EFL Tertiary Teachers' Perceptions of The Integration Of Culture Into English Classes

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to explore the perceptions of EFL teachers at four universities in the Mekong Delta in Vietnam with respect to the integration of Culture into English classes. There is much research in the field of language and culture, however, to my best understanding, little research has been investigated on teachers' perceptions of culture embedment in English classes, especially in the context of Vietnam and the Mekong Delta. The data for this study were collected through questionnaires of 96 EFL tertiary teachers in the Mekong Delta and through interviews with 10 of them. The data were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. Firstly, findings showed that the teacher participants strongly agree that culture plays an important role in English classes and that cultural elements can help learners improve their linguistic and communicative competence, especially, since being successful in multicultural communication is the primary aim of teachers' culture integration. Secondly, teachers can use different source materials and different learning activities to embed culture in English classes. Thirdly, teachers can play a variety of roles in culture integration. Finally, teachers think that policies, teachers' low salary, teachers' and students' limited class time and students' lack of interest are the main barriers. From the findings of this study, useful suggestions were proposed for English teachers, teacher educators, local educational leaders, policy-makers, and the community so that the integration of culture into English classes will be encouraged and become more effective.

Key words: Culture Integration, Culture and Language, Culture Teaching and Learning, and Teachers' Perceptions

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

The rationale for conducting this study will be discussed in two aspects: theoretical and practical consideration.

Theoretical Consideration

Culture plays an important role in foreign language learning. According to Marcal (2010) students need to learn foreign cultures to understand others' viewpoints, prepare for personal encounters with foreign cultures and put the language into context; and Thanasoulas (2001) discusses that culture can enhance and enrich learners' communicative competence as well as lead them to empathy and respect toward different cultures and promote objectivity and cultural perspicacity. Also, culture is considered communicative competence (Hymes, 1972), or the 5th language skill. In short, as above-mentioned, it is essential to incorporate culture in language teaching and learning to develop learners' abilities to communicate and use the language effectively and appropriately in various situations. Due to the nature of the relationship between culture and language and the importance of culture in language teaching and learning, many

researchers have suggested embedding culture in foreign language teaching and learning. However, in practice, whether cultural elements can be integrated in the language lessons and how is still a question. To the best of my knowledge, there is not much research regarding culture embedment in foreign language teaching, especially on EFL teachers' perceptions of integration of culture into English classes. There is also little research about how English teachers teach cultural elements in their English lessons. Therefore, research on culture integration into English classes is practical and necessary. The findings of this study will contribute to the theoretical research gap in the field of culture and foreign language teaching.

Practical consideration

As we can see from theoretical consideration, culture is an integral part in the language teaching and learning process and is a factor leading to learners' success or failure in learning a foreign language. However, as an EFL teacher for more than 15 years, the researcher assumes that the EFL teachers in the educational institutions where this study is conducted are not aware of the importance of integrating culture in their English classes and do not teach cultural elements in their

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lessons consciously. This opinion is just her own assumption drawn by her observation. For this reason, it is hoped that the current study helps the researcher find scientific evidence on the EFL teachers' perceptions in the integration of culture in teaching English, and to some extent, these findings can provide a general understanding of the EFL teachers' perceptions about culture-embedded English teaching.

Aim(s) of the Study

The aims of this study are to investigate (1) the EFL teachers' perceptions about the term "culture" and its role in English classes, (2) their perceptions about their culture integration in English classrooms, and (3) the advantages and the difficulties they face when integrating culture in English classes.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Definition of Culture

Culture is a very complicated term to define, and different researchers view and divide culture in their own ways. For example, Thanasoulas (2001) divides culture into *Culture with a Capital C* (art, music, literature, politics) and *Culture with a Small C* (the behavioral patterns and lifestyles of everyday people). Adaskou, Britten and Fahsi (1990, cited in Lessard-Clouston, 1997) define culture to the four senses including *the aesthetic sense* (cinema, literature, music and media), *the sociological sense* (the organization of family, interpersonal relations, customs, material conditions, and so on), *the semantic sense* (perceptions thoughts processes), and *the pragmatic and sociolinguistic sense* (the background knowledge, social and paralinguistic skills, and language code). Goodenough (1963, cited in Thanasoulas, 2001) considers culture as *standards* for deciding what can be, how one feels about it, what to do about it and how to go about doing it; and Shah and Bilal (2012) define culture as a set of values. Bourdieu (1986, cited in Brown, 2000) considers culture term as *Cultural Capital* (values, tastes, behaviors, and thought) and *Cultural Identities* (language, dialect, and ethnicity). Similar to Bourdieu (1986), Nieto (2002) thinks that culture consists of not only language, ethnicity, and race but also social class and gender. Salzmann (1993) separates culture into *Verbal culture* (the corresponding language) and *Nonverbal culture* that includes mental culture (worldview or value orientations), behavioral culture and material culture. Scarino & Liddcoat (2009) views culture as a *body of knowledge* (knowledge about cultural artefacts or works of arts; places and institutions; events or symbols and ways of livings). Similarly, Rajabi & Ketabi (2012) also define culture as the *system of knowledge* which includes values, beliefs, and attitudes, notions of appropriate behavior, statuses, role expectations and worldview, material objects and knowledge of their purpose and use. Since there are so many different definitions of culture, in this study culture is just understood to the extent of language teaching. Based on the field of anthropology, Moran (2001) defines five dimensions of culture including Cultural Products (artifacts, places, institutions and art forms), Cultural Practices (cultural and

linguistic behaviors as operations, acts, scenarios and lives), Cultural Perspectives (perceptions, beliefs, values, and attitudes as well as etic (outsider) and emic (insider) view), Cultural Communities (the national community, coexisting communities and relationships) and Cultural Persons (concepts of identity and life histories). Generally, this research will employ the five dimensions of culture (cultural products, cultural practices, cultural perspectives, cultural community and cultural persons).

The Relationship between Culture and Language

Culture is intertwined with language itself (Mekheimer, 2011; Mekheimer and Alsosari, 2011; Thanasoulas, 2001; Byram, 1998; Alptekin, 1993). Culture is an inseparable part of foreign language learning (Nadera, 2012; Marcal, 2010; Thanasoulas, 2001; Lessard-Clouston, 1997, Byram, 1988). Besides their intimate relationship, language and culture also have a strong connection with literacy (Nieto, 2002), thought (Brown, 2000) and race (Salzmann, 1993). Culture is also considered as the background for language learners to settle a new language (Kramsch, 1994) and language is viewed to participate in the culture, and to learn culture (Moran, 2001). More importantly, Kramsch, Cain and Murphy-Lejeune (1996) consider culture as language and language as culture. Similarly, Thanasoulas (2001) also confirms that foreign language learning is foreign culture learning, and language teaching is culture teaching. Kramsch (1994) has the same idea when he states that language is culture and teaching language is teaching culture.

Also, a lot of research shows that culture can help learners develop linguistic competence as discussed by Marcal (2010), Frantzan (2010), Thanasoulas (2001), and communicative competence by Thanasoulas (2001), Turkan and Celik (2007), Scarino and Liddicoat (2009), and Marcal (2010).

Teaching Culture in English Classes

Teaching Culture: Cultural Content

Moran (2001) develops the cultural experience based on the experiential learning cycle proposed by Kurt Lewin (in Kolb, 1984). The cultural experience consists of four kinds of cultural learning, or cultural knowings, namely, *knowing about* (acquiring cultural information or cultural experiences), *knowing how* (developing cultural behaviors or cultural descriptions), *knowing why* (discovering cultural explanations or cultural interpretation), *and knowing oneself* (articulating personal responses to what they are learning or articulation of personal responses).

Teaching Culture: Language functions

This research will employ language functions discussed by Moran (2001); learners use the language functions to (1) participate in the cultural experience including socializing, establishing/maintaining relationships, influencing people, giving and responding to feedback; (2) describe the cultural experience including knowledge, comprehension, descriptions and cognitive functions; (3) identify, explain, and justify cultural perspective and compare and contrast these with

perspectives from the individual's own culture and other cultures, including rational inquiry and exposition, analysis, and cognitive functions; and (4) express their thoughts, feelings, questions, decisions, strategies and plan regarding the cultural experience including evaluation, expressing emotions, and expressing/inquiring about.

Teaching Culture: Culture Learning Outcomes

According to Moran (2001), outcomes for cultural learning include cultural understanding, cultural awareness, cultural adaptation, assimilation, integration, social change, communicative competence, identity transformation, and language proficiency. Therefore, he thinks that culture learners should achieve six cultural goals namely culture-specific understanding, culture-general understanding, competence, adaptation, social change and identity. Due to the fact that this research only investigates the cultural elements on English classes, this research focuses on four culture learning outcomes mentioned by Moran (2001): learners' performance of the cultural behaviors, comprehension of the information presented, the ability to make culture explanations, and learners' expressions of self-awareness.

Teaching Culture: Learning Activities

As mentioned above this research emphasizes the integration of cultural elements in English classes to enhance students' cultural behaviors, cultural understandings, cultural interpretations and students' self-awareness, so the researcher will apply Moran's (2001) discussions on learning activities in this research. Particularly, according to Moran (2001), in English classes, (1) to improve students' cultural behaviors, teachers use operations (use of tools, artifacts, or other products of the culture), rituals (brief exchanges enacted in the classroom that reflect the everyday tasks of teaching and learning, done in the manner of the target culture, dialogues, role-plays, performance, drama, simulations and field experiences; (2) to improve students' cultural understandings, teachers use authentic material, pedagogical material, experiences and personal accounts; (3) to improve students' cultural interpretations, teachers use cultural analyses, research, research projects and field experiences; and to develop students' self-awareness to use reflection, focused talking and focused writing.

Teachers' roles

According to Moran (2001) when integrating cultures in language learning, teachers can play a role as (1) a model and a coach, (2) a source, a resource, an arbiter and an elicitor, (3) a guide, and a co-researcher, (4) and a listener, a witness and a co-learner.

The barriers preventing teachers from embedding culture in English classroom

There are various barriers preventing the integration of culture in English classes and the factors are the teacher

(Thanasoulas (2001); Byram, Morgan et al., (1994); Mekheimer and Aldosari (2011); Turkan and Celik (2007) and Ma (2012); time (Du, 2008), material and policy (Turkan and Celik (2007); Ma (2012); Mekheimer and Aldosari (2011); Lessard-Clouston, (1997); and socio-cultural and religious factors, and lack of teaching technology enabling culture learning in classrooms (Mekheimer and Aldosari, 2011).

METHOD

Research Design

This study aims to focus on describing the phenomenon (what/how) rather than giving the reasons (why), so the appropriate research method for this study will be descriptive. Therefore, this study employs a descriptive research design using a questionnaire and interview to get useful data on EFL teachers' perceptions on the integration of culture into English classes.

Context of the study/Research site

The study will be conducted on 96 EFL teachers working at four universities in the Mekong Delta, Vietnam.

Research Instruments

Research tools for this study are a questionnaire and interview, which are used to get data to answer the research question: the EFL teachers' perceptions about the term "culture" and its role in English classes, their perceptions about their culture embedment in English classes, and the advantages and disadvantages of embedding culture in English classes.

The questionnaires are designed in Liker five-point scale followed with an open-ended section. The questionnaire is only designed in English because it is assumed that these EFL tertiary teachers can understand the questionnaires appropriately and can fill in the English questionnaire form with ease. This questionnaire is designed based on the theories in the literature review. As mentioned above the purpose of this question is to find out the information about the teachers' perceptions towards the integration of cultures into English classes, so the questionnaire consists of three parts regarding (1) the teachers' perceptions about the term "culture" and the role of culture in English classes, (2) the teachers' perceptions about their culture embedment in English classes and (3) the advantages and disadvantages of preventing teachers from embedding cultural elements in English classes.

The interview section will be conducted after the questionnaire phrase to obtain more insights into the data collected from the questionnaire. The aim of the interview is to clarify and consolidate the data, so the interview is just conducted to those participants whose data need to be clarified and consolidated and/or to experienced teachers (over 15 years of teaching) with the hope to get more in-depth information.

Data collection Procedure

Questionnaire procedure

Questionnaire includes questions designed in Liker five-point scale with 1 – strongly disagree, 2 – disagree, 3 – neutral, 4 – agree, 5 – strongly agree and open-ended ones. Firstly, 20 participants are asked to participate in the pilot questionnaire stage. Thanks to (1) observing these people's reactions and answers for the first version of the survey questionnaire, (2) their direct suggestions for the improvement of the survey questionnaire, and (3) the reliability statistics of the questionnaire, the researcher will finish the final version of the questionnaire. Once the reliability coefficient of the questionnaire is accepted, the revised questionnaire is delivered to the participants (96 EFL tertiary teachers). To obtain reliable data, before the participants began to fill in the questionnaire, instructions, explanations and demonstrations will be given to these participants.

Interview procedure

In order to have qualitative data on the EFL tertiary teachers' perceptions of the integration of culture into English classes, interview was carried out after the questionnaire phrase. The participants of the interview are those whose data need to be clarified and consolidated and/or those who have more than 15 years of teaching experience because the researcher hopes to get in-depth information from the interview. The researcher created a friendly atmosphere when interviewing and each interview was conducted about 30 minutes. During the interview, the researcher took notes on the participants' answers and comments and the researcher frequently checked the participants' answers by repeating their responses. The interview was done in face-to-face mode.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Question 1

What are the EFL tertiary teachers' perceptions about the term of "culture" and the role of culture in English classes?

Finding 1

EFLtertiary teachers' perceptions about the term of "culture"
   + Finding from the questionnaire
   Table 4.1 showed that the mean score of the questionnaire for the teachers' perceptions about culture is M=3.87. The mean is higher than the scale 3 in 5-point scale. It indicates that the teachers agree with all of the definitions of culture in the questionnaire. The teachers' perceptions to each item will be described in detail in table 4.2.
   The findings of the study, with the Mean score from 3.84 to 3.92, revealed that English teachers agree to define culture as cultural products including artifacts, places, institutions and art forms; cultural practices including cultural and linguistic behaviors as operations, acts, scenarios, and lives; cultural perspectives including perceptions, beliefs, values, and

attitudes as well as etic (outsider) and emic (insider) view; cultural communities including the national communities, coexisting communities and relationships; and as cultural persons including the concepts of identity and life histories.
   + Finding from the Interview
   The EFL tertiary teachers modify many definitions for the term "culture". Particularly, they consider culture as religious beliefs, all things that are related to tradition, mores including customs, traditions, conversations, accepted public manner, civilization, refinement, cultivation (agriculture), enlightenment, education, or awareness. Some teachers define culture as the combination of all human related aspects wwhich can be around in each individual society, language, religion and the like.

Finding 2

EFL tertiary teachers' perceptions about the role of culture in English classes
   Table 4.3 showed that the mean score of the questionnaire for the EFL tertiary teachers' perceptions towards the role of culture in English classes is M=4.3. The mean score indicates that these teachers strongly agree that culture plays an important role in English classes. The result is similar to Mekheimer and Alsodsari's (2001) finding. In Mekheimer and Alsodari's (2001) study, both teachers and students recognize the important role of culture learning.

Research Question 2

What are the EFL tertiary teachers' perceptions about their culture embedment in English classes?

Table 4.1. Overall mean EFL tertiary teachers' perceptions about the culture definition.

	N	Min.	Max	Mean	SD
General mean	96	2	5.00	3.87	0.682

Table 4.2. EFL tertiary teachers' perceptions about the term "culture"

Items	N	Min.	Max	Mean	SD
Culture is defined as cultural products	96	2	5	3.84	0.663
Culture is defined as cultural practices	96	2	5	3.92	0.714
Culture is defined as cultural perspectives	96	2	5	3.85	0.703
Culture is defined as cultural communities	96	2	5	3.87	0.670
Culture is defined as cultural persons	96	2	5	3.89	0.661

Table 4.3. EFL tertiary teachers' perceptions about the role of culture in English classes

	N	Min.	Max	Mean	SD
General mean	96	1	5.00	4.30	0.937

Table 4.4. EFL tertiary teachers' perceptions about culture materials

Items	N	Min.	Max	Mean	SD
Teachers only use textbooks.	96	1	5	2.79	1.156
Teachers use both textbooks and their own materials.	96	1	5	3.43	1.008
Teachers use textbooks, their own materials and their understandings.	96	2	5	4.08	0.714

Table 4.5. EFL tertiary teachers' perceptions about culture content.

Items	N	Min.	Max	Mean	SD
Providing students cultural information	96	3	5	4.02	0.695
Developing students cultural behaviors	96	3	5	4.02	0.695
Improving students' cultural interpretations	96	2	5	3.97	0.730
Developing the individual learners' worldview and personal competence	96	2	5	3.90	0.851

Table 4.6. EFL tertiary teachers' perceptions about developing language functions for students.

Items	N	Min.	Max	Mean	SD
Focus on language students use to participate in the cultural experience.	96	2	5	4.10	0.746
Focus on the language students use to describe the cultural experience.	96	2	5	3.95	0.717
Focus on the language students use to identify, explain and justify cultural perspectives.	96	2	5	3.95	0.717
Focus on the language students use to express their thought and feelings	96	3	5	4.02	0.741

Table 4.7. EFL tertiary teachers' perceptions about culture outcomes

Items	N	Min.	Max	Mean	SD
Students can demonstrate the performance of the cultural behaviors.	96	3	5	3.92	0.696
Students can demonstrate the comprehension of the information presented.	96	2	5	3.72	0.686
Students can demonstrate the ability to make cultural explanations.	96	2	5	3.82	0.671
Students can demonstrate the ability to express their self-awareness.	96	3	5	3.89	0.635

Table 4.8. EFL tertiary teachers' perceptions about learning activities.

Items	N	Min.	Max	Mean	SD
Teachers use operations, rituals, dialogues, role-plays, performance, drama, simulations and field experiences.	96	3	5	3.92	0.557
Teachers use authentic materials, pedagogical materials, experiences and personal accounts.	96	3	5	3.89	0.661
Teachers use cultural analyses, research, research projects and field experiences.	96	2	5	3.77	0.589
Teachers use reflection, focused talking and focused writing	96	3	5	3.89	0.608

as materials for cultural integration such as movies, videos, newspapers, and other kinds of media; almost all materials that teachers can find such a kind of culture; personal experiences; students' prior knowledge; friends' cultural knowledge; or native guest speakers.

Finding 2

EFL tertiary teachers' perceptions about the cultural contents

+ Finding from the questionnaire

As seen in the table above, the teacher participants express their agreements on all cultural contents mentioned in the questionnaire, and they are providing students cultural information, developing students' cultural behaviors and their worldview and personal competence, and improving students' cultural interpretations.

+ Finding from the interview

Besides these cultural contents, in the interview the EFL tertiary teachers share that teachers can analyze language and culture's interconnected relationship in both students' mother-tongue and target language, free students from

Finding 1

EFL tertiary teachers' perceptions about the cultural materials

+ Finding from the questionnaire

The English teachers express that they use textbooks, their own developed materials and their understandings to teach cultural elements in English classes.

+ Finding from the interview

All EFL tertiary teachers in this research mention the internet as a source of materials that teachers can use to embed cultural features in English classes. Besides the internet, the participants also mention other sources that teachers can use

cultural prejudices and ethnocentrism, and develop students' sociocultural perspectives.

Finding 3

EFL tertiary teachers' perceptions about language functions
+ Finding from the questionnaire

Similar to the results of culture content, all the EFL tertiary teachers agree with the language functions provided in the questionnaire – the language students use to participate in the cultural experience, to describe the cultural experience, to identify, explain and justify cultural perspectives and to compare and contrast these with perspectives from the individual's own culture and other cultures, and to express their thoughts.

+ Finding from the interview

Regarding language functions, in the interview, the teachers share that teachers should provide students language functions to help them to refuse to do something, to share their feelings and to encourage somebody to comfort somebody.

Finding 4

EFL tertiary teachers' perceptions about culture outcomes
+ Finding from the questionnaire

For the culture outcomes, the teachers agree with all the culture outcomes listed in the questionnaire. That means they think that the aims of culture learning are that students can demonstrate their performance of the cultural behavior or competence, their comprehension of the information presented, the ability to make cultural explanations, and their expressions of self-awareness.

+ Finding from the interview

In the interview, the teachers also modify that the prior aim of culture learning is that students can be successful in Multicultural communication.

Finding 5

EFL tertiary teachers' perceptions about learning activities
+ Finding from the questionnaire

The findings from the questionnaire show that the ELF teachers use many different kinds of learning activities for culture embedment such as operations, rituals, dialogues, role-plays, performance, drama, simulation and field experience; authentic materials, pedagogical materials, experiences and personal accounts; cultural analyses, research, research projects; and reflection, focused talking and focused writing.

+ Finding from the interview

The teachers also show that teachers can elicit students' cultural experiences and knowledge; and they can use all kinds of learning activities that contain the value of cultural perspectives.

Finding 6

EFL tertiary teachers' perceptions about teacher roles
+ Finding from the questionnaire

With mean scores are M=3.85, M=3.75, M=3.97, and M=3.95, Table 4.9 showed that regarding teacher roles the teachers think that when integrating cultural elements into English classes, teachers play many different roles as a model a coach, a source, a resource, an arbiter, an elicitor, a guide, a co-researcher, a listener, a witness and a co-worker

+ Finding from the interview

The teachers in this research agree with the teacher roles listed in the questionnaire. They think that when integrating culture in English classes, teachers play roles as a model, a coach, a source, a resource, an arbiter, an elicitor, a guide, a co-researcher, a listener, a witness and a co-learner. Besides, in the interview, the teachers add that teachers should play a role as an assessor, and they should be a facilitator rather than a controller.

Research Question 3

What are the EFL tertiary teachers' perceptions about the advantages and disadvantages of culture integration in English classes?

Finding 1

EFL tertiary teachers' perceptions about the advantages of culture integration in English classes

When teachers integrate cultural elements into English classes, they will face many barriers as mentioned below.

Table 4.9. EFL tertiary teachers' perceptions about teacher roles

Items	N	Min.	Max	Mean	SD
Teachers play roles as a model and a coach.	96	2	5	3.85	0.654
Teachers play roles as a source, a resource, an arbiter and an elicitor.	96	2	5	3.75	0.745
Teachers play roles as a guide and a co-researcher.	96	1	5	3.97	0.632
Teachers play roles as a listener, a witness and a co-learner.	96	2	5	3.95	0.644

Table 4.10. EFL tertiary teachers' perceptions about the advantages of integrating culture in English classes

Items	N	Min.	Max	Mean	SD
Culture integration can only help students achieve linguistic competence.	96	1	5	2.79	1.156
Culture integration can only help students achieve communicative competence.	96	1	5	2.79	1.156
Culture integration can only help students achieve communicative competence.	96	3	5	4.02	0.609

Table 4.11. EFL tertiary teachers' perceptions about the barriers preventing teachers from integrating culture in English classes

Items	N	Min.	Max	Mean	SD
Teachers are not aware of integrating culture elements in English classes.	96	1	5	3.03	0.948
Teachers do not have enough cultural competence to integrate culture in English classes.	96	1	5	3.13	0.957
Teachers do not have time to embed culture in their classes.	96	1	5	3.36	0.967
Teachers think that students can learn culture after they achieve linguistic proficiency.	96	1	5	3.08	0.900
There is a lack of native-English teachers	96	1	5	3.41	0.990
Teaching culture is not required officially in language teaching programs.	96	1	5	3.23	0.920
There is not enough materials including cultural aspects.	96	1	5	3.51	0.942
There is not guidance for teachers to integrate culture in their English classes	96	1	5	3.34	1.031
There is socio-cultural and religious factors	96	2	5	3.31	0.923
There is a lack of teaching technology enabling culture learning in classrooms.	96	1	5	3.21	0.933

However, the teachers in this research point out that students can get benefits from the teachers' cultural integration. Particularly, with the culture integration, students can achieve both linguistic and communicative competence

+ Finding from the interview

In the interview the teachers confirm the positive effects of culture on improving students' linguistic and communicative competence. One teacher participant in the interview said that "by understanding the culture they are dealing with, the students can effectively acquire the language knowledge that they are learning."

Finding 2

EFL tertiary teachers' perceptions about barriers preventing teachers from integrating culture in English classes

+ Finding from the questionnaire

Among ten items related to the barriers preventing teachers from integrating culture in English classes, the teacher participants show their neutral viewpoint on eight items. They just agree that a lack of native-English teachers and materials including culture is a barrier preventing teachers from integrating culture in English classes.

+ Finding from the interview

In the interview, the teacher participants add many factors preventing teachers' culture integration; and they are related to teacher, students and policy factors. Regarding the teacher factor, the teacher participants think that the barriers are teachers' limited real experience, and cultural understandings as well as their unwillingness to integrate it into English classes. One teacher participant in the interview says that "how teachers can be well-qualified in terms of culture awareness and how they can transfer what they are experience to the learner audiences." Also related to the teacher factor, the teacher participant thinks that limited class time and low salary for teachers fails to encourage them to try their best, especially to do what are not required officially. Limitation of time and lack of interest are the two barriers related to students. In terms of policies, one teacher participant says that a top down policy system seems like a

systematic and safe way to deal with language teaching (culture interference) at first glance, but it creates a number of problems including the practical and applicable introduction of culture stuffs into the teaching and learning curriculum. Another teacher participant adds that teachers are afraid of Vietnamese government management and they are afraid of being violated according to Vietnamese rules, so they do not dare to integrate culture in English classes. Compared to Mã Huỳnh Kim Bích's (2012) study, the findings in this study to some extent are similar. In Mã Huỳnh Kim Bích's (2012) study, barriers preventing cultural integration are rigorous approach, rigid socio-religious inhibitors, lack of literacy texts, and lack of time and technology

CONCLUSION

From the result of the study, it can be obvious that (1) the teacher participants strongly believe that culture plays an important role in English classes and students can get benefits from teacher' culture integration; particularly students can achieve both linguistic and communicative competence as mentioned above; (2) the teachers use textbooks, their own developed materials, and their understandings to teach culture in English classes; (3) they provide students cultural information, develop students cultural behaviors and improve students cultural interpretations; (4) they provide students the language functions the students can use to participate and describe in the culture experience, to identify cultural perspectives and to compare and contrast these perspectives with theirs; (5) the teachers' aims at integrating culture in English classes are that students understand, explain, perform and express their own culture; (6) they use various learning activities for culture embedment and (7) teachers play different roles when integrating culture into English classes. However, when integrating culture into English classes, (8) teachers face many barriers relating to their limited real experience and cultural understandings as well as unwillingness to integrate it into English classes, time, salary, and policies. Therefore, some significant implications in integrating cultural elements into English classes were drawn. Firstly, to encourage teachers to integrate culture in

their English classes, teachers should be trained to have real culture experience and have profound cultural understanding. Secondly, they should be offered more class time and higher salary to be motivated to devote the time and effort for culture integration. Finally, the policies should be applicable and practical so that teachers can have an encouragement to integrate culture in English classes. One limitation of this study is that this study is just based on the teacher participants' perceptions about culture embedment into English class, so the further research will focus on classroom observations to find out whether there are any mismatches between what the teacher participants think and what they do in their daily classes.

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