English Language & Literature Teaching, Vol. 24, No. 4 Winter 2018

Teachers' and Students' Perceptions towards Culture and Culture-related Topics in Non-English Major Korean University English Language Classrooms

Erika Choe[*]
(Eulji University)
Chase Karcher
(Eulji University)
Daniel Cuffey
(Eulji University)
Myeong-Hee Seong[**]
(Eulji University)

Choe, E, Karcher, C, Cuffey, D & Seong, Myeong-Hee (2018). Teachers' and students' perceptions towards culture and culture-related topics in non-English major Korean university English language classrooms. *English Language & Literature Teaching, 24*(4), 1-20.

This paper aims to primarily assess two things: 1) student and teacher perceptions regarding culture and the sources of cultural content in the Korean university EFL context, and 2) the specific culture-related topics that teachers and students in this setting prefer to teach and learn, respectively. Both qualitative and quantitative data was gathered through questionnaires distributed to 607 students currently enrolled in English conversation classes offered at a Korean university and 12 professors of English at the university. The first section asked teachers and students about: 1) the importance of culture in the language classroom, 2) how they valued different sources of culture (target, international, source), and 3) how their interest in certain culture-related topics affected their motivation to study. The second section asked both groups about their preference for specific culture-related topics (including both Big "C" and little "c" topics). The results revealed that while both students and teachers agreed on the importance of culture in class, students preferred to study native English speaking (target) cultures over non-native cultures. Results also showed that both students and teachers found topics like "popular culture" and "lifestyles" interesting, yet differed on others. Discussion for application and relevance are also provided.

[*] First author
[**] Corresponding author

[culture-related topics/Korean university/big "C"/little "c"/source culture/ international culture/target culture]

I. INTRODUCTION

While the importance of culture in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) curricula is generally accepted within the profession, what and how exactly it should be taught is not so widely agreed upon. Moreover, the last century of language pedagogy has approached language teaching primarily through the four separate skills (i.e. reading, writing, listening, and speaking), however, when culture is addressed, it leans towards larger culture-related topics (Lee, 2008).

The last two decades has also seen a larger shift to incorporate culture into the forefront of the language learning experience as more educators and researchers have started to see culture as essential to the language learning experience. This is especially true since learners of English are almost guaranteed to use the language with people from a variety of backgrounds, not only Native English Speakers (NES). While substantial research has been done on the topic of culture, which cultural topics belong in Korean university textbooks specifically has yet to be sufficiently examined. This paper seeks to fill this gap and hopefully inform the development of future English language curricula and materials (e.g. textbooks).

Research still needs to explore what source cultures and specific culture-related topics garner the most interest from those studying English and subsequently should be built into lesson materials, especially at the tertiary education level. Some research of this nature has been done in other social contexts. However, the same information cannot be found for the Korean context, so this will be the primary aim of this paper.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Language and Culture in the Language Classroom

Language and culture have a close, interdependent relationship and the majority in the field of EFL agree that culture plays a key role in English Language teaching (ELT). While agreeing with the importance of culture is relatively easy, establishing how culture is defined is an important keystone of cultural study that has proven to be quite difficult for researchers. Kramsch (1998) defines culture as "membership in a discourse community that shares a common social space and history, and a common system of standards in

perceiving, believing, evaluating, and action". Brown (2000) sees it as "information, thoughts, and feelings which are conveyed by language in a language community" (As cited in Liu & Laohawiriyanon, 2013).

Culture can also be seen as that which all contexts such as time, place, people, and situations, etc. are based (Hymes, 1972). Others have likened culture to an iceberg, saying that it is comprised of that which can be seen, or "observed", but a larger portion of it is not observable and is hidden deep within people's minds (Levine, Baxter, & McNulty, 1987). Finocchiaro and Bonomo (1973) divided culture into Material (i.e. food, art, nature, etc.), Behavioral (i.e. daily life, habits, school, etc.), and Spiritual (i.e. values, economy, politics, language, etc.). However, others have provided more concrete definitions of culture as they specifically relate to language education. The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) proposes that culture consists of three aspects, namely perspectives, practices, and products (1996). Similarly, others have suggested three-pointed models similar to the ACTFL's, using slightly different language (Spradley, 1980; Tomalin & Stemplesky, 1993). Moran (2001) seems to accept the ACTFL's model and goes on to identify two additional dimensions of culture: persons and communities. Hammerly (1982) proposed that culture in language can be divided into information culture, achievement culture, and behavior culture. Adaskou, Britten, and Fahsi (1990) cite four categories of culture as it relates to language teaching: 1. "Culture" with a big "C", 2. "Culture" with a little "c", 3. semantic orientation (i.e. culture that is represented in the language which influences thought processes), and 4. verbal exchange (i.e. rules of speaking by way of norms and expectations). This research utilizes categories of this last definition of culture.

The most common way that culture-related topics are often divided and the way that this paper will approach culture-related topics is into the previously mentioned two main categories: big "C" culture and little "c" culture, also referred to as "high culture" and "sociological" culture, respectively (Adaskou, Britten, & Fahsi, 1990; Chastain, 1976; Nelson, 1994; Valette, 1986). Big "C" culture refers to larger aspects of culture, such as geography, literature, education, societal norms, core values, and history; whereas, little "c" culture are those smaller parts of the culture which include the target culture's viewpoints, preferences or tastes, opinions, behaviors, clothing, food, hobbies, pop culture (e.g. music, trivia, facts, etc.), and current issues (Peterson, 2004). Another way to describe the two types of cultures is that big "C" culture are those things "which are related to the history of civilization" and little "c" are those "which represent the behavioral patterns or lifestyle of the people" (Kim, 2006). According to Wintergerst and McVeigh (2010), both big "C" and little "c" cultural knowledge is required if students are to participate effectively in intercultural settings. While each of the definitions of culture presented have merit, this paper will define culture as outlined above as the

authors of this paper feel this definition gives a clear lens through which to find culture-related topics for study.

The goal of English language learning depends greatly on the way the language will be used outside of the classroom (Im, 2018). In countries where it is not spoken natively, many learners study English as an Intercultural Language (EIcL). As a result, examining the sources of culture is necessary as this influences the types of cultures that are valued and studied in English language classrooms. Cortazzi and Jin (1999) identified three different sources of culture: source, target, and international. Source culture refers to the learners' own culture. Source culture is important in the English classroom because it allows students to reflect on their own culture as well as avoids alienating a key part of their identities (Nelson, 1994). Target culture is that of the countries where the target language is primarily spoken (e.g. Canada, New Zealand, the United States, etc.). As we have already outlined, language and culture are strongly tied to one another, so it is not possible to teach the target language without including the target culture (Han & Bae, 2005). Finally, international culture refers to those cultures which are not included in the first two categories. This type of culture is especially important to consider in the context where English is often the lingua franca. For example, in situations where English is used as the intermediary between two unrelated cultures, British culture may not be of much use when neither of the interlocutors are from the country. There are also marked benefits to including international culture in ELT. It allows non-native English speakers to: 1) see how to use the language interculturally with other non-native speakers, 2) determine what is appropriate in different communicative settings, and 3) better understand different cultural norms of those who do not hail from countries where English is the primary language (McKay, 2000). Two aspects used to define culture, little "c" versus big "C" and culture source, outlined above by Adaskou et. al and Cortazzi and Jin, respectively, will provide a foundation for the present research.

2. Culture-Related Topics in EFL Classrooms

The decision of what cultural topics are taught is often made by the source material (i.e., textbook) as opposed to the teacher or the students themselves. Therefore, the nature of culture-related topics often found in EFL textbooks is important to consider. Lee (2009) analyzed 11 textbooks used in high school EFL classes in South Korea and found that all textbooks neglected culture-general aspects of culture learning and small "c" culture and that they were biased towards the Western culture of English-speaking countries, especially that of the United States. Han & Bae (2005) looked into the extent to which culture was addressed in both high school and college EFL materials. They found that among the five college EFL textbooks they examined written by native English speakers,

only two sufficiently addressed culture. Moreover, of the topics covered, big "C" culture-related topics were more present over little "c" and the target culture was covered more than twice as much as that of international cultures and the source culture (i.e. Korea) was hardly mentioned at all. The two studies show a tendency towards big "C" culture and a bias towards certain cultures over others in Korean EFL classrooms. Bias towards Western culture-related topics is problematic because it has been shown to discourage students from garnering positive feeling towards and connecting with the target culture (Canagarajah, 1993). The favoring of big "C" culture is also notable because one researcher in Turkey found "teachers and learners favor to provide/get experience with a rich […] variety of L2 culture...which is also in the same line with many researches in the field" (Kahraman, 2016).

Researchers have also tried to determine which topics students prefer to study and how this aligns with established research. Kim (1997) looked at the culture and social topics found in elementary school textbooks used in South Korea, where the curriculum is set by the Ministry of Education. Analysis showed that the topics students were most interested in were not frequently mentioned in the textbook whereas the topics that students said they were least interested in studying were the most common in the textbooks. The researcher suggested a balance between topics of interest and topics of importance, such as social customs (e.g. greetings, apologizing, etc.). Liu and Laohawiriyanon (2013) did a similar study with university students in China and found that regarding the source of the culture students were interested in studying about, they most preferred to study their own (source) culture. Among the following seven top-ranked countries on the list, only two were that of the target culture (e.g. America and Australia). Regarding preferences for culture themes, students were given a list of 17 culture-related topics, 10 big "C" and 7 little "c". They found that students slightly preferred big "C" culture over little "c" culture.

According to Lafayette (1988), the topic of culture is often presented poorly in ELT in textbooks and by the teachers themselves due to a lack of understanding or familiarity with culture-related topics. A recent study attempted to gauge how fairly different aspects of culture were presented in textbooks used in Korean middle schools (Huh, 2013). Analysis of the results showed that the presentation of culture-related topics in textbooks show signs of improvement compared to the past. The textbook presented more diverse cultural groups, addressed common differences in cultures that could present misunderstandings in intercultural settings, and celebrated multiculturalism. However, the way in which certain cultures were represented was still problematic, namely with what the researcher called "confirming the status quo without challenging it: Stereotyping us and others" and a "Deficit view toward African and other Third World Cultures."

Thus far, the primary focus of research into culture-related topics in English language classrooms has largely been on South Korean public schools, especially at the elementary and middle school level. What research that has examined the culture-related topics at the university level shows is that there is apparent bias towards certain cultures over others, even Korean culture itself, and that the types of cultural topics are not balanced as researchers argue is necessary for developing culturally competent global citizens, a primary goal of English education in South Korea. Some progress has been made with how culture is taught in South Korea, but there is still room for improvement. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to answer the following research questions:

1) What are teachers/students' general perceptions towards culture in English language classrooms in a Korean university?
2) Which culture-related topics do Korean university students prefer to study?
3) Which culture-related topics do English teachers prefer to teach?

III. METHOD

1. Setting

This research is a case study that was conducted at a 4-year university specializing in preparing students to go into the healthcare field located in a suburban area outside of Seoul, South Korea. Students attending this university are required to take 3 English courses in order to graduate: Conversation English I, Conversation English II, and English Reading and Writing. However, the university offers a variety of English-related courses outside of the 3 requirements. Students were those currently taking Conversation English I at E. University. The goal of the course is based on the primary four language skills (i.e. listening, reading, speaking and writing), giving priority to speaking.

2. Participants

The participants surveyed included two groups (Table 1). The first group of respondents were students. A total of 607 students provided responses. Of those, 600 provided information about their experiencing living in English speaking countries. Their majors were dental hygiene, radiology, nursing, medical engineering, beauty cosmetics, emergency medical service, medical IT and marketing, mortuary science, food technology and services, addiction rehabilitation and social welfares, food and nutrition, healthcare management, early childhood education, environmental health and safety, medical public

relations, and visual design. An overwhelming majority of students had no experience living abroad. They were also asked about their level of English ability as determined by their Test of English for International Conversation (TOEIC) scores. A majority of the responses indicated that students were at around a lower-intermediate to true-intermediate level of English.

TABLE 1
Participant Demographics

	Male	Female	N/A	Total
Student	155	449	3	607
Teacher	5	7	0	12

The second group of respondents surveyed were teachers. The number of teachers surveyed totaled 12. Of that number, 7 were Native English Speakers (NES) and 5 were Non-Native English Speakers (NNES). NES teachers were from several different countries. Four were from the United States, 1 from Ireland, 1 from England, and two were from New Zealand. Five of the teachers were male and seven were female. Teachers had a variety of teaching experience ranging from less than five years to over 15 years. Additionally, teachers also ranged in age from under 30 years of age to over 50.

3. Instruments and Data Analysis

Data were collected using questionnaires which were distributed to students currently taking Conversation English I and given approximately ten minutes to complete. Student surveys were translated to Korean while teachers were given English questionnaires to ensure they provided the most accurate answers.

The primary data from the questionnaires consisted of two sections. The first ten questions were constructed to determine the attitude towards general importance of cultural content in the English classroom. They were asked to respond based on a scale of 1 through 5. Some of the questions in this section were adapted from Kahraman (2016) while others were created by the researchers of this study. The next part of the questionnaire was concerning specific culture-related topics. It contained items asking students their interests in 20 culture-related topics, ten big "C" and ten little "c". The culture-related topics were gathered from Finocciaro & Bonomo (1973), Moran (2001), and Liu & Laohawiriyanon (2013), and subsequently categorized as big "C" or little "c" topics by the researchers. The final section was free-response, which asked teachers/students to provide any topics that they would be interested to teach/study. The students and teachers were provided a list of culture-related topics and asked to indicate how interesting they found specific topics on a

Likert scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being "Most Interesting". Student and teacher responses were presented as response totals as well as percentages.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. General Attitudes towards Culture in Language Classrooms

The questionnaire data were compiled to determine: (1) which cultures students preferred to study and teachers preferred to teach and (2) the highest ranked cultural topics for both students and teachers. This data also revealed patterns in the similarities and differences between the two groups, which are discussed below. Questions 1-4 address the general importance of cultural content in the English language classroom. Table 2 shows the average student scores to the first four questions.

TABLE 2
Student Preference towards Cultural Topics in Classroom

	Question	M	SD
1	In English class, the topics for the textbook are important.	3.85	.862
2	In English class, the culture-related topics or content are as important as English language knowledge.	3.88	.835
3	In English class, cultural teaching improves English language communication ability	3.92	.845
4	The English conversation textbook needs to include various cultural topics or contents.	3.99	.805

Question 1 addresses the importance of textbook topics in particular. With an average score of 3.85 out of 5, students generally agree as to the importance of textbooks topics in the classroom. 11 out of 12 teachers agreed as well. In question 2, an average score of 3.88 shows that students agree that cultural content is as important as linguistic content. Teachers also agreed, with 10 out of 12 marking 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree'. Students and teachers are also in agreement on question 3, which addresses whether cultural teaching improves English language communication ability. The average score was 3.92 among students, with 11 out of 12 teachers agreeing. Question 4, which connects cultural content to the textbook, follows this trend, with the highest average student score among the first four questions at 3.99. All 12 teachers agreed. This firmly shows the agreement between teachers and students on the necessity of including cultural content in English conversation textbooks.

Utilizing the categories of target, international target, and source cultures established by Cortazzi and Jin (1999), questions 5-7 and 10 sought to establish which cultures in particular students and teachers thought important to include (Table 3).

TABLE 3
Student Preference towards Target, International, or Source Cultures

	Question	M	SD
5	The English conversation textbook needs to include topics or contents on culture of native English-speaking countries such as Canada, USA, Australia, etc.	3.81	.860
6	The English conversation textbook need to include topics or contents on culture of non-native English-speaking countries such as South America, Europe, Middle East, other Asian countries, etc.	3.40	.996
7	The English conversation textbook needs to include topics or contents on students' own culture.	3.28	1.041
10	Teaching about non-native English-speaking cultures in the English language classroom does not improve intercultural competence: it is a waste of time.	2.21	1.032

Question 5 addresses the importance of including content based on the cultures of native English-speaking countries. Students and teachers favored the inclusion of this content, with an average student score of 3.81 and 10 out of 12 teachers in agreement. This suggests that both groups believe native English-speaking cultural content is important to include in an English teaching curriculum. It is difficult to determine whether this attitude is the *reason* why textbooks in South Korean English classrooms are overwhelmingly focused on the target culture or it is a *result* of such tendencies. Question 6 asked whether non-target language cultures should be included in culture-related topics. Student and teacher responses are largely in accordance in questions 1-5, however, the average score for question 6 is slightly lower at 3.40, and 9 out of 12 teachers in agreement. This small drop suggests that students may not feel as strongly for the inclusion of international cultures as they do for the inclusion of target cultures. Question 7 received an even lower average student score of 3.28, with 9 out of 12 professors in agreement. Since this question addresses the necessity of including cultural content on students' own culture (source culture), the data suggests that students prefer the inclusion of native-speaking (target) cultural content first, non-native speaking (international) cultures second, and their own (source) culture third.

Question 10 asked respondents whether they believed including international cultures in the English language classroom was a waste of time in regards to improving intercultural competence. The average student score of 2.21 reflects a general disagreement among students. This is mirrored by 9 out of 12 teachers marking 'Disagree' or 'Strongly

Disagree'. This shows that the two groups do not believe the inclusion of international cultures is a waste of time.

Next, Question 8 and 9 depart from the emphasis on target, international target, and source cultures, and choose instead to focus on students' and teachers' perceptions of how engaging with cultural content could be a factor in classroom motivation (Table4).

TABLE 4
Student Preference towards Culture-Related Topics for Motivation

	Question	M	SD
8	Students are motivated to participate in class by English conversation textbooks that include topics or contents on culture which interest them.	4.02	.787
9	Comparing and contrasting students' culture with other cultures in the English language classroom is interesting to me.	3.80	.892

Question 8 addresses the relationship between cultural content in the textbook and students' motivation. With an average score of 4.02, students believe that the cultural content of textbooks are a significant factor in motivation. Ten out of 12 teachers are in agreement with students on question 8. Question 9, which enquires about the importance of comparing and contrasting students' own culture with other cultures, achieved a slightly lower average student score of 3.80. If considered alongside question 7, which also addresses inclusion of students' own (source) culture, the data suggests that students are more interested in the inclusion of target and international target cultural content rather than source cultural content. 10 out of 12 teachers were in agreement on question 9, which may suggest that teachers value this type of content more than students.

2. Preference for Cultural Topics

The second part of this study concerns the specific culture-related topics that both students and teachers preferred to study. Table 4 shows student preferences for specific culture-related topics.

TABLE 5
Rank of Students' Cultural Topics Preferences

Topic	*Big C*	*Little c*	*Average*	*Rank*
Trends		√	4.09	1
Food		√	4.08	2
Popular Culture		√	4.05	3
Lifestyles		√	3.96	4
Hobbies		√	3.88	5
Media/Arts	√		3.82	6

Pastimes/Sports	√		3.69	7
Social Norms		√	3.63	8
Mythology		√	3.59	9
Values	√		3.57	10
Holidays/Customs		√	3.49	11
Famous People	√		3.42	12
Education	√		3.39	13
Geography	√		3.24	14
Technology		√	3.20	15
History	√		2.96	16
Politics	√		2.71	17
Body Language		√	2.67	18
Science	√		2.57	19
Economy	√		2.54	20

Previously, we saw that students and teachers were generally in accordance with each other regarding their perception towards culture in the language classroom. However, when looking at their specific preferences for topics, we do see less overlap. Generally, both students and teachers preferred little "c" topics. Among students, the top five topics were: "trends", "food", "popular culture", "lifestyles", and "hobbies". "Trends", which included example subtopics such as fashion, pop culture, and entertainment, ranked highest with an average of 4.09. Food, which included local cuisine and eating customs as subtopics, followed closely at 4.08. "Popular culture", "lifestyles", and "hobbies" achieved average scores of 4.05, 3.96, and 3.88, respectively. The subsequent topics fall in value, with the lowest ranked topics, "body language", "science", and "economy" achieving average scores of 2.67, 2.57, and 2.54, respectively. For students, the lowest rated topics were largely big "C" topics, with "technology" and "body language" as exceptions. Table 5 shows teacher preferences for specific cultural topics.

TABLE 6

Rank of Teachers' Cultural Topics Preferences

Topic	*Big C*	*Little c*	*Average*	*Rank*
Lifestyles		√	4.36	1
Social Norms		√	4.36	1
Technology		√	4.27	3
Popular culture		√	4.27	3
Values	√		4.18	5
Trends		√	4.00	6
Media/Arts	√		3.91	7
Education	√		3.82	8
Food		√	3.73	9

Economy	√		3.73	9
Famous people	√		3.64	11
History	√		3.64	11
Holiday/customs		√	3.45	13
Body Language		√	3.45	13
Geography	√		3.36	15
Politics	√		3.18	16
Hobbies		√	3.18	16
Science	√		3.09	18
Pastimes/ sports	√		3.09	18
Mythology		√	3.00	20

The top four little “c” topics were: “lifestyles” (4.36), “social norms” (4.36), “technology” (4.27), and “popular culture” (4.27). Possible subtopics for “lifestyles” included dating, marriage, and alternative lifestyles, while subtopics for “social norms” included acceptable or unacceptable behaviors in certain groups, places, or situations. The lowest ranked topics among teachers were “science” (3.09), “pastimes/sports” (3.09), and “mythology” (3.00).

Based on the data, we can conclude that both students and teachers consider little “c” topics more interesting than big “C” topics. Both “popular culture” and “lifestyles” are among the top five in both groups, with “trends”, which was highest rated among students at 4.09, achieving the sixth highest ranking among teachers at 4.00. There is clearly some overlap between “popular culture” and “trends”, while we might also consider “lifestyles” and “social norms” (which achieved an average of 4.36 among teachers and 3.63 among students) to be similar. There is also some overlap in the lowest ranked topics between the two groups, of which “science” and “politics” are notable.

There are, however, some clear and surprising differences. In particular, “hobbies” ranked high among students (3.88), yet very low among teachers (3.18). “Food” also follows this trend, with an average student ranking of 4.08, yet a teacher ranking of 3.73. This could reflect the frequency with which these topics appear in ELT textbooks (which may account for the low rating among teachers, who may view the topics as overused and uninspiring), and yet their relevance to daily life (which could account for their popularity among students).

Liu & Laohawiriyanon (2013) did a similar study of student preference of big “C” and little “c” topics as well as sources of culture in English classrooms at a university in China. No English teachers were surveyed as a part of their research. They reported that the top five topics were “geography”, “food”, “holidays, “science”, and “history”. Of these five, only two were little “c” (“food” and “holidays”). Looking beyond the top five in their study, students still responded that they preferred big “C” culture-related topics over little

"c" topics. This could be due to the fact that the topics provided were weighted more towards big "C" than little "c", with 10 of 17 being big "C" topics. However, it is impossible to draw definitive conclusions as to whether this influenced findings. Regardless, these results differ from our own findings that students prefer to study little "c" topics over big "C" topics. The aforementioned research also looked at target, international, and source culture preferences. Students were asked to mark: 1) their preferred country to study among a list of eight provided by the researcher, and 2) their preference of source culture for each of the individual culture-related topics. Results showed that students preferred to study their own culture foremost, followed by target culture, and finally international cultures. Again, this differs from our data, which shows that students prefer to study target culture, followed by international cultures and finally their own culture. Also, it is important to note that the research conducted in China asked about target, international, and source cultures separately as well as alongside the individual culture-related topics, whereas this research only asked about importance of and preference for target, international, and source culture-related topics in English language classrooms. As such, it would be informative to examine which source culture Korean students prefer when discussing particular topics.

Respondents were also provided a place to write specific topics that they were interested in. Non-native English teachers replied as follows:

- Interesting islands and their cultures; e.g.: Saipan, Tinian and Rota (Northern Mariana Islands) and Guam.
- Korean islands and their cultures, e.g.: Jeju, Muiido, Oido, Daebudo, Wolmido etc.
- The island of Hawaii and Hawaiian culture
- Differentiation between South American countries (e.g.: Brazil, Chile, Colombia) and Central American countries (e.g.: Panama, Costa Rica) as some students are aware of South America but not of Central America. A look at some or a few of such cultures would be interesting.

Native English teachers replied as follows.

-Traveling
-Working holiday: University students show great interest in overseas working holidays
-In the science section or technology section, it would be better to include Fourth Industrial Revolution

Among students, many suggestions were similar to the topics provided in the questionnaire. Specific topics included "games", "youth culture", "dreams", and "racial

discrimination". These seem to follow the aforementioned observation of students' preference for little "c" content. Although these topics can be loosely aligned with the list of cultural topics, the specificity with which students replied may be indicative of the need for further research as to which exact topics under the umbrella of "lifestyles", for example, that students truly desire to study.

Among teachers, native English speaking teachers suggested the inclusion of non-native English-speaking (international target) cultures such as those in South America and the Northern Mariana Islands, as well as various Korean (source) island cultures. This mirrors what we saw in the first section of the survey where teachers were overwhelmingly in agreeance that international cultures should be included in the English language classroom. Non-native English-speaking teachers suggested "Traveling", "Working holiday", and the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Between the two groups, it is clear that detailed topics within these larger cultural spheres are desired. As mentioned, this may be a fruitful avenue for future research.

V. CONCLUSION

This paper begins to shed light on students' and teachers' perceptions of culture-related topics in English classrooms and textbooks in South Korean universities. After a thorough analysis of the qualitative and quantitative data, it is clear that both teachers and students consider culture to be a critical area of study in English language classrooms. Culture is so deeply embedded in any language that it should be carefully considered when designing English textbooks and other curricula. This is of particular importance as our findings revealed that when studying from textbooks, both teachers and students believe that interesting culture-related topics and content have a significant impact on participation and motivation (see Table 4).

Interestingly, students and teachers agreed on some aspects and differed widely on others. There was a clear preference for little "c" topics for both students and teachers. However, this study also showed that if given a choice, students at E. University prefer to study target cultures over other cultures. This differs from the opinions of the teachers and most existing research on the topic. Furthermore, certain topics were more popular with one group than the other. For example, "food" was rated highly by students but not teachers. Insights such as this could prove to be very useful for future curriculum design.

Additionally, the preferences of the university students and teachers surveyed in this study differed from the prior research conducted by Kim in 1997 on elementary students in South Korea. This could indicate a change in preference based on age or a cultural shift in Korea from 1997 to 2018. It is unclear what caused the preference to shift from big "C"

topics among elementary students in 1997 to little "c" topics among university students in 2018. This could be a result of changing interests as students age. For example, elementary students may not be paying attention to behavioral culture and the different lifestyles around the world, while university students may find this interesting.

Moreover, university students have likely been exposed to big "C" topics throughout their schooling leading up to university while little "c" topics are less common. Some big "C" topics may feel stale for this reason, which could cause university students to prefer little "c" topics. The change in opinion could also stem from the 21-year gap between the two studies. The world was a very different place in 1997, and not nearly as connected as in 2018. This increased exposure to other cultures through modern technology may have sparked a natural curiosity for students of all ages, which could cause students to favor little "c" topics regardless of age. Additional research needs to be conducted on current university and elementary students in order to conclusively state what has caused the shift in preference from big "C" to little "c" topics.

This paper represents student and teacher sentiment regarding culture-related topics in English language classrooms, however, this does not mean that prior research should be disregarded in an attempt to please students. The research and student sentiment should be equally considered when designing lessons and textbooks. As noted by Kim (1997), there needs to be a balance between the topics that students are interested in and important culture-related topics. Additionally, McKay (2000) illustrates the importance of international cultures and the necessity for their inclusion in the language learning classroom. In the context of this research, this means that we should not abandon big "C" topics simply because the students surveyed in this study preferred little "c" topics. Prior research still needs to be considered strongly when designing any language learning textbook.

Furthermore, additional research on international cultures and their respective 'Englishes' (i.e. Korean English, Singaporean English, Indian English, etc.) is necessary as a majority of English-language interactions that learners will participate in will take place within an intercultural context. While the present study focused on perceptions of culture and culture-related topics, research on what topics or themes should be studied with a particular focus on the EIcL context would provide insight as to pragmatic English language education.

Going forward, this paper will ideally guide further textbook design at the university in which it was conducted, and serve as a useful guideline for other universities with similar courses. It should be noted that this study had some limitations hindering the research; primarily the small sample size of the teachers and students from only one university. Ideally, this study would be conducted across a range of universities with more student participants and substantially more teacher participants. It is difficult to make any claims

about preferred topics with the number presented, however, we still believe the results are meaningful and deserve further exploration. Moreover, the study suggests that those involved in course and materials development should take note of culture-related topics that students prefer while still paying careful attention to the research. An example of this in practice might be designing materials that contain all three cultures (i.e. source, target, and international) and a mixture of big "C" and little "c" topics, while, within those guidelines, still selecting topics students prefer. This would maintain an appropriate balance between prior research and student opinions.

REFERENCES

Adaskou, K., Britten, D., & Fahsi, B. (1990). Design decisions on the culture content of a secondary English course for Morocco. *ELT Journal*, *44*(1), 3-10.

American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages [ACTFL]. (1996). *Standards for foreign language learning: Preparing for the 21st century*. Yonkers, NY: National Standards in the Foreign Language Education Project.

Brown, D. H. (2000). *Principles of language learning & teaching*. New York: Longman.

Canagarajah, A. S. (1993) Critical ethnography of a Sri Lankan classroom: Ambiguities in student opposition to reproduction through ESOL. *TESOL Quarterly*, *27*(4), 601-625.

Chastain, K. (1976). *Developing second language skills: Theory to practice.* Chicago: Rand McNally College.

Cortazzi, M., & Jin, L. (1999). Materials and methods in the EFL classroom. In E. Hinkel (Ed.), *Culture in second language teaching and learning* (pp. 196-219). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Finocchiaro, M. B., & Bonomo, M. (1973). *The foreign language learning: A guide for teachers.* New York: Regents Pub. Co.

Hammerly, H. (1982). *Synthesis in second language teaching.* Blain, Washington: Second Language Publications.

Han, Y-J, & Bae, Y-S. (2005). An analysis of the cultural content of high school and college English textbooks. *English Teaching*, *60*(4), 47-70.

Huh, S. (2013). Cultural analysis of middle school English textbooks. *The Mirae English Language and Literature Association Proceedings*, 164-171.

Hymes, D. (1972). *Foundations in sociolinguistics: An ethnographic approach.* Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Im, H-S. (2018). Perceptions of world English: Different attitudes from inner and expanding circles. *English Language and Literature Teaching*, *24*(1), 35-56.

Kahraman, A. (2016). Teachers' and learners' attitudes towards culture and culture learning in a Turkish context. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies, 12*(2), 1-12.

Kim, E-U. (1997). The social and cultural topics in elementary school English textbooks. *Korean Journal of Applied Linguistics, 13*(1), 145-162.

Kim, Y-S. (2006). Secondary Korean ESL students' perception on culture learning and cross-cultural adjustments. *English Teaching, 61*(4), 109-131.

Kramsch, C. (1998). *Language and culture*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.

Lafayette, R. C. (1988). Integrating the teaching of culture into the foreign language classroom. In A. J. Singerman & R. C. Williamson (Eds.), *Toward a new integration of language and culture* (pp. 47-63), The Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, Inc.

Liu, S. & Laohawiriyanon, C. (2013). Student's attitude towards culture learning in the English classroom: A case study of non-English major students in a Chinese university. *International Journal of English Language Education, 1*(3), 28-42.

Lee, K-Y. (2008). Factors affecting success in contemporary L2/FL culture acquisition and guidelines involved in the factors. *English Teaching, 63*(3), 135-157.

Lee, K-Y. (2009). Treating culture: What 11 high school EFL conversation textbooks in South Korea do. *English Teaching: Practice and Critique. 8*(1), 76-96.

Levine, D. R., Baxter, J., & McNulty, P. (1987). *The culture puzzle*. Englewood Cliffs.

Mckay, S. D. (2000). *Teaching English as an international language: Implications for cultural materials in the classroom.* New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.

Moran, P. (2001). Language-and-culture. In teaching culture: *Perspectives in practice* (pp. 34-47). Boston, MA: Heinle & Heinle.

Nelson, G. (1994). Consider culture: Guidelines for ESL/EFL textbook writers. In P. Byrd (Ed.), *Material writer's guide* (pp. 23-42). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Peterson, B. (2004). *Cultural intelligence: A guide to working with people from other cultures.* Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press.

Spradley, J. P. (1980). *Participant observation.* Chicago: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Tomalin, B., & Stempleski, S. (1993). *Cultural awareness.* Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.

Valette, R. M. (1986). The culture test. In J.M. Valdes (Ed.), *Culture bound: Bridging the cultural gap in language teaching* (pp. 179-197). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wintergerst, A . C., & McVeigh, J. (2010). *Tips for teaching culture: A practical approach to intercultural communication.* White Plains, NY: Pearson Longman.

APPENDIX

Questionnaire

I. Please mark √ in the appropriate position which best describes the extent which you agree or disagree with the statement.

1: Strongly Disagree 2: Disagree 3: Neutral 4: Agree 5: Strongly Agree

1. In English class, the topics for the textbook are important.
2. In English class, the culture topics or content are as important as English language knowledge (i.e. grammar, reading, writing, speaking, listening, etc.).
3. In English class, cultural teaching improves English language communication ability. 4. The English conversation textbook needs to include various cultural topics or contents. 5. The English conversation textbook needs to include topics or contents on culture of native English speaking countries such as Canada, USA, Australia, New Zealand, etc.
6. The English conversation textbook needs to include topics or contents on culture of non-native English speaking countries such as South America, Europe, Middle East, other Asian countries, etc.
7. The English conversation textbook needs to include topics or contents on students' own (Korean) culture.
8. Students are motivated to participate in class by English conversation textbooks that include topics or contents on culture which interest them.
9. Comparing and contrasting students' culture with other cultures in the English language classroom is interesting to me.
10. Teaching about non-native English speaking cultures in the English language classroom does not improve intercultural competence; it is a waste of time.

II. Please mark your level of interest in each topic for an English conversation textbook.

1: Strongly un-interest 2: Un-interesting 3: Neutral 4: Interesting 5: Very interesting

1. Popular Culture (Current events, trends, media, etc.)
2. Geography (Cities, Landmarks, Landscape, Weather)
3. Science (Discoveries, Scientists)
4. History (Conflicts, Development, Social Movements)
5. Economy (imports/exports, business, management, jobs)
6. Social Norms(acceptable behaviors in certain groups, public places, special situations)
7. Mythology (Ghost stories, Heroic Figures)
8. Pastimes/Sports (Traditional games/activities, Olympic sports, famous athletes)
9. Education (school system, university life)
10. Media/Arts (Famous paintings, stories, music, movies)
11. Politics (Type of government & Leader, Human rights)

12. Food (Eating customs, local cuisine)
13. Technology (internet, social media)
14. Trends (fashion, pop culture, entertainment)
15. Lifestyles (Dating, Marriage, Alternative)
16. Lifestyles (Dating, Marriage, Alternative)
17. Holidays / Customs (origins, traditions, festivals, relationship to ancestors)
18. Values (view of life, success, happiness)
19. Body Language (rude gestures, kind gestures)
20. Hobbies (Common/uncommon, indoor/outdoor)

Examples in: English
Applicable Language: English
Applicable Level: Tertiary

Erika Choe
Faculty of Liberal Arts
Eulji University
Sanseongdae-ro 553, Seongnam-si
Gyeonggi-do, 13135, Korea
E-mail: erikachoe1@gmail.com

Chase Karcher
Faculty of Liberal Arts
Sanseongdae-ro 553, Seongnam-si
Gyeonggi-do, 13135, Korea
E-mail: chasekarcher@yahoo.com

Daniel Cuffey
Faculty of Liberal Arts
Sanseongdae-ro 553, Seongnam-si
Gyeonggi-do, 13135, Korea
E-mail: Daniel.cuffey@gmail.com

Myeong-Hee Seong
Faculty of Liberal Arts
Sanseongdae-ro 553, Seongnam-si

Gyeonggi-do, 13135, Korea
E-mail: seong@eulji.ac.kr

Received in October 16th, 2018
Reviewed in November 27th, 2018
Revised version received in December 5th, 2018