Themes

This section delineates the findings of the teachers' perceptions and expectations of cultural contents in the Fundamental English coursebooks in terms of Big "C" and Small "c" cultural themes.

Under Big "C" culture, Table 3 shows that 19 themes were perceived by 52% to 96% of the teachers as cultural contents whereas only three themes, namely 'Medicine/Science', 'Traffic/Transportation', and 'Telecommunication/Postal system/Mass communication', were not by 56% to 68% of the teachers.

Regarding the teachers' expectations of cultural contents in the Fundamental English coursebooks, it was found that 56% to 96% of the teachers expected 17 themes in the coursebooks. However, only three themes, namely 'Metropolitan/Infrastructure', 'Government/Politics' and 'Telecommunication/Postal system/Mass communication' were not by 52% to 56% of the teachers.

Table 3. Teachers' Perceptions and Expectations of Big "C" Cultural Themes in Fundamental English Coursebooks

Main themes	Sub-themes	Are they cultural contents?		Should they be presented in Fundamental English coursebooks?	
		Yes	No	Yes	No
Big "C"	Festival/Celebration/ Ceremony/Party	24 (96%)		24 (96%)	
	People	24 (96%)		23 (92%)	
	Various social customs	24 (96%)		22 (88%)	
	Style/Dress/Food/Housing	23 (92%)		23 (92%)	
	Family	22 (88%)		22 (88%)	
	Leisure/Music/Dance/Sport	21 (84%)		22 (88%)	
	Holiday	21 (84%)		21 (84%)	
	Region	21 (84%)		18 (72%)	
	Art/Artifact/Craft/ National treasure	21 (84%)		18 (72%)	
	Race	20 (80%)		18 (72%)	
	Geography/ Historical sites/History	19 (76%)		20 (80%)	
	Education	18 (72%)		21 (84%)	
	Literature	18 (72%)		20 (80%)	
	Nonverbal behavior	18 (72%)		18 (72%)	
	Business/Shopping/Currency/ Market/Industry	16 (64%)		19 (76%)	
	Agriculture	16 (64%)		15 (60%)	
	Weather/Season	14 (56%)		18 (72%)	
	Metropolitan/Infrastructure	15 (60%)			13 (52%)
	Government/Politics	13 (52%)			14 (56%)
	Medicine/Science		17 (68%)		14 (56%)
Traffic/Transportation		14 (56%)		14 (56%)	
Telecommunication/ Postal system/ Mass communication		14 (56%)		13 (52%)	

Under Small "c" culture, Table 4 shows that 12 themes were perceived as cultural contents by 52% to 80% of the teachers while nine themes, namely 'Self-improvement',



‘Experiment’, ‘High-involvement’, ‘Materialism’, ‘Competition’, ‘Confrontation’, ‘Freedom’, ‘Hard work’, and ‘Equality’ were not by 52% to 60% of the teachers.

Concerning the teachers’ expectations of cultural contents in the Fundamental English coursebooks, it was found that 52% to 72% of the teachers expected nine themes in the Fundamental English coursebooks, namely ‘Consciousness of social face’, ‘Rules/Regulation-oriented’, ‘Self-reliance’, ‘Informality’, ‘Privacy/Individualism’, ‘Result-oriented’, ‘Directness/Openness/Honesty’, ‘Future-oriented’ and ‘Self-improvement’. However, 12 themes were not by 52% to 64% of the teachers.

Table 4. Teachers’ Perceptions and Expectations of Small “c” Cultural Themes in Fundamental English Coursebooks

Main themes	Sub-themes	Are they cultural contents?		Should they be presented in Fundamental English coursebooks?	
		Yes	No	Yes	No
Small “c”	Consciousness of social face	20 (80%)		18 (72%)	
	Rules/Regulation-oriented	20 (80%)		15 (60%)	
	Self-reliance	17 (68%)		17 (68%)	
	Informality	17 (68%)		16 (64%)	
	Privacy/Individualism	17 (68%)		14 (56%)	
	Result-oriented	17 (68%)		14 (56%)	
	Directness/Openness/Honesty	16 (64%)		16 (64%)	
	Future-oriented	13 (52%)		13 (52%)	
	Nurture	16 (64%)			13 (52%)
	Novelty-oriented	15 (60%)			13 (52%)
	Personal control over environment	13 (52%)			15 (60%)
	Control over time	13 (52%)			15 (60%)
	Self-improvement		13 (52%)	13 (52%)	
	Experiment		15 (60%)		16 (64%)
	High-involvement		14 (56%)		16 (64%)
	Materialism		14 (56%)		16 (64%)
	Competition		14 (56%)		15 (60%)
	Confrontation		14 (56%)		14 (56%)
	Freedom		14 (56%)		14 (56%)

Main themes	Sub-themes	Are they cultural contents?		Should they be presented in Fundamental English coursebooks?	
		Yes	No	Yes	No
	Hard work		14 (56%)		13 (52%)
	Equality		13 (52%)		13 (52%)

To summarize, the results of the teachers' perceptions and expectations of cultural contents in the Fundamental English coursebooks under Big "C" culture indicate that from 19 out of 22 themes perceived as cultural contents, 17 of them were expected in the coursebooks while the remaining two were not. Two out of three not perceived as cultural contents were expected in the coursebooks while the remaining was not.

Regarding the 12 out of 21 themes under Small "c" culture perceived as cultural contents, eight of them were expected in the Fundamental English coursebooks while the remaining four were not. Only one out of nine not perceived as cultural contents were expected in the coursebooks while the remaining eight were not.

The results of the teachers' perceptions and expectations of cultural contents in the Fundamental English coursebooks indicate the majority of themes under Big "C" culture were perceived as cultural contents and their presence in the coursebooks was expected. Probably, this type of culture is easily seen, readily apparent and easy to understand by learners. Therefore, most of the teachers in this study easily perceived these themes as cultural contents and preferred their presence in the coursebooks to a greater extent than those themes under Small "c" culture.

Although this study found that the majority of Big "C" cultural themes were perceived as cultural contents and expected in the Fundamental English coursebooks to a greater degree than Small "c" cultural themes, such findings are not in line with many scholars' (Lee, 2009; Tomalin & Stempleski, 1993; Pulverness, 1995) suggestions that the priority of culture learning and teaching in the EIL classroom should be given to Small "c" culture in order to develop learners' intercultural communicative competence. To enhance learners' intercultural communicative competence, both Big "C" and Small "c" cultural themes should be presented in the Fundamental English coursebooks. The promotion of the learning of Small "c" culture, in particular, can equip learners with a deeper sense of cultural knowledge useful for effective and appropriate communication with people in cross-cultural circumstances (Lee, 2009; Paige et al., 1999; Tomalin & Stempleski, 1993).

Sources of Culture

Table 5 shows the findings of the teachers' expectations of cultural contents in the Fundamental English coursebooks in terms of sources of culture. It indicates that the teachers gave top priority to integrating the cultural contents of Target Culture in the coursebooks. The followings are Source Culture and International Culture respectively.

The results of this study support Gu, Meng, and Li (2012) who also found that university teachers of English in China put emphasis on cultures of English-speaking countries. Nonetheless, it should be pointed out that although in this study all the teachers gave top priority to integrating the cultural contents of Target Culture in the



Fundamental English coursebooks, their expectations of sources of culture were very high in all three sources. This suggests that these teachers were aware of the importance of teaching culture from various countries to facilitate the development of students' intercultural knowledge for communicating with people from other backgrounds to serve the goal of teaching English as an international language.

Table 5. Teachers' Expectations of Sources of Culture in Fundamental English Coursebooks

Rank Orders	Sources of Culture	Frequencies and Percentages of Responses
1	Target Culture	25 (100%)
2	Source Culture	21 (84%)
3	International Culture	19 (76%)

Teachers' Problems of and Suggestions for Teaching Cultural Contents in Fundamental English Courses

The findings of the teachers' problems of teaching cultural contents in the Fundamental English courses are summarized in Table 6 illustrating that the teachers faced three problems in their teaching of cultural contents in the courses. These problems were related to the teachers themselves, students, and coursebooks.

First, limited knowledge of other cultures and limited ability to teach cultural contents were reported by ten teachers as their biggest problems in the teaching of cultural contents in the Fundamental English courses. The teachers mentioned that their limited knowledge of other cultures did not allow them to explain the cultural contents to their students adequately.

Second, the fact that the students have limited background knowledge of international culture was one of the problems of teaching cultural contents in the Fundamental English courses. This problem was mentioned by one teacher.

Third, problems related to the coursebooks were mentioned by three teachers. They stated that some cultural themes in the coursebooks such as individualism and lifestyle of people from other countries were complex and were irrelevant to the students' and teachers' own culture. In addition, some authentic materials contained difficult cultural contents.

To conclude, the findings of the teachers' problems of teaching cultural contents in the Fundamental English courses show that the limitation of the teachers' knowledge of other cultures was the biggest problem.

Table 6. Teachers' Problems of Teaching Cultural Contents in Fundamental English Courses

Problems	Frequencies of Responses
1. Teachers' limited knowledge of other cultures and limited ability to teach cultural contents	10
2. Students' limited knowledge of international culture	1
3. Difficulty and irrelevance of cultural contents in the coursebooks and in authentic materials	3

The findings of this study were similar to those of Gu, Meng, and Li (2012) and Schulz (2007) in that most teachers of English lacked intercultural knowledge and experience of teaching culture and they were not able to make appropriate adjustments to their teaching practice and curriculum. Based on the findings, it can be said that although the teachers were aware of the importance of teaching cultural contents in the Fundamental English courses, they were not competent to do so.

Table 7 summarizes the teachers' suggestions for teaching cultural contents in the Fundamental English courses which relate to the purposes of teaching cultural contents, cultural contents that should be taught, and approaches to teaching them.

First, two teachers suggested that the purpose of teaching cultural contents in the Fundamental English courses be to build up harmony, peace, and mutual understanding. They suggested teaching a wide variety of cultures for intercultural communication and understanding in the courses.

Second, six teachers suggested the cultural contents that should be taught in the Fundamental English courses. Two of them suggested teaching cultural contents relating to Big "C" cultural themes such as food and important events. Moreover, they suggested that teachers avoid talking about the topic of religion in the classroom. This suggestion supports the findings of this study that most of the teachers expected Big "C" cultural themes to be presented in the Fundamental English coursebooks. However, two teachers suggested that cultural contents relating to Small "c" culture such as slang, idioms, clichés, and sarcasm be taught in the courses. They also suggested teaching "culture shock" as a topic in the courses. Interestingly, this finding shows that some teachers were aware of the importance of teaching some cultural themes relating to a deeper sense of cultural knowledge that can prevent misunderstanding and miscommunication among people from different cultural backgrounds (Lee, 2009). Interestingly, the other two teachers stated that teachers in Thailand should pay more attention to the teaching of the cultural contents of ASEAN community. Especially, the cultural contents of ten ASEAN countries should be rapidly integrated into the curriculum to prepare the students for the ASEAN community.

Third, 13 teachers suggested the approach to teaching cultural contents in the Fundamental English courses. One teacher suggested that teachers of English be open to the learning of other cultures and try to find appropriate ways to teach cultural knowledge of other countries. Two teachers mentioned that teachers should not focus only on teaching grammatical rules in English classes. They should emphasize more on teaching cultural contents and teaching English for communication. Four teachers suggested teaching cultural contents by using comparative approach mentioning that teachers of the Fundamental English courses should show students the similarities and differences between Thai and other cultures. Another teacher suggested teaching cultural contents through popular songs. In addition, five teachers suggested teaching cultural contents by using authentic materials. They recommended using multi-media materials, audio or visual aids, graded readers and English or American literature to promote the teaching and learning of culture. The teachers viewed that the cultural contents presented in authentic materials could motivate students to learn English. This is supported by Lee (2009) asserting that such authentic materials provide a great deal of information and richness of cultural input and help motivate learners to study English by introducing a slice of real life into classrooms in more complete communicative contexts. However, some of the teachers mentioned that teachers should only use this type of materials when



the learners' level of English proficiency is very high. Probably, this suggestion is a response to the problem reported by the teachers that authentic materials contain complex cultural contents.

Table 7. Suggestions for Teaching Cultural Contents in Fundamental English Courses

Suggestions	Frequencies of Responses
1. Purposes of teaching cultural contents in Fundamental English courses	2
2. Cultural contents that should be taught in Fundamental English courses	6
3. Approaches to teaching cultural contents	13

To recapitulate, the findings of this study indicate that the teachers had positive attitudes towards intercultural understanding. They considered that intercultural communicative competence was important in English language teaching, and a wide variety of sources and themes of cultures should be covered in the Fundamental English courses.

Conclusions and Implications

This study examined the teachers' perceptions and expectations of cultural contents in the Fundamental English coursebooks used in Nakhon Si Thammarat Rajabhat University in terms of themes and sources of cultures as well as their problems of and suggestions for teaching cultural contents in the Fundamental English courses.

The survey findings of the teachers' perceptions and expectations of cultural contents in the Fundamental English coursebooks show that the teachers had positive views of teaching culture. They strongly perceived Big "C" cultural themes as cultural contents and expected them in the coursebooks. They also expected cultural contents from all sources of culture in the coursebooks. Based on their suggestions, the cultural contents relating to Small "c" culture such as slang, idioms, clichés, sarcasm and cultural shock were also expected in the Fundamental English coursebooks. This reflects their awareness of the importance of teaching cultural contents in the Fundamental English courses.

Although the findings of this study showed that the teachers were aware of the importance of teaching cultural contents in the Fundamental English courses, they had limited cultural knowledge and limited ability to teach it. Therefore, to solve this problem, a course or a workshop in which teachers are trained to teach cultural contents and to integrate them into the curriculum should be organized.

Since the problem of the difficulty of cultural contents presented in the coursebooks may have caused the teachers to refuse to teach such cultural contents in their courses and to teach more grammar and vocabulary instead, the teacher's manual should contain suggestions and instruction on how to handle the cultural contents in coursebooks as well as the role of teachers and students. Such information would make it easier for teachers and learners to make sense of the cultural contents in the class. Illustrations and suggestions need to be appropriately adjusted to learners' own culture. Sufficient information in the form of guidelines should be provided for teachers to avoid their stereotyping culture of other countries. Moreover, cultural exchange programs as well as training in cultural knowledge, intercultural communicative competence, and teaching approaches for cross-cultural understanding should be provided for teachers.



This study sheds light on the teachers' awareness of teaching cultural contents in the Fundamental English courses in Nakhon Si Thammarat Rajabhat University. Moreover, the finding of the teachers' expectations of cultural contents in this study can be used as a guideline for the inclusion of themes of cultural contents in the Fundamental English coursebooks and in the curriculum as a way to develop students' intercultural communicative competence and to prepare them for the use of English as an international language.

Suggestions for Further Study

This study investigated the teachers' perceptions and expectations of cultural contents in all three Fundamental English coursebooks used for the Fundamental English courses in Nakhon Si Thammarat Rajabhat University in terms of sources and themes of culture. The fact that there were only 25 participants in this study make the findings limited in that they may not be generalizable to teachers in other universities or other contexts. Many issues were beyond the scope of this investigation and deserve further research.

First, other dimensions of cultural contents such as 'Product', 'Practice', and 'Perspectives' (Moran, 2001) should be addressed in constructing the items of the questionnaire to gain more information about different perceptions and expectations of cultural contents in the coursebooks.

Second, teachers' expectations of cultural contents of other types of coursebooks, such as in-house coursebooks or ones used in other levels of education should be examined. It would be useful to interview teachers or organize a focus group discussion among them to gain more insights into their perceptions and expectations of cultural contents in the coursebooks as well as their problems of and suggestions for teaching cultural contents in English courses.

Third, it would be useful to evaluate teachers' ability to teach cultural contents as well as their views on the value of integrating cultural contents in English courses. Such information would offer implications for culture teaching training courses.

Fourth, it may also be necessary to investigate students' preferences for sources and themes of culture and the congruence between student preferences for and teacher expectations of sources and themes of cultural contents in English classes. The results of such study can be used as a guideline for the inclusion of cultural contents in materials, coursebooks and curricular.

Finally, in order to yield a bigger picture of findings, a wider range of subjects can be selected and the design of the study must be revised to suit the objectives of the study and the sample population.

About the Authors

Wanvisa Kaewsakul is a lecturer at the Department of General Education, Nakhon Si Thammarat Rajabhat University, Nakhon Si Thammarat, Thailand. She earned her Master of Arts in Teaching English as an International Language from Prince of Songkla University in 2013. Her research interests include Second Language Acquisition, English as an International Language, Language and Culture, and Language and Communication.



Adisa Teo is an associate professor at the Department of Languages and Linguistics, Faculty of Liberal Arts, Prince of Songkla University, Hat Yai, Songkhla, Thailand. She received Ph.D. in Education, from University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Her areas of research include Second Language Acquisition, English as an International Language, Learner Autonomy, and Teacher Development

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