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指導教授：余明忠博士

Advisor : Dr. Ming-chung Yu

進口美語教科書文化內涵分析及探討

A Cultural Content Evaluation on a Series of Imported English

Textbooks



研究生：于鈴玉撰

Name : Ling-yu Yu

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國立政治大學英國語文學系碩士在職專班碩士論文提要

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指導教授：余明忠

研究生：于鈴玉

論文提要內容：

根據十二年國民基本教育課程綱要，學生的文化理解能力是英語教學應培養的要素之一，而許多英語教學都是以教科書為主要課程。既有文獻大多探討在地出版社所出版的教材，但對國外出版社之教材其研究則相對缺乏。本文探討補習班所使用的進口兒美教材。本研究旨在分析補習班兒美教材 *Let's Go* 其文化內容的分布。採內容分析法進行資料分析，評量之依據為趙子嘉(2011)的文化種類及十二年國民基本教育課程綱要(2014)。

本研究結果顯示：在文化種類部分，無特定文化占比 84.83% 為最多。跨文化占比 0.49% 為最少。在課綱部分，關於文化理解的學習表現能力培養，*Let's Go* 1-3 冊比例最高的是「國內外基本的招呼方式」；*Let's Go* 4-6 冊中最高的是「能了解外國風土名情」。值得注意的是，一到六冊中完全沒有包含課綱所提及的「國內外主要節慶習俗」。

本研究建議編者應該納人民俗慶典相關被忽略的文化元素在新編教科書中，並且採用更多真實案例。期盼藉此鼓勵教師更加注重文化方面的教學。培育具備文化涵養的語言使用者應該成為語言教學的一項具體目標。

關鍵字：文化、英文教科書、進口美語教科書、兒美教科書

ABSTRACT

According to Taiwan's 12-Year Basic Education curriculum guidelines, (1) teachers should foster cultural understanding in their English teaching and (2) textbooks should form the basis of many English programs. Although locally published textbooks have been extensively investigated, imported textbooks have remained relatively unexplored. In This study, the imported textbooks used in English cram schools in Taiwan were evaluated. The study investigated the distributions of content related to cultural understanding in the six volumes of *Let's Go*. Content analysis was conducted using two coding schemes: Chao's (2011) *Main Categories of Culture* and the Taiwan Ministry of Education's (2014) *General Curriculum Guidelines of 12-Year Basic Education*.

The results revealed that the universality across culture (UC) content was predominant in the target textbooks, accounting for 84.83% of the content coded as related to cultural understanding. Only 0.49% of the content in the textbooks was coded as pertaining to intercultural interaction (ICI), the smallest proportion of all the categories. In terms of the cultural competence indicators, the ability to understand basic local and foreign greetings was the main focus in Volumes 1–3. In Volumes 4–6, content related to understanding foreign customs and traditions displaced greetings as the most common content. Notably, the six volumes contained no cultural content related to local or foreign festivals and customs.

The findings of this study suggest that the editors of foreign-published textbooks such as *Let's Go* should include previously neglected discussions of customs and festivals in new textbooks and favor authentic content. Additionally, they should

endeavor to motivate teachers to place greater emphasis on teaching cross-cultural understanding. Cultivating culturally literate language users should be an objective of language teaching.

Keywords: culture, imported English textbooks

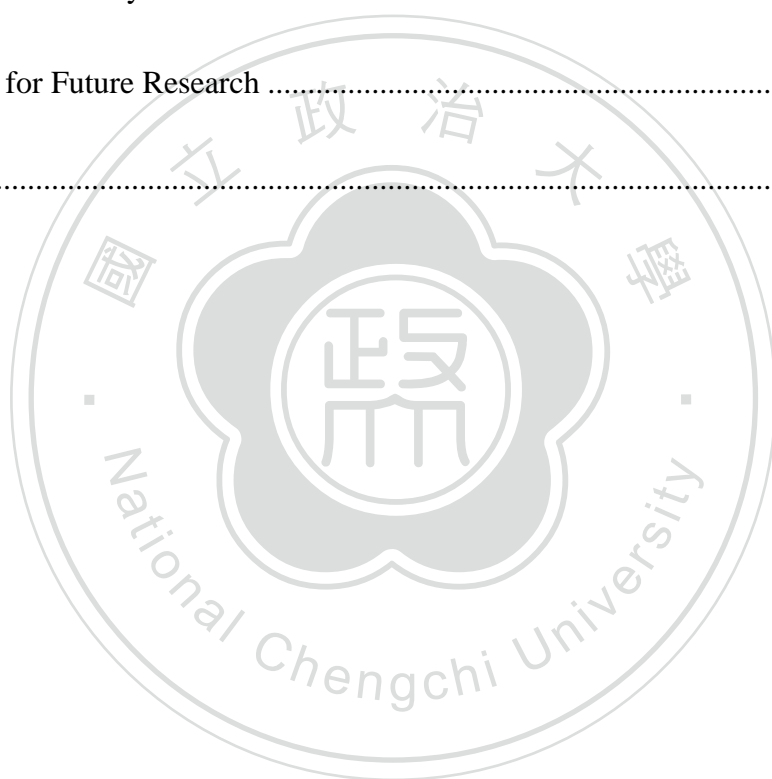


TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
CHINESE ABSTRACT	v
ABSTRACT	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS	viii
LISTS OF TABLES	xi
LISTS OF FIGURES	xiii
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION	1
Background and Motivation	1
Purpose of the study	2
CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW	5
Culture and Language	5
Culture in Language Teaching	6
Role of Textbooks in a Language Program	8
Textbook Evaluation	9
Models for Evaluating Cultural Content of Textbooks	11
Kachru's Model	11

The Model of Big C and Little C Cultures	11
Cortazzi and Jin’s Model	12
Chao’s Model	12
Related Studies on EFL Textbook Evaluation	13
English Curriculum Guidelines in Taiwan	16
CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHOD	19
Textbooks Under Investigation	20
Procedure	24
Data Analysis	26
Content Analysis	26
Coding Schemes	27
CHAPTER 4 RESULTS	31
English Curriculum Guidelines Presented in <i>Let’s Go</i> Volumes 1–6	51
CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION	59
Discussion of Research Results	59
Cultural Categories in the Target Textbooks	59
Cultural Competence Indicators in English Textbooks	62
Discussion of Possible Factors Contributing to Research Results	63
Students’ Competencies	64

The Education System	64
Background of Compilers and Target Textbooks.....	65
Difficulties in the Teaching of Culture in an EFL classroom	65
CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSION	67
Implications.....	68
Limitation of the Study	72
Suggestions for Future Research	72
REFERENCES	74



LISTS OF TABLES

Table 2.1 Main Categories of Cultural Content.....	13
Table 3.1 Example Unit in Volume 1	21
Table 3.2 Example Review in Volume 5	23
Table 3.3 The Interrater Reliabilities of the evaluation with the framework of Chao (2011) and the English Curriculum Guidelines (2018)	26
Table 3.4 Cultural Competencies for Elementary School Students According to Grade 1–12 English Curriculum Guidelines	29
Table 4.1 Occurrence of Cultural Content Categories in the Six Textbook Volumes	31
Table 4.2 Proportions of Cultural Content Categories in the Six Textbook Volumes	32
Table 4.3 Occurrence of Cultural Content Categories in Each Textbook Volume ..	33
Table 4.4 Occurrence of Cultural Competence Indicators in Let’s Go, Volumes 1–3	52
Table 4.5 Occurrence of Cultural Competence Indicators in Let’s Go, Volumes 4–6	53
Table 4.6 Percentages of Cultural Competence Indicators in Let’s Go, Volumes 1–3	53

Table 4.7 Percentages of Cultural Categories in Let's Go, Volumes 1–3.....54

Table 4.8 Percentages of Cultural Competence Indicators in Let's Go, Volumes 4–6

.....54

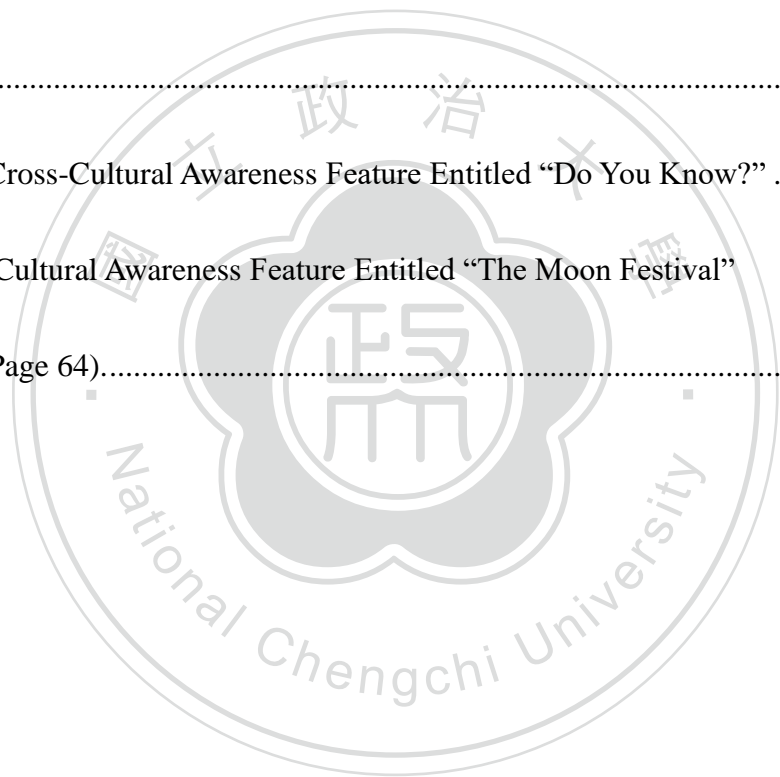
Table 4.9 Percentages of Cultural Categories in Let's Go, Volumes 4–6.....55



LISTS OF FIGURES

Figure 3.1 Research Process Flowchart.....	20
Figure 4.1 Percentages of Source Culture in the Six Volumes	34
Figure 4.2. Reading Text on Page 21, Units 1 and 2 (Review), Volume 5.....	35
Figure 4.3. Speaking Practice on Page 45, Unit 5, Volume 6.....	36
Figure 4.4. Writing Practice on Page 39, Units 3 and 4 (Review), Volume 3	36
Figure 4.5 Percentages of Target Culture in the Six Volumes	37
Figure 4.6. Listening Task on Page 48, Unit 6, Volume 2.....	38
Figure 4.7. Reading Text on Page 75, Units 7 and 8 (Review), Volume 5.....	39
Figure 4.8. Speaking Practice on Page 51, Unit 6, Volume 6.....	40
Figure 4.9 Percentages of International Culture in the Six Volumes.....	40
Figure 4.10. Listening Task on Page 7, Unit 1, Volume 6.....	42
Figure 4.11. Reading Task on Page 11, Unit 1, Volume 4.....	43
Figure 4.12. Writing Exercise on Page 39, Units 3 and 4 (Review), Volume 4.	44
Figure 4.13. Speaking Practice on Page 39, Units 3 and 4 (Review), Volume 6. ...	45
Figure 4.14. Proportions of Intercultural Interaction Content in the Six Textbook Volumes.	46
Figure 4.15. Writing Practice on Page 75, Units 7 and 8 (Review), Volume 4.	47
Figure 4.16. Speaking Practice on Page 57, Units 5 and 6 (Review), Volume 5. ...	48

Figure 4.17. Speaking Practice on Page 21, Units 1 and 2 (Review), Volume 6. ...	49
Figure 4.18 Percentages of Universality across Culture in the Six Volumes	50
Figure 4.20 Percentages of 8-2-1 in Let's Go, Volumes 1–3	56
Figure 4.21 Percentages of 8-3-1 in Let's Go, Volumes 4–6.....	56
Figure 4.22 Percentages of 8-3-4 in Let's Go, Volumes 4–6.....	57
Figure 6.1. A Cross-Cultural Awareness Feature Entitled “Families Are Different.”	
.....	69
Figure 6.2 A Cross-Cultural Awareness Feature Entitled “Do You Know?”	70
Figure 6.3. A Cultural Awareness Feature Entitled “The Moon Festival”	
(Page 64).....	71



CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background and Motivation

As a result of globalization, English has become the most widely spoken language by nonnative speakers communicating with people from different cultures (Kirkpatrick, 2006). The learning of a new language is incomplete if it does not include an understanding of the cultural background of the speakers of that language (Choudhury, 2014); such an oversight may cause communication breakdown between people (Storti, 2001). Thus, culture teaching is a crucial component of language learning, and textbooks can be instrumental (Matsuda, 2012) in providing “the tangible element” (Dubin & Olstain, 1986, p. 167) for culture teaching, and they can be regarded as the main source of cultural knowledge (Chao, 2011). Therefore, evaluating textbooks on the basis of cultural content is of considerable importance to language learning and should be emphasized.

Numerous scholars have highlighted the importance of textbooks and investigated the impact of the cultural content in textbooks. Alpetkin (1993) indicated that English as a foreign language (EFL) learners’ culture-specific cognition may be distorted by the use of internationally published textbooks that mainly include target language culture elements (British or American cultures). McKay (2003) argued that in the EFL context, the cultural content of materials should represent not only the target culture (TC) but also world cultures. McKay and Bokhorst-Heng (2008) subsequently suggested that students are likely to be more motivated when learning English through the context of

their own country and culture.

Yao (2016) affirmed that “a student’s multicultural literacy is as important as reading literacy and writing literacy” (p. 61). The use of textbook is one training strategy to equip students with such knowledge. Yao (2016) contended that textbooks are the most critical curricular resource for elementary and middle school students, and that a lack of multicultural content in textbooks may cause students to fail to develop sufficient multicultural awareness.

According to the latest edition of the Grade 1–12 Curriculum Guidelines released by the Ministry of Education (MOE, 2014) in Taiwan, English education is implemented starting in the third grade. Culture learning in English focuses on understanding relevant culture and social customs. Textbooks are indispensable for teaching and learning cultural content (Matsuda, 2012) and provide a wide range of learning resources (Richards, 2001).

Purpose of the study

In Taiwan, cram schools may select their own English textbooks, and textbooks published by acclaimed publishers such as Oxford, Cambridge, and Macmillan are not required to comply with the English curriculum guidelines of Taiwan. However, in Taiwan, most English textbook studies related to cultural content have emphasized locally published textbooks at the elementary and high school levels (Chang, 2009; Chen, 2007; Hsu, 2018). Few international textbooks have been scrutinized in terms of cultural content, even though many teachers at after-school English programs (so-called cram schools) prefer to use them.

The purpose of this study was to investigate cultural content in imported English textbooks in Taiwan from an intercultural perspective.

The aim of the study was to examine the cultural content in the textbook series

entitled *Let's Go*. The research questions of this study were as follows:

1. How are cultural and intercultural topics presented in *Let's Go 1-6*?
2. To what extent do the target textbooks meet the cultural objectives in Taiwan's English Curriculum Guidelines for Elementary School Students?





CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, relevant literature on culture, language teaching, and the evaluation of textbooks is presented. The chapter is divided into five sections. First, trends in culture and language teaching are outlined. Second, the importance of textbooks in language teaching is discussed. Third, models employed for evaluating cultural content in textbooks are detailed. Fourth, the current English Curriculum Guidelines in Taiwan are introduced. Finally, studies related to evaluating the cultural content of textbooks are reviewed.

Culture and Language

English is the world's lingua franca (Canagarajah, 2006), and nonnative speakers using it as an international language outnumber those speaking it natively (Maley, 2009). The relationship between language and culture is complex and changeable (Baker, 2008).

Culture has become a popular topic in the language teaching field. Culture and language have received considerable attention because they are closely related to each other (Brown, 2000; Byram, 1989; Kramsch, 1993). Brown (2000) explained this connection as follows: "A language is a part of a culture, and a culture is a part of a language; the two are intricately interwoven so that one cannot separate the two without losing the significance of either language or culture" (p. 177).

Moran (2001) argued that language and culture are "two sides of the same coin"

(p. 47). Language not only involves linguistic or metalinguistic knowledge but also represents a complex system embedded in a social context (Berns, 1990). Thus, most EFL and English as a second language (ESL) experts agree that “language is culture and culture is language” (Wright, 1996, p. 37). Moreover, Byram (1997) affirmed that when language teaching theory and practice are discussed, language and culture cannot be regarded separately. More specifically, language learning remains incomplete if cultural information is neglected.

Moran (2001) stated, “In the culture, the language is literally everywhere” (p. 35). Moran used the term “language-and-culture” (Byram & Morgan, 1994) to reflect this fusion; he also summarized how language-and-culture appears in the five dimensions of culture, namely products (e.g., tools, food, and clothes), practices (e.g., verbal and nonverbal language, actions and interactions, and taboos), perspectives (e.g., values and beliefs), communities (e.g., race, sex, and religion), and persons (individuals). In sum, according to Kramsch (1998), language expresses and symbolizes cultural reality. Culture and language are intertwined in not only the linguistic but also the social elements of communication (Wegmann et al., 1994). Thus, knowledge of the target language culture is not a choice but an essential requirement for learning that language. Otherwise, the learner may be regarded as a “fluent fool” “who speaks a foreign language well but does not understand the social or philosophical content of that language” (Bennett, 1993, p. 16).

Culture in Language Teaching

Those involved in the fields of ESL and EFL generally agree that learners must have the ability to use English in socially and culturally appropriate manners. During the last two decades, the importance placed on culture teaching in foreign or second language education has grown. Byram (1997) advocated the cultivation of critical

cultural awareness as a central purpose of English language teaching (ELT). Culture teaching has since become an essential part of foreign language instruction (Kramersch, 2003; Thanasoulas, 2001). Thus, learning a new language is incomplete if not accompanied by a familiarity with the associated culture. Cultural literacy is even referred to as a fifth language skill (Kramersch, 1993; Phillips, 2003; Tomalin, 2008; Vernier et al., 2008). Kramersch (1993) defined cultural literacy as an “expandable” fifth skill that is additional to the four basic language skills (i.e., speaking, listening, reading, and writing). If language is regarded as a social practice, then culture should be regarded as the essence of language teaching and cultural awareness ought to be regarded as a tool for improving language proficiency (Kramersch, 1993, p. 8). Vernier et al. (2008) asserted that the teaching of culture as a fifth skill for language learners “enhances students’ overall learning experience” (p. 268). These researchers have suggested that culture is a pivotal part of language learning in addition to the acquisition of the four basic language skills.

The concept of intercultural communicative competence (ICC) in teaching culture developed from recognition of the impact of English as a lingua franca in the EFL classroom (Bocu et al., 2016). Collier (1989) defined ICC as “conduct perceived to be appropriate and effective for both cultural identities being advanced” (p. 296–297). Gudykunst and Nishida (1989) extended Collier’s definition by adding that “communication is intercultural when cultural interpretations emerge in discourse and that intercultural competence is a function of negotiating meanings, rules, and outcomes that are positive” (p. 36). Moreover, Corbett (2003) noted that learners are trained to be “diplomats,” and they explore diverse cultures from a perspective of knowledgeable understanding through the intercultural approach.

However, as globalization increases, English teachers should teach not only the target-language culture but also other cultures, and English learners should be equipped

with cultural and intercultural awareness to facilitate successful communication without breakdowns (Baker, 2011; Nault, 2006).

Role of Textbooks in a Language Program

According to Dubin and Olsain (1986), “the tangible element that gives a language course face validity to many learners and teachers is the textbook” (p. 167). EFL students typically regard textbooks as a fundamental source of input (Bardovi-Harlig, 1996). Language learners are expected to benefit from these well-designed textbooks that help enhance students’ grammatical and communicative abilities. (Sheldon, 1987). As Sheldon (1988) noted, “course books are perceived by many to be the route map of any ELT program” (p. 238). Furthermore, Hutchinson and Torres (1994) indicated “textbooks can provide teachers with a scheme within a curriculum.” According to Cunningsworth (1995, p. 7), textbooks serve as

1. a resource of material for presentation;
2. a source of activities for learner practice and communicative interaction;
3. a reference source for learners on topics such as grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation;
4. a source of stimulation and ideas for classroom activities;
5. a syllabus;
6. a support for less experienced teachers.

Dudley-Evan and St. John (1998) indicated that textbooks provide a source of language, learning support, reference, and motivation and stimulation. According to Matsuda (2012), a student’s perception and view of the target language and even the world can be constructed through teaching materials.

Providing a contrary perspective, Richards (2001) indicated several potential negative effects of textbooks. First, inauthentic language might be presented to

elucidate teaching points. Second, real-world issues, especially controversial topics, might be distorted or avoided to present an idealized view of the world. Third, students' needs and interests might not be addressed because of textbooks being written for global markets. Fourth, using textbooks as the primary source of instruction might deskill the role of teachers. Fifth, the price of commercial textbooks might represent a financial burden for language learners in many countries. Hutchinson and Torres (1994) indicated that "the danger with ready-made textbooks is that they can seem to absolve teachers of responsibility" (p. 315). Uncritically using teaching resources such as textbooks may be easier for teachers than participating in day-to-day pedagogical decisions and identifying the most appropriate teaching content. Teachers may opt to remain in their comfort zone and believe that the textbook editors were adept at selecting suitable content.

Because the use of textbooks in a program has both benefits and limitations, teachers should be provided with supplementary materials or appropriate guidance so that they can use the textbooks appropriately.

Textbook Evaluation

Textbooks play a vital role in most language programs. In Taiwan's after-school programs, students are exposed to English primarily through EFL textbooks. Cortazzi and Jin (1999) argued that "the textbook can be a teacher, a map, a resource, a trainer, an authority, a de-skinner, and an ideology" (p. 199). Hence, textbook evaluation appears necessary for decision makers to determine the suitability of a textbook for an EFL classroom. We should ensure "that careful selection is made, and that the materials selected closely reflect [the needs of the learners and] the aims, methods, and values of the teaching program" (Cunningsworth, 1995, p. 7). Evaluating textbooks is a complicated process. Tomlinson (2003) indicated that evaluation is a process

“measuring the value of a set of learning materials” (p. 15). Evaluators must consider learner and teacher needs and interests as well as other factors when selecting the materials for particular contexts (Bell & Gower, 1998).

Textbook evaluation is generally one of three types: “pre-use,” “in-use,” or “post-use” (Tomlinson, 2003, p. 42). Pre-use evaluation is for predictive purposes to help teachers select the most appropriate textbooks to meet student needs and interests. In-use evaluation involves assessing textbooks that are being used at a given time, including exploring weaknesses or strengths. Finally, post-use evaluation involves a retrospective assessment after textbooks have been used (Mukundan et al., 2011).

Nahrkhalaj (2012, p. 189) suggested that the evaluation of ELT materials provides EFL or ESL teachers with the following crucial knowledge:

- a. It helps teachers understand the limitations of the textbook;
- b. It helps teachers acquire knowledge and skills for selecting the most suitable textbook with reference to the learners’ needs, the purpose of the program, and the teachers’ own abilities;
- c. It advances teachers’ skill in adapting a textbook to students’ needs, in personalizing it to a group of learners, and in adapting it to suit the learners’ interests and competence;
- d. It helps teachers obtain valuable experience and skills in thorough and strict evaluation of the results of using particular ELT materials;
- e. It helps teachers to design their own materials according to different and current materials available;
- f. It helps the users, evaluators, and evaluation designers to articulate their theories and identify their preferences in order to construct their criteria for evaluation;
- g. It enables teachers to use the ELT materials to reskill themselves. Teachers

should focus on using their creative skills and exploring innovative ideas embedded within the framework of the textbook; in this manner, they can avoid being deskilled by the use of textbooks.

Models for Evaluating Cultural Content of Textbooks

Kachru's Model

Kachru (1985) constructed a model of the different users of English worldwide. This model comprises inner, outer, and expanding circles. The inner circle comprises countries where English is spoken as the native language, such as the United Kingdom, the United States, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand. Kachru labeled the inner circle countries as “norm-providing”—the norms of the English language are produced there. The outer circle comprises countries where English is spoken as an official second language or where it serves as a major language for communication for historical reasons; examples include India, Singapore, and Nigeria. Finally, the expanding circle comprises countries where English is spoken as a foreign language or lingua franca, such as China, Russia, South Korea, Japan, and Taiwan.

The Model of Big C and Little C Cultures

The big C and little C model has been used as a coding scheme or a norm in some studies (Bocu & Razi, 2016; Phillips, 2003; Xiao, 2010). Big C is defined as high culture. According to Chastain (1988), big C culture involves the contributions to society by outstanding individuals in fields such as economics, history, politics, literature, arts, science, and geography. The big C category includes recognizing and describing geographical monuments, historical events, major institutions (e.g., administrative, political, religious, or educational), and major artistic monuments (Lafayette, 1997).

Daily routines and aspects of life, including food, holidays, lifestyle, customs, and values, have become known as little c culture (Pulverness, 1995; Tomalin & Stempleski, 1993). Awareness of little c culture involves recognizing and explaining everyday active cultural patterns such as social stratification, marriage, and work as well as acting appropriately in common everyday situations (Lafayette, 1997).

Cortazzi and Jin's Model

Cortazzi and Jin (1999) identified three types of cultural content that can be used in language textbooks: source culture (SC), target culture (TC), and international culture (IC). SC elements in textbooks include materials that draw on the learners' own culture as content. Learner awareness of their own culture can be a major outcome of English language education. TC materials refer to those focusing on inner circle countries (as defined by Kachru,1985). Finally, IC content includes a variety of cultures from outer and expanding circle countries.

Chao's Model

Developed as a reaction to the model of Cortazzi and Jin (1999), Chao (2011) further proposed the main categories of culture, inserting intercultural interaction (ICI) and universality across culture (UC) into Cortazzi and Jin's model. Chao's model thus includes five categories: TC, SC, IC, ICI, and UC. Table 2.1 summarizes these categories. Language teaching material should include various cultural elements, which Chao's model captures effectively with its five categories; hence, this model was adopted in the present study to investigate the diversity of cultural material in the target textbook series.

Table 2.1 *Main Categories of Cultural Content*

Cultural Categories	Explanations
Source Culture (SC)	Content highlighting pan-Chinese culture (e.g., China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong)
Target Culture (TC)	Content on English-speaking countries (e.g., Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States)
International Culture (IC)	Content focusing on cultures worldwide (e.g., content on European Latin American, African, or Asian countries) except for pan-Chinese and English-speaking cultures
Intercultural Interaction (ICI)	Content that helps students compare, reflect on, or become aware of the differences and similarities between the local or source and the target or international culture through activities such as case studies, problem-solving tasks, and role plays; such content helps students develop positive attitudes, knowledge, skills, and awareness for intercultural communication
Universality across Culture (UC)	Content that includes general knowledge or content that is not specific to any particular culture or country; such content is mainly related to linguistic knowledge and practice with no focus on any particular culture

Related Studies on EFL Textbook Evaluation

Han and Bae (2005) used the model of big C and little C to create a cultural checklist that was used to examine the degree to which cultural content was incorporated into Korean high school and college English textbooks; the existence of

any difference in cultural content written by native-speaker writers and Korean ELT writers was also investigated. The results suggested that textbooks writers had difficulty including balanced information on diverse cultural aspects given the few pages in textbooks dedicated to such content. Furthermore, Korean writers exhibited an understanding of the importance of culture, especially the SC, and its inclusion in textbooks; by contrast, native-speaker writers did not address any SC items in textbooks.

Cakir (2010) used content analysis to examine the frequency of culture-specific expressions in English language course books for sixth to eighth grade students in Turkey. The results revealed that inclusion of cultural elements in the textbooks was insufficient and the frequency of culture-specific expressions was limited and did not assist learners in using the target language in authentic situations.

Chao (2011) modified the model of Moran (2001) and contributed to the model of Cortazzi and Jin (1999) by adding two additional categories. He analyzed one popular internationally published ELT textbook: *New American Inside Out* (elementary level, 2008). The results indicated that TC and Perspective (one of the cultural dimensions) play essential roles in the presentation of cultural content.

Bocu and Razi (2016) employed the model of Cortazzi and Jin (1999) and the concept of big C and little C to analyze the English textbook series *Life* in terms of cultural components in Turkey. The results revealed that the greatest proportion of the main activities involved IC content, with SC content accounting for the smallest proportion of main activities. An analysis of the big C and little C cultural themes indicated that the number of activities focusing on these two themes was similar in *Life A1* (beginner), whereas big C cultural content was slightly more common in *Life A2* (elementary).

Syahri and Susanti (2016) used the model of Cortazzi and Jin (1999) to analyze local culture (LC) and target culture (TC) integration in the English textbooks of senior

high schools in Palembang, Indonesia. The results indicated that the target textbooks (nine in total) had an imbalance between the LC and the TC, and only half of the books published included elements that focused on local culture.

In Taiwan, several studies have examined the cultural content in textbooks (Chang, 2009; Chen, 2007; Hsu, 2018; Kuo, 2011).

Chen (2007) investigated the cultural content in six series of junior high EFL textbooks and reported that most of the content was coded as nonculture. British and American cultures and Taiwanese and Chinese cultures received similar emphasis, with other world areas receiving markedly less attention.

Chang (2009) analyzed seven series of elementary school English textbooks, and the English Curriculum Guidelines for Elementary Schools (2008) were employed to examine the 56 target textbooks; of the four cultural competence indicators, Competence Indicator 7-1-3 (i.e., awareness of some international social customs) had the greatest representation in all seven series, whereas Competence Indicator 7-1-2 (i.e., understand expressions related to native festivals and holidays in English) was addressed in the smallest proportion of content.

Kuo (2011) compared the junior high English textbooks used in Taiwan and mainland China. Four series of English textbooks published in Taiwan and two series published in mainland China were analyzed. She found that pan-Chinese culture and English-speaking culture dominated the content of the target textbooks in Taiwan, whereas cross-cultural comparison accounted for the highest proportion of content in both target textbooks in mainland China.

Hsu (2018) employed the model of Chao (2011) and Taiwan's English Curriculum Guidelines for Junior High Schools (2008) and analyzed a series of junior high textbooks. He found that UC predominates in the target textbooks, and the lowest proportion of the cultural content was coded as ICI. The results also indicated an

imbalance between the three cultural objectives of Taiwan's English Curriculum Guidelines in the six volumes; teachers should be aware of this shortcoming.

English Curriculum Guidelines in Taiwan

The latest curriculum guidelines of Taiwan's 12-Year Basic Education program were released by the Ministry of Education (MOE) in 2014 and implemented in 2019; the guidelines emphasize the need for students to be self-directed learners and schools to stimulate students' motivation and passion. Students are guided to expand their knowledge of life and interact with others, society, and nature. Students are regarded as lifelong learners who can understand what they have learned and then integrate and apply that knowledge.

Many international entities, such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the European Union, and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, have highlighted the importance of core competencies (Fan, 2016). Consistent with the approach of such influential bodies, the MOE of Taiwan has reformed the national guidelines to prioritize the development of core competencies (Lin, 2017). Core competencies are the basic concept of Taiwan's 12-Year Basic Education Curriculum. Core competencies in a curriculum encompass knowledge, skills, and attitudes (Peng, 2017). The MOE indicated the following: "Core competency encompasses all information, abilities, and attitudes that a person should possess to equip him or her for daily life and for tackling future challenges" (MOE, 2014).

The Curriculum Guidelines of 12-Year Basic Education regard students as self-directed learners who should develop nine core competencies distributed among three dimensions, namely spontaneity, communicative interaction, and social participation (MOE, 2014). Among the three dimensions, social participation is most related to

culture. The three core competencies included in this dimension are (1) moral praxis and citizenship, (2) interpersonal relationships and teamwork, and (3) cultural and global understanding. At the elementary level, the third core competency involves possessing the ability to understand and care about local and international affairs and recognize and cherish cultural diversity.

The curriculum guidelines for all domains and subjects require adherence to the core competencies outlined in the Curriculum Development Guidelines for 12-Year Basic Education (2014). According to the MOE (2018), the core of the English subject guidelines is learning performance, and it is subdivided into the following nine categories:

1. Listening ability
2. Speaking ability
3. Reading ability
4. Writing ability
5. Ability to employ integrated skills
6. Learning interest and attitude
7. Learning methods and strategies
8. Cultural understanding
9. Logical thinking, judgment, and creativity

Regarding cultural understanding for students in the elementary school stage, four indicators are the focus for developing students' intercultural capability: (1) understanding basic local and foreign greetings, (2) recognizing local festivals and customs in students' own culture that are introduced in class, (3) recognizing foreign festivals and customs that are introduced in class, and (4) understanding foreign customs and traditions. In the present study, these four indicators were employed to analyze whether the cultural content in the target textbooks meets the learning criteria

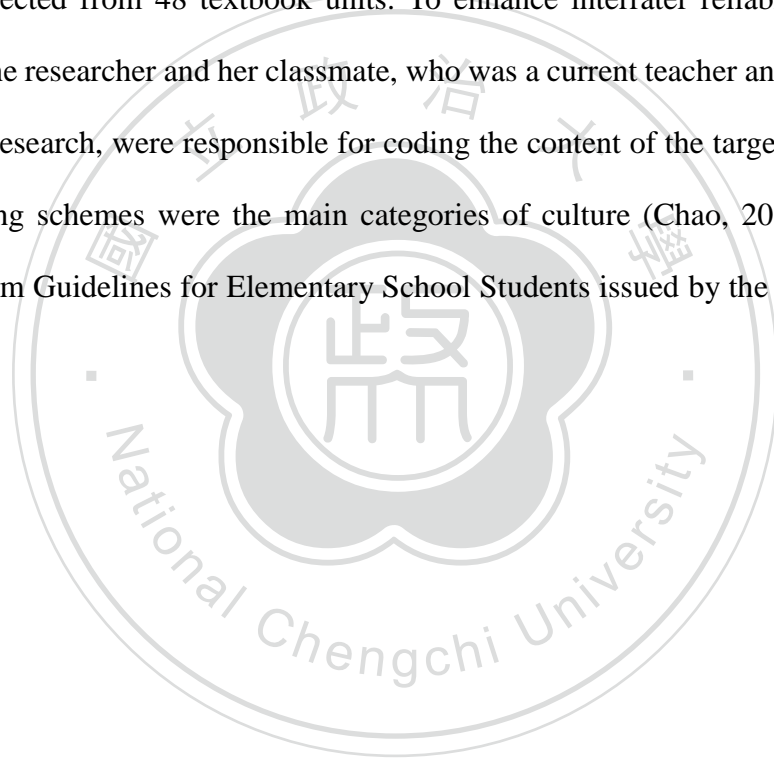
stipulated in Taiwan's English curriculum guidelines. The results of the present study can help teachers using the target textbooks effectively evaluate the teaching materials in accordance with the official MOE recommendations.



CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHOD

In this study, the proportions of various types of cultural content in the six volumes of the fifth edition of the *Let's Go* textbook series were investigated. The data were collected from 48 textbook units. To enhance interrater reliability, two raters, namely the researcher and her classmate, who was a current teacher and had performed relevant research, were responsible for coding the content of the target textbooks. The two coding schemes were the main categories of culture (Chao, 2011) and English Curriculum Guidelines for Elementary School Students issued by the MOE of Taiwan in 2014.



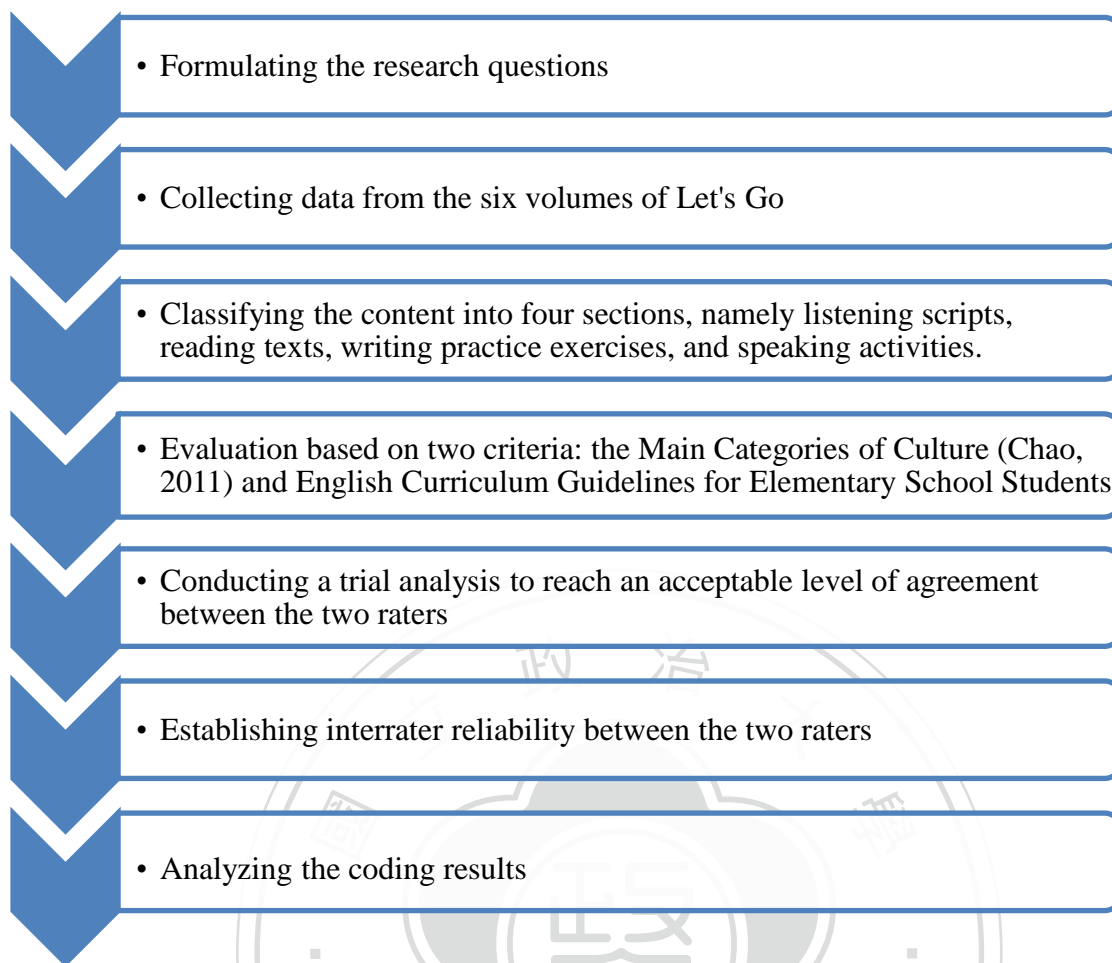


Figure 3.1 Research Process Flowchart

Textbooks Under Investigation

Data were collected from the six volumes of an EFL textbook series entitled *Let's Go* (fifth edition), which was published by Oxford University Press. This series was selected because it was the top-selling English textbook series at Caves Books in Taiwan. The target users were elementary school students who were expected to attain basic English proficiency by learning with *Let's Go* at after-school English programs. The researcher employed content analysis to investigate the distribution of cultural categories and whether the cultural content of these textbooks meets the requirements of the Grade 1–12 Curriculum Guidelines for Elementary School Students in Taiwan.

To analyze the types of cultural content in the target textbooks for Grade 3–6

students, the content was divided into the following four categories: listening transcripts, reading texts, writing practice exercises, and speaking activities. The four items are related to the four language skills.


Each of the units typically includes eight main parts, namely Listen and Say, Listen and Sing, Theme Words, Ask and Answer, Make Sentences, Play a Game, Phonics and Listen, and Read Along. Each part of the textbooks was categorized into one of these sections according to the emphasized English skill.

An example of the four sections in Unit 2, Volume 1 of *Let's Go* is provided in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 Example Unit in Volume 1

Sections	Unit One: Things for School
Listening	<p>A Listen and say. 1.23</p> <p>Hi, Andy. How are you?</p> <p>I'm fine. How are you?</p> <p>I'm fine. Thank you.</p> <p>How are you? I'm fine. Thank you.</p>

Speaking


B Ask and answer.  1.26



What color is this?
It's orange.

14 Unit 2 Colors and Shapes

Reading

C Listen and read along.  1.38

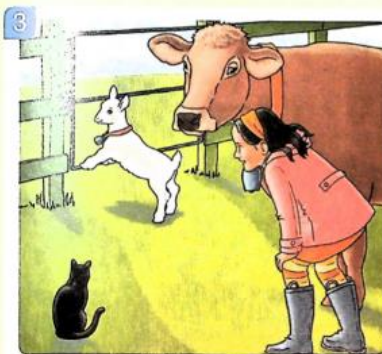
Good Friends!



Come on, black cat.



Open the gate, brown cow.
Thank you.

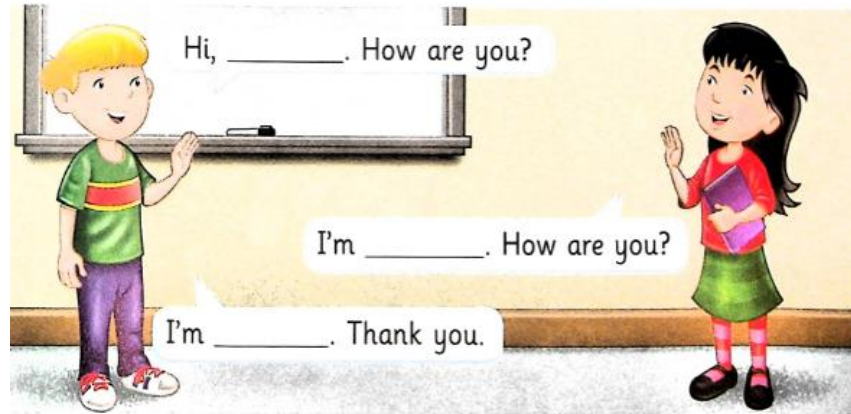


Close the gate. Good goat!



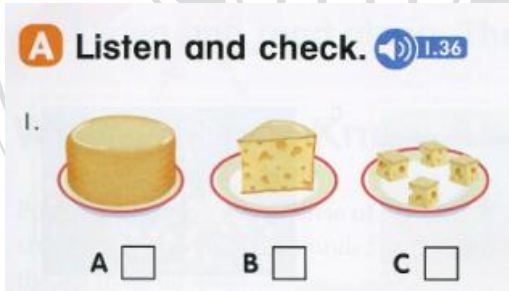
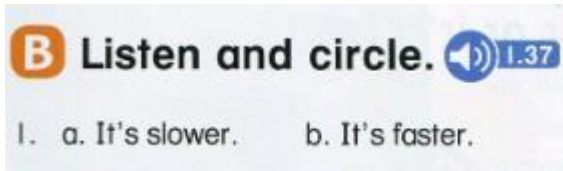
This is a coat. It's pink.


Writing






The target textbooks typically include a review after every two units (i.e., four in total). Table 3.2 presents an example of the four sections in Review One, Book Five.

Table 3.2 Example Review in Volume 5

Sections	Review
Listening	<p>Listen and check.</p>  <p>Script:</p> <p>A: How much cheese is there? B: There is little cheese.</p>  <p>Script:</p> <p>A: Is a squirrel as fast as a polar bear? B: No, it isn't. It's slower.</p>

C Listen and check.  1.38

1.   

A B C

Script:

A: Which one is the most colorful? B: The bird is the most colorful.

Speaking What About You?

- How many pets do you have?
- Do you like to watch baby animals?
- What do they do? Are they funny?

Reading

D Let's read about a panda kindergarten.  1.39

We're in China! **John and Lisa's Travel Blog** 

Ni Hao from Panda Kindergarten, China! *ni hao = hello*

 This week, we're volunteering at a panda kindergarten. Every morning, we clean the pandas' rooms, and then we feed them. They eat a lot of bamboo every day! Pandas also like carrots and apples. We didn't know that.

 Newborn pandas are very small. They are about as light as a stick of butter. But they grow quickly.

We like watching the pandas. They really like to play. Baby pandas like to tumble, climb, and chase. They are very funny.

Writing Write about a baby animal.

Procedure

The procedures of this study were as follows: First, the content of the target textbooks was classified into four types, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing content. Subsequently, the main categories of culture (Chao, 2011) were used

as the coding scheme to answer the first research question. The Grade 1–12 Curriculum Guidelines were employed to answer the second research question.

To enhance the interrater reliability, the data were coded by two individuals. Interrater reliability was calculated by summing the content that received the same code from the two raters and dividing this number by the total number of cases. Interrater reliability is typically determined by considering the percentage of agreement. Reliability is calculated using Cohen's kappa coefficient (1960); if the value approaches 1, the coding is perfectly reliable, whereas 0 indicates no agreement other than what would be expected by chance. Kappa scores between 0.81 and 1 are acceptable.

A trial analysis was conducted to ensure an acceptable level of interrater agreement was reached. The first chapters in Volumes 1 and 6 were selected for the trial analysis. The interrater reliability in both the trial analysis of Chao's model and the Ministry of Education's English curriculum guidelines was 1; hence, formal coding could be performed individually by the two raters.

The interrater reliabilities of the two taxonomies employed in this study are summarized in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3 The Interrater Reliabilities of the evaluation with the framework of Chao (2011) and the English Curriculum Guidelines (2018)

Interrater reliability	Chao's taxonomy	English Curriculum Guidelines
<i>Let's Go 1</i>	1	1
<i>Let's Go 2</i>	1	0.93
<i>Let's Go 3</i>	1	0.84
<i>Let's Go 4</i>	0.88	0.86
<i>Let's Go 5</i>	1	0.84
<i>Let's Go 6</i>	0.84	0.81

First, the interrater reliability of the examination using the taxonomy of Chao (2011) for *Let's Go* Volumes 1 to 6 was 1, 1, 1, 0.88, 1, and 0.84, respectively. Second, the interrater reliability of the investigation using the criteria of the English Curriculum Guidelines (2018) for the same six volumes was 1, 0.93, 0.84, 0.86, 0.84, and 0.81, respectively.

The interrater reliabilities of the examination with the taxonomy of Chao (2011) and the English Curriculum Guidelines (2014) were all within the acceptable range, indicating that the reliability of the content analysis in this study was acceptable.

Data Analysis

Content Analysis

Content analysis is a research tool that is widely used to examine written texts for the inclusion of specific words and concepts and assessing the relationship between them (Wallen & Fraenkel, 2001). Holsti (1969) defined content analysis as “any technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified

characteristics of messages” (p. 14). Content analysis can help researchers to analyze and quantify content such as words, pictures, audio, video, or ideas. This approach enables researchers to make assumptions regarding the information within the texts.

To analyze the cultural dimension presented in the target textbooks, the researcher scrutinized the textbooks and extracted all culture-related data for the content analysis. The current researcher employed the scheme of Chao (2011) and the Grade 1–12 Curriculum Guidelines for Elementary School Students (2014) to conduct content analysis on the *Let's Go* series of English textbooks for students in Grade 3–6. The content consists of words, themes, and any information that is used for communication.

Coding Schemes

In this study, the researcher coded the data on the basis of the main categories of culture (Chao, 2011) and the English Curriculum Guidelines for Elementary School Students (2014).

The researcher used the coding scheme of Chao (2011) to determine the distribution of cultural and intercultural content in the target textbooks; the contents of the target textbooks were also compared with the Grade 1–12 Curriculum Guidelines for Elementary School Students (2014) to evaluate to what extent these textbooks conform to the cultural objectives outlined in the guidelines.

Main Categories of Culture

To determine the distribution of the main categories of culture, the main content in the target textbooks was analyzed and sorted into the five categories of cultural content devised by Chao (2011), namely SC, TC, IC, ICI, and UC (Table 2.1). Content that did not focus on any specific culture was coded as UC, and content concentrated on pan-Chinese culture was coded as SC.

Content that focused on cultures in English-speaking countries (Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States) was coded as TC.

The topic of a girl named Shelly from New Zealand (p. 39, Volume 3) is an example of TC content. Content connected to cultures worldwide (e.g., content focusing on European, Latin American, African, or Asian countries), except for pan-Chinese and English-speaking cultures, was coded as IC; an example is the section of Astrid from Denmark, which is introduced on page 65 (Volume 4). Finally, content designed to help students compare or reflect on the differences or similarities between local and target or international cultures was coded as ICI. The cultural content pertaining Mount Everest (Volume 5, page 57) is an example of ICI content. This page presents a visit to a Nepali village near Mount Everest and introduces curry as the main cuisine of Nepal. Students are asked to consider whether they would eat curry for dinner or what else they might eat for dinner; through such questions, students can learn more about cultural differences.

English Curriculum Guidelines

According to the Grade 1–12 Curriculum Guidelines issued by the MOE in 2014, elementary students start learning English from Grade 3. The target competence in the English curriculum focuses not only on language skills but also on cultural competence. Students are expected to appreciate and respect different cultures and develop a global perspective.

The Grade 1–12 English Curriculum Guidelines include four stages (Stage 2 to 5). Stage 2 refers to the third and fourth grades in elementary school, and Stage 3 represents the fifth and sixth grades in elementary school.

The main content in the target textbooks was analyzed to examine to what extent it conforms to the cultural objectives in the English Curriculum Guidelines. For

example, the content in *Let's Go 1* entitled “The Hello Song” (p. 5) was coded as Competence Indicator 8-2-1 in Stage 2 (Table 3.4). The content of a boy named Tony living in the United States is another example; it was coded as TC.

Table 3.4 Cultural Competencies for Elementary School Students According to Grade 1–12 English Curriculum Guidelines

Stages	Indicators of Stage Competence	
Stage 2	8-2-1	Understand basic local and foreign greetings
	8-2-2	Recognize the local festivals and customs in students' own culture introduced in class
	8-2-3	Recognize the foreign festivals and customs introduced in class
Stage 3	8-3-1	Understand basic local and foreign greetings
	8-3-2	Recognize the local festivals and customs in students' own culture introduced in class
	8-3-3	Recognize the foreign festivals and customs introduced in class
	8-3-4	Understand foreign customs and tradition



CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

In this chapter, the results of the study are presented in light of the two research questions posed in Chapter 1. The results of the distribution of the cultural and intercultural issues in this study based on the taxonomy of Chao (2011) as well as the extent to which the cultural competence indicators in the Curriculum Guidelines (2014) are represented in the textbooks are reported.

Table 4.1 Occurrence of Cultural Content Categories in the Six Textbook Volumes

Sections	SC	TC	IC	ICI	UC
Reading	1	14	27	0	129
Listening	0	2	9	1	144
Speaking	4	9	14	1	205
Writing	4	0	6	1	42
Total	9	25	56	3	520

Table 4.2 Proportions of Cultural Content Categories in the Six Textbook Volumes

Sections	SC	TC	IC	ICI	UC
Reading	0.58%	8.19%	15.79%	0.00%	75.44%
Listening	0.00%	1.28%	5.77%	0.64%	92.31%
Speaking	1.72%	3.86%	6.01%	0.43%	87.98%
Writing	7.55%	0.00%	11.32%	1.89%	79.25%
Total	1.31%	4.08%	9.14%	0.49%	84.83%

As detailed in Table 4.1 and Table 4.2, content related to UC represented the most prevalent category (84.83%) in the six volumes, whereas ICI content accounted for the smallest percentage (0.65%). In addition, SC content only accounted for 1.31%, and no listening scripts were coded as SC. IC content (9.14%) was also more prevalent than TC content (4.08%).

After obtaining an overview of the distribution of cultural content in the target textbooks, the five cultural categories were further applied to examine the cultural content in each volume.

Table 4.3 Occurrence of Cultural Content Categories in Each Textbook Volume

	SC	TC	IC	ICI	UC
Let's Go 1					
reading	0	0	0	0	32
listening	0	0	0	0	29
speaking	0	0	0	0	38
writing	0	0	0	0	8
Let's Go 2					
reading	0	1	0	0	31
listening	0	2	0	0	28
speaking	0	3	0	0	37
writing	0	0	0	0	8
Let's Go 3					
reading	0	5	2	0	30
listening	0	0	0	0	22
speaking	2	0	0	0	36
writing	4	0	0	0	1
Let's Go 4					
reading	0	2	9	0	13
listening	0	0	0	0	25
speaking	0	0	3	0	35
writing	0	0	6	1	5
Let's Go 5					
reading	1	3	4	0	14
listening	0	0	1	0	23
speaking	0	1	4	1	33
writing	0	0	0	0	12
Let's Go 6					
reading	0	3	12	0	9
listening	0	0	8	0	17
speaking	2	5	7	1	26
writing	0	0	0	0	8

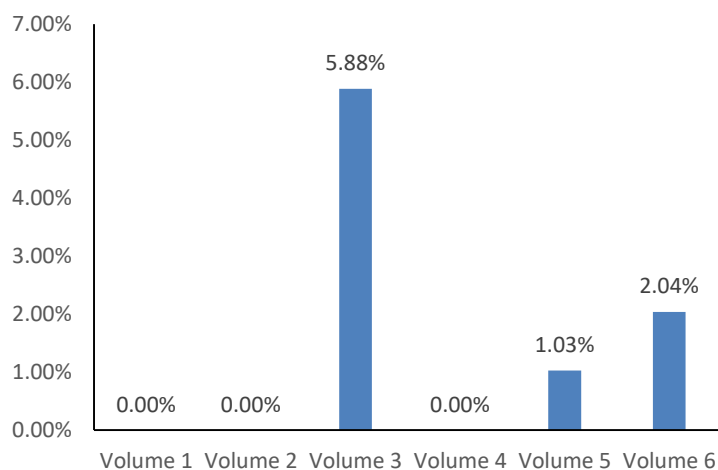


Figure 4.1 Percentages of Source Culture in the Six Volumes

Figure 4.1 illustrates the percentages of SC in the six volumes. Volumes 1, 2, and 4 did not contain any SC content, and Volume 3 had the highest percentage of SC content (5.88%), followed by Volumes 6 (2.04%) and 5 (1.03%). The content related to SC in Volume 3 focused on a simple self-introduction. In terms of speaking, students were asked to say where they live, and in terms of writing practice, students were instructed to write down their personal information or plan their summer vacation. These activities are extremely simple and do not require students to think about or discuss specific topics, such as local festivals or customs. The SC content in Volume 5 was a reading text related to a panda kindergarten in China. In the SC content in Volume 6, students were asked questions related to the picture writing task, and this was the only question that created an opportunity for discussion of SC in *Let's Go* 1–6.

To further clarify how SC content is presented in the target textbooks, related cultural content (in terms of reading, speaking, and writing materials) is presented in the following sections. None of the listening scripts were coded as SC; thus, no relevant cultural content is presented here.

D Let's read about a panda kindergarten. 1.39

We're in China! **John and Lisa's Travel Blog** China



Ni Hao from Panda Kindergarten, China! ni hao = hello

This week, we're volunteering at a panda kindergarten. Every morning, we clean the pandas' rooms, and then we feed them. They eat a lot of bamboo every day! Pandas also like carrots and apples. We didn't know that.



Newborn pandas are very small. They are about as light as a stick of butter. But they grow quickly.

We like watching the pandas. They really like to play. Baby pandas like to tumble, climb, and chase. They are very funny.



What About You?

- How many pets do you have?
- Do you like to watch baby animals? What do they do? Are they funny?

New Words

kindergarten
bamboo
carrots
newborn
stick of butter
tumble

E Write about a baby animal.

Comments

Units 1 and 2 Review 21

Figure 4.2. Reading Text on Page 21, Units 1 and 2 (Review), Volume 5.

Figure 4.2 displays a reading passage on a panda kindergarten in China. This was the only reading material coded as SC in the six volumes.

Learners are likely to benefit if editors place greater emphasis on content related to learners' cultural background. The British psychologist Sir Frederic Bartlett (1932) developed the concept of schema, and he defined it as the active organization of experiences that represent an individual's inclusive knowledge of the world. Through schema, past knowledge affects new information. Schema theory provides a theoretical background for understanding the function of learners' SC in comprehension, including reading comprehension. According to the theory, reading can entail interaction between learners' background knowledge and the reading text. Relating a reading text to learners' own background can help learners acquire effective comprehension skills.

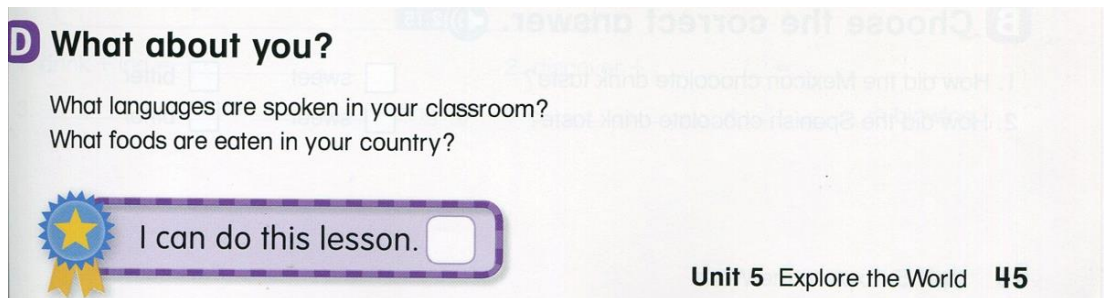


Figure 4.3. Speaking Practice on Page 45, Unit 5, Volume 6.

Figure 4.3 presents a speaking task concerning the students' own language and foods; in the task, the students must answer questions and learn how to introduce their native language and foods.

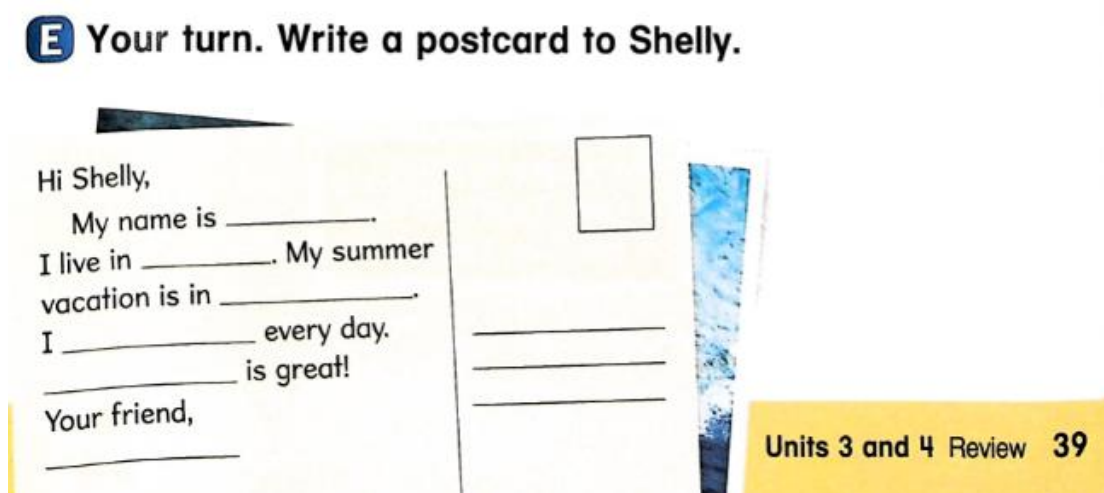


Figure 4.4. Writing Practice on Page 39, Units 3 and 4 (Review), Volume 3

Figure 4.4 presents a writing task that requires students to introduce themselves and the city where they live, in addition to providing information on their summer vacation.

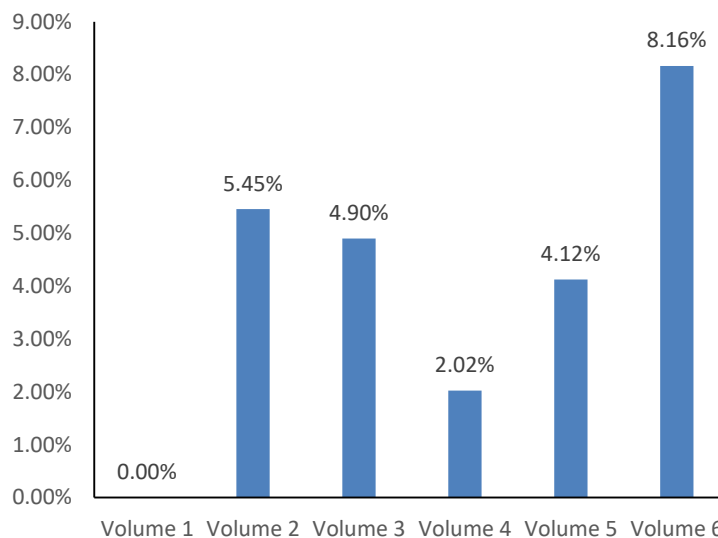


Figure 4.5 Percentages of Target Culture in the Six Volumes

Figure 4.5 shows the percentages of TC content in the six volumes. None of the cultural content in Volume 1 was coded as TC, and Volume 6 had the highest percentage of TC content (8.16%) among the six volumes. Volumes 2, 3, 4, and 5 had 5.45%, 4.90%, 2.02%, and 4.12% TC content.

In Volumes 1 to 6, only three pages included authentic TC information. Page 10 of Volume 6 describes how a San Francisco Bay Area boy accidentally invented the first ice pop in 1905. Pages 39 and 75 of Volume 5 introduce the Great Barrier Reef in Australia and the Grand Canyon in the United States, respectively. The remainder of the TC content in the series is mostly designed to facilitate practicing sentence patterns in the target textbook. Take Volume 2 as an example. The TC content in this volume focuses on food vocabulary and providing an address in the United States. Students are instructed to use the listed food vocabulary to make sentence by using the sentence pattern in this unit. Most of the TC content is presented in this manner, which is exceedingly simple and provides students with little opportunity to delve deeper into the TC.

To clarify how TC is represented in the target textbooks, culture-related listening,

speaking, and reading materials are presented in the following sections. None of the writing practice was coded as TC; thus, no related cultural content is presented here.

Unit 6
My House
Let's Talk

A Listen and say. 2:19

Where do you live, Jenny?
What's your address?
I live in Hillsdale.
It's 6 North Street.

What's your cell phone number?
It's (798) 555-2143.

2:20


Where do you live? I live in Hillsdale.	What's your address? It's 6 North Street.
--	--

B Watch the video.

48 Unit 6 My House

Figure 4.6. Listening Task on Page 48, Unit 6, Volume 2.




Figure 4.6 presents a listening script that is used to teach students how to provide addresses in the American format; the city mentioned in the dialogue is in the US state of Michigan.

C Let's read about the Grand Canyon.  2.69

We're in the U.S.A!

John and Lisa's Travel Blog

Grand Canyon, U.S.A.

Hello from the Grand Canyon, U.S.A.!

This morning, we went rafting on the Colorado River. The river goes through the Grand Canyon. We went through a lot of rapids. They were very rough. We've never gone rafting before. It was exciting.



In the afternoon, we camped near the river. For dinner, the guides cooked steaks over a campfire. The steaks smelled and tasted delicious!



Tonight we're going to sleep outside. We can hear the river. It sounds wonderful. We can also see a lot of stars. We've never seen so many stars!

What About You?

- Have you ever gone rafting?
- Have you ever cooked over a campfire?

New Words

Colorado River
rapids
campfire




Figure 4.7. Reading Text on Page 75, Units 7 and 8 (Review), Volume 5.

The reading passage in Figure 4.7 describes a trip to the Grand Canyon in Arizona, United States.

C Ask and answer. 2.24

1. had a cat / May
2. studied English / six years
3. lived in New York / 2017
4. been at the hotel / yesterday evening
5. played soccer / one hour
6. taught French / six months

How long has **she** had a cat?
She has **had a cat** since **May**.

How long has **he** studied English?
He has **studied English** for **six years**.

Figure 4.8. Speaking Practice on Page 51, Unit 6, Volume 6.

Figure 4.8 presents a speaking task requiring students to practice the sentence pattern learned during the unit; a US city, New York, is mentioned in the task description.

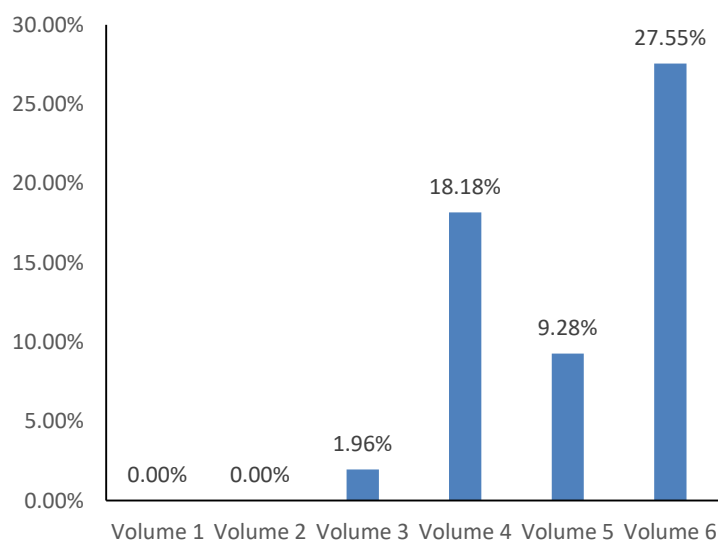




Figure 4.9 Percentages of International Culture in the Six Volumes

Figure 4.9 reveals the percentages of IC content in the six volumes. Volume 6 contained the highest proportion of IC content (27.55%) among the six volumes, followed by Volumes 4 (18.18%), 5 (9.28%), and 3 (1.96%). Volumes 1 and 2 contained no IC content.

IC-related content in Volume 4 concerns a boy's daily life in Chile, the knowledge of pyramids, the life of girls in Egypt and Denmark, and the farm life of a boy living in Saint Lucia; in this volume, questions are included on the information related to Egypt and pyramids, providing students the opportunity to think deeply about relevant matters.

Two pages in *Let's Go* Volume 5 are related to IC, and authentic information is introduced. One page focuses on an elephant camp in Thailand, and the other introduces Mt. Everest in Nepal. *Let's Go 6* contains three pages with IC content. This content focuses on mysterious statues in Easter Island, the discovery of cacao seeds by the Mexicans, and hieroglyphics (picture writing) discovered in Egypt.

To clarify how IC is represented in the target textbooks, culture-related listening, speaking, reading, and writing materials are presented in the following sections.


D Listen and chant.  


Kim's Father Was Born in Seoul

Kim's father was born in Seoul.
They speak Korean at home.
Which man is Kim's father?
He's the man who's waiting
for the phone.

Ann's sister was born in Rome.
They speak Italian at home.
Which girl is Ann's sister?
She's the girl who's standing
by the phone.

Ken's brother was born in Japan.
They speak Japanese at home.
Which boy is Ken's brother?
He's the boy who's talking
on the phone.



 I can do this lesson.

Unit 1 School Days 7

Figure 4.10. Listening Task on Page 7, Unit 1, Volume 6.

Figure 4.10 presents a chant about people from different countries; the task was coded as IC.

C Listen and read along.  1.21

MEET CHAD FROM CHILE




Hola! My name is Chad. I live in Chile.



I like empanadas with chicken and cheese. I eat them for lunch. I like chocolate, too!



Tomorrow I'm going to visit my cousins. They live on a sheep farm. It's going to be hot. I need shorts and a T-shirt.



I'm going to play soccer with my cousins.

New Words

Chile
empanadas
cousins
play soccer

hola = hello

D Choose the correct answer.  1.22


- Where does Chad live?
 - Chile
 - Empanada
- What does Chad need?
 - He needs a T-shirt.
 - He needs chocolate.
- What's Chad going to do tomorrow?
 - go to a sheep farm
 - eat chicken

 I can do this lesson.


Unit 1 The Great Outdoors ||

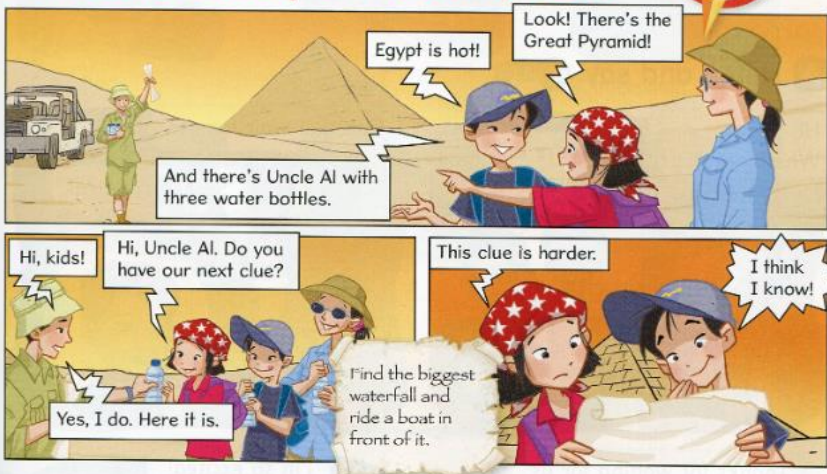
Figure 4.11. Reading Task on Page 11, Unit 1, Volume 4.

The reading passage in Figure 4.11 focuses on a boy's day-to-day life in Chile, including the food, the farm life, and the most popular sport in Chile.

C Let's read about:  1.87

Chris and Cindy's Treasure Hunt






D Where are they going to go next?

a. 

b. 

c. 

E Write a description of Egypt.

EGYPT

Egypt is not a _____, but there is a lot of _____.

The weather is always _____.

New Words

Great Pyramid
kids
waterfall

Units 3 and 4 Review 39

Figure 4.12. Writing Exercise on Page 39, Units 3 and 4 (Review), Volume 4.

In the writing task in Figure 4.12, students write a description of Egypt.

D Let's read about the mysterious statues.  1.70



Mystery Hunters





Moai heads on Easter Island



More moai heads



Easter Island is located in the South Pacific Ocean.

Easter Island: Mysterious Statues

Have you ever seen people moving a giant statue? They use a crane. How did ancient people move giant statues?

Ancient people on Easter Island carved more than 800 large stone statues, called *moai*. They put the *moai* around the island. Each *moai* is taller than an elephant and heavier than two elephants. How did people move them? There were no cranes a thousand years ago.

We can't ask the Easter Island people. They have disappeared. But we can still see their statues on the island.

It's a mystery.

New Words

- Easter Island
- giant
- ancient
- stone
- statue = moai
- a thousand
- disappeared

E **Your turn!**

Have you ever seen people moving a statue?

How did the Easter Island people move the *moai*?

What do you think? Write your opinion.

Units 3 and 4 Review 39

Figure 4.13. Speaking Practice on Page 39, Units 3 and 4 (Review), Volume 6.

In the speaking task in Figure 4.13, students attempt to explain how the Easter Islanders moved the moai.

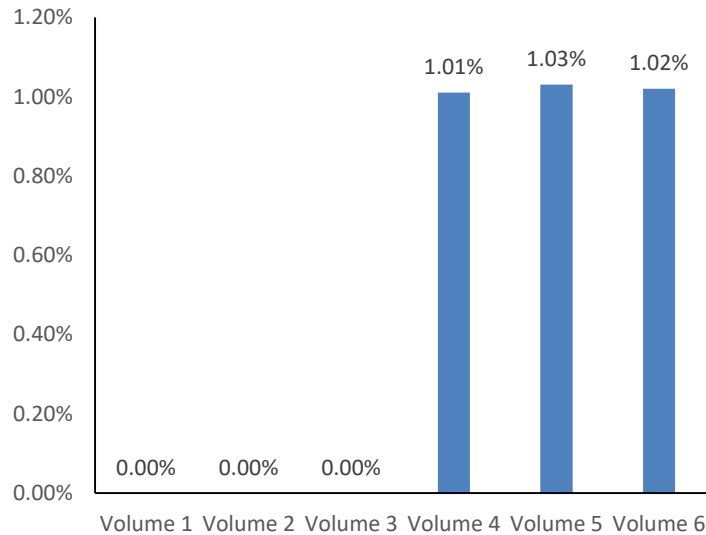


Figure 4.14. Proportions of Intercultural Interaction Content in the Six Textbook Volumes.

Figure 4.14 illustrates the percentages of ICI content in the six textbook volumes. Volumes 1, 2, and 3 did not contain any cultural content coded as ICI. Volumes 4, 5, and 6 each had one page of content coded as ICI.

Two key ideas of ICI are helping students distinguish and be aware of how their local culture is similar to and differs from various foreign cultures. Students' language abilities constrain the depth of ICI content that can be presented. Among six volumes, only three pages were coded as ICI.

To clarify how ICI is represented in the target textbooks, examples of culture-related content are presented in the following sections.

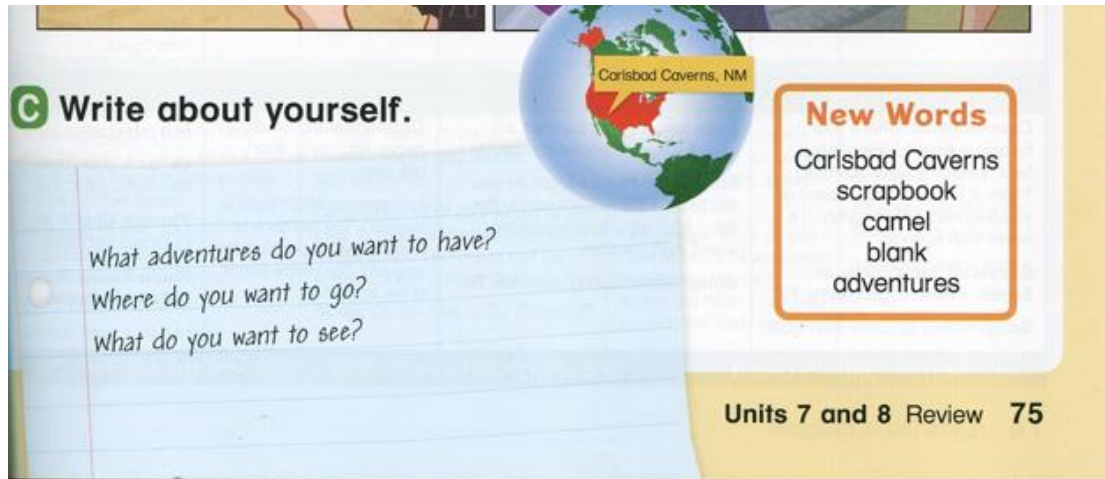


Figure 4.15. Writing Practice on Page 75, Units 7 and 8 (Review), Volume 4.

In the writing task presented in Figure 4.15, students are encouraged to think deeply and inquire into other cultures to answer the posed questions, which enables students to acquire and develop intercultural knowledge.

B Let's read about Mt. Everest.  2:33

We're in Nepal! **John and Lisa's Travel Blog** 

Namaste from Mt. Everest, Nepal!

namaste = hello



We're not at the top of Mt. Everest because only mountain climbers can go there. But we can see the top!



We stayed with a host family in a small village last night. Everyone was very friendly. We ate curry and bread for dinner. It was delicious.



Summer is trekking season. It's too cold in the winter. Tomorrow, our guides will take us to the Everest Base Camp. We'll be at the top of the world!

What About You?

- What did you do last weekend? Did you go trekking in the mountains?
- Do you think you'll eat curry for dinner? What will you probably eat for dinner?

New Words

Mt. Everest
host family
village
curry


C Write about your visit to a new place.


Comments


Units 5 and 6 Review 57

Figure 4.16. Speaking Practice on Page 57, Units 5 and 6 (Review), Volume 5.

After reading the content about Mount Everest on this page, students are posed questions to help them consider the differences between their local culture and Nepali culture.

D Let's read about pyramids.  L.36

Mystery Hunters 




The Great Pyramids in Giza, Egypt

Huge Ruins


There are many pyramids around the world. You can see pyramids in Egypt, in Africa, in Greece, in Mexico, and in China.

The most famous pyramids are in Egypt. The largest pyramid is in Mexico. But the oldest pyramids may be underwater.



The Great Pyramid of Cholula, Mexico

Divers have found ruins in the ocean near Japan. They think they have found a very old city. Some of the ruins look like pyramids.



Underwater Pyramids, Japan

Who built the underwater city?
Why did it sink?
Was there an earthquake?
Did the ocean rise?

It's a mystery.

New Words

- famous
- diver
- ruins
- sink
- earthquake
- rise
- mystery

E Your turn!

Have you ever seen a pyramid?
Why do you think people built pyramids?
Why did the underwater pyramids sink?
What do you think? Write your opinion.

Units 1 and 2 Review 21

Figure 4.17. Speaking Practice on Page 21, Units 1 and 2 (Review), Volume 6.

Figure 4.17 introduce various types of pyramids in different countries, such as the most famous pyramids in Egypt and the largest pyramids in Mexico. In this task, students are encouraged to discuss possible answers to questions on the builders of the underwater city, such as why it sank and why people constructed pyramids; students also have the opportunity to share their opinions. The questions and ensuing discussion enable students to develop intercultural knowledge.

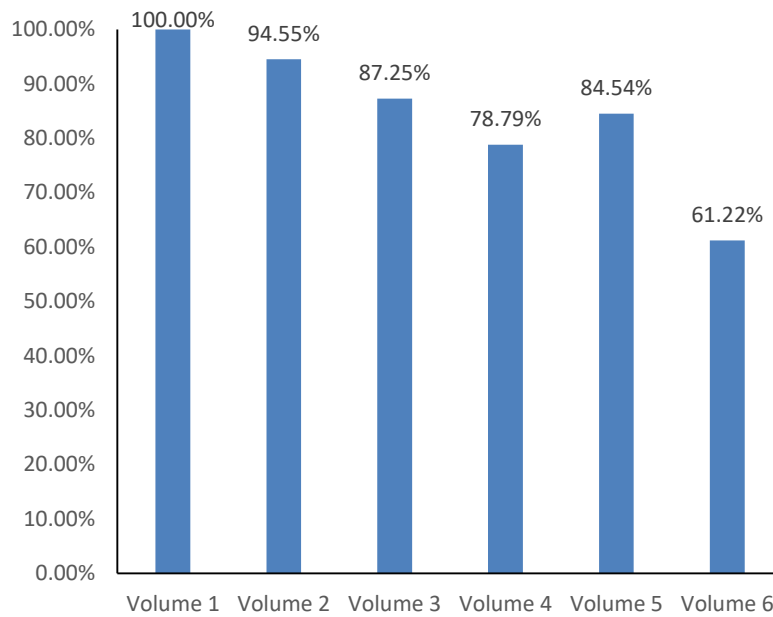


Figure 4.18 Percentages of Universality across Culture in the Six Volumes

Figure 4.18 demonstrates the percentages of UC content in the six volumes. Overall, the percentages of UC content progressively decline from Volume 1 to 6, with the exception of Volume 4. Volume 1 had the highest percentage of UC content (100%), followed by Volume 2 (94.55%), Volume 3 (87.25%), Volume 5 (84.54%), Volume 4 (78.79%), and Volume 6 (61.22%).

English Curriculum Guidelines Presented in *Let's Go* Volumes 1–6

The second research question concerned the extent to which the target textbooks meet the cultural objectives outlined in Taiwan's English Curriculum Guidelines for Elementary School Students. Tables 4.4 and 4.5 present the overall results for this research question.

In this study, the Taiwan Ministry of Education's (2014) English curriculum guidelines for elementary school students were used to investigate the reading texts, listening scripts, speaking tasks, and writing tasks for elementary school students in the six volumes of *Let's Go*. The extent to which each of the aforementioned content types addressed each of the seven cultural competence indicators listed in Table 3.3 was examined. Content not coded as any of the seven competence indicators was coded as N/A.

Cultural Competence Indicators 8-2-1 (understand basic local and foreign greetings), 8-2-2 (recognize the local festivals and customs in students' own culture introduced in class), and 8-2-3 (recognize the foreign festivals and customs introduced in class), which are for Grades 3 and 4, were used to examine the first three target textbooks: *Let's Go* 1, 2, and 3.

Competence Indicators 8-3-1 (understand basic local and foreign greetings), 8-3-2 (recognize the local festivals and customs in students' own culture introduced in class), 8-3-3 (recognize the foreign festivals and customs introduced in class), 8-3-4 (understand foreign customs and tradition), which are for Grades 5 and 6, were used to investigate the last three target textbooks, *Let's Go* 4, 5, and 6.

Table 4.4 Occurrence of Cultural Competence Indicators in Let's Go, Volumes 1–3

Let's go 1	8-2-1	8-2-2	8-2-3	N/A
Reading	0	0	0	32
Listening	14	0	0	15
Speaking	3	0	0	35
Writing	7	0	0	1
Let's go 2				
Reading	3	0	0	29
Listening	12	0	0	18
Speaking	3	0	0	37
Writing	7	0	0	1
Let's go 3				
Reading	4	0	0	33
Listening	12	0	0	10
Speaking	10	0	0	28
Writing	4	0	0	1

Table 4.5 Occurrence of Cultural Competence Indicators in Let's Go, Volumes 4–6

Let's go 4	8-3-1	8-3-2	8-3-3	8-3-4	N/A
Reading	1	0	0	11	12
Listening	13	0	0	0	12
Speaking	14	0	0	3	21
Writing	0	0	0	8	4
Let's go 5					
Reading	2	0	0	6	14
Listening	10	0	0	2	13
Speaking	4	0	0	5	29
Writing	0	0	0	0	12
Let's go 6					
Reading	0	0	0	15	9
Listening	8	0	0	7	10
Speaking	1	0	0	15	25
Writing	0	0	0	0	8

Table 4.6 Percentages of Cultural Competence Indicators in Let's Go, Volumes 1–3

	8-2-1	8-2-2	8-2-3	N/A
Reading	6.93%	0.00%	0.00%	93.07%
Listening	46.91%	0.00%	0.00%	53.09%
Speaking	13.79%	0.00%	0.00%	86.21%
Writing	85.71%	0.00%	0.00%	14.29%
Total	24.76%	0.00%	0.00%	75.24%

Table 4.7 Percentages of Cultural Categories in Let's Go, Volumes 1–3

Sections	SC	TC	IC	ICI	UC
Reading	0.00%	5.94%	1.98%	0.00%	92.08%
Listening	0.00%	2.47%	0.00%	0.00%	97.53%
Speaking	1.72%	2.59%	0.00%	0.00%	95.69%
Writing	19.05%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	80.95%
Total	1.88%	3.45%	0.63%	0.00%	94.04%

According to Table 4.6, most of the content (75.24%) was coded as N/A, indicating content that is not relevant to the three cultural competence indicators. For a more specific comparison, Table 4.7 presents the percentages of cultural categories in the first three volumes of *Let's Go* according to the taxonomy of Chao (2011). The proportion of N/A in Table 4.6 is less than that of UC in Table 4.7 because the cultural content that was coded as 8-2-1 occupied the second largest proportion (24.76%) in Table 4.6, whereas none of the cultural content was coded as 8-2-2 and 8-2-3. Furthermore, writing activities included the most cultural content related to 8-2-1.

Table 4.8 Percentages of Cultural Competence Indicators in Let's Go, Volumes 4–6

	8-3-1	8-3-2	8-3-3	8-3-4	N/A
Reading	4.29%	0.00%	0.00%	45.71%	50.00%
Listening	41.33%	0.00%	0.00%	12.00%	46.67%
Speaking	16.24%	0.00%	0.00%	19.66%	64.10%
Writing	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	25.00%	75.00%
Total	18.03%	0.00%	0.00%	24.49%	57.48%

Table 4.9 Percentages of Cultural Categories in *Let's Go*, Volumes 4–6

Sections	SC	TC	IC	ICI	UC
Reading	1.43%	11.43%	35.71%	0.00%	51.43%
Listening	0.00%	0.00%	12.16%	0.00%	87.84%
Speaking	1.69%	5.08%	11.86%	1.69%	79.66%
Writing	0.00%	0.00%	18.75%	3.13%	78.13%
Total	1.02%	4.76%	18.37%	1.02%	74.83%

N/A was predominant in Volumes 4 to 6 of *Let's Go*, being represented in 57.48% of the content; 8-3-4 was represented in 24.49% of the content in the three volumes, and the content coded as 8-3-4 was mostly presented in reading content (45.71%; Table 4.8). Thirdly, in the three volumes, 18.03% of the content was coded as 8-3-1, with listening scripts accounting for the largest proportion (41.33%). Finally, as was the case in Volumes 1–3, none of the cultural content was coded as 8-3-2 and 8-3-3.

Furthermore, the proportion of N/A in Volumes 4–6 (57.48%) was less than the proportion of N/A in volumes 1–3 (74.83%).

Table 4.9 presents the percentages of cultural categories in the last three volumes of *Let's Go* in terms of the taxonomy of Chao (2011) to enable a comparison of the percentages of N/A with the percentages of UC (not specific to any particular culture or country). As indicated in Table 4.8, the percentages of the not-applicable category were less than those of UC (Table 4.9) because the cultural content that was coded as 8-3-4 (understand foreign customs and tradition) accounted for the second largest proportion of content (24.49%; Table 4.8).

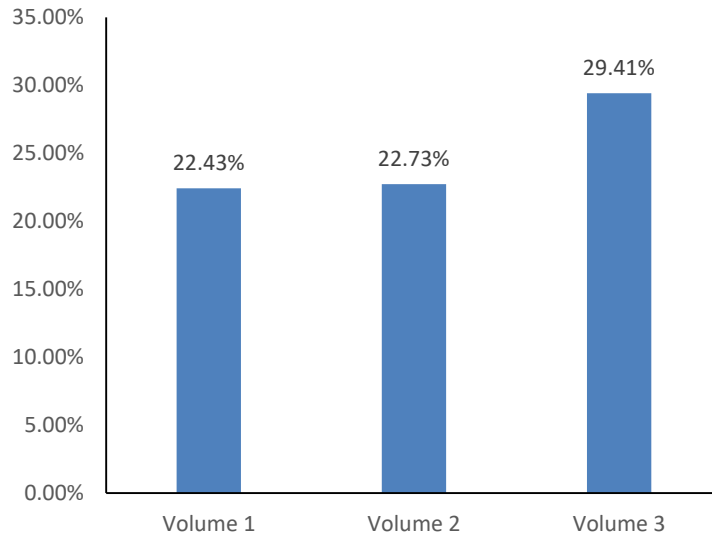


Figure 4.19 Percentages of 8-2-1 in Let's Go, Volumes 1–3

Figure 4.20 displays the percentages of 8-2-1 in the first three volumes. Volume 3 had the highest percentage of 8-2-1 (29.41%), followed by Volume 2 (22.73%) and Volume 1 (22.43%).

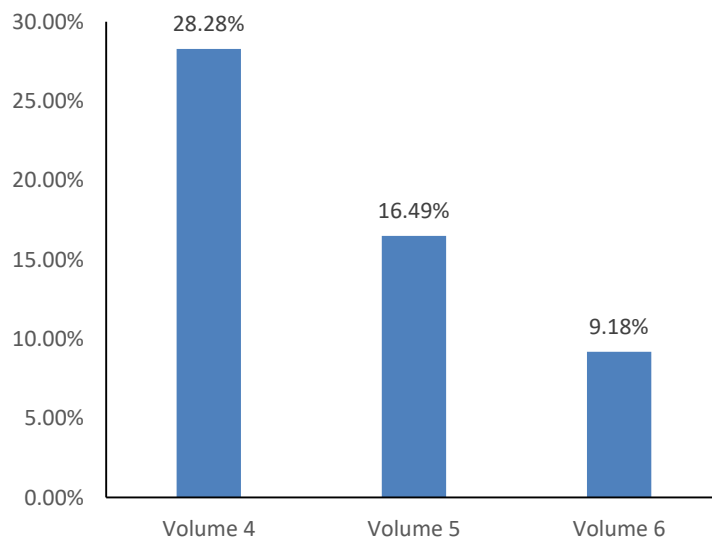


Figure 4.20 Percentages of 8-3-1 in Let's Go, Volumes 4–6

Figure 4.21 reveals the percentages of 8-3-1. Volume 4 accounted for the highest percentage of 8-3-1 (28.28%), followed by Volume 5 (16.49%) and Volume 6 (9.18%).

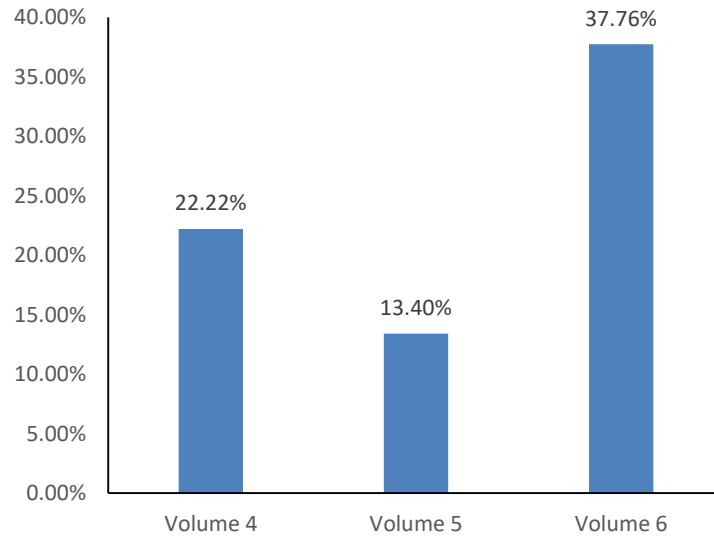


Figure 4.21 Percentages of 8-3-4 in Let's Go, Volumes 4–6

Figure 4.22 presents the percentages of 8-3-4. Volume 6 accounted for the highest percentage, followed by Volume 4 (22.22%) and Volume 5 (13.40%).

In summary, the six volumes were unbalanced in terms of the seven cultural competence indicators in the English Curriculum Guidelines (2014). Moreover, the limited attention placed on Competency Indicators 8-2-2, 8-2-3, 8-3-2, and 8-3-3 in all six volumes may deprive students of opportunities to increase relevant cultural experience.



CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The goal of this study was to obtain an overview of the cultural content and intercultural issues addressed in the six volumes of *Let's Go* and to subsequently examine how they meet the cultural competence indicators presented in the English Curriculum Guidelines (2014). Content analysis was employed to examine and analyze the main texts in the study on the basis of two schemes: the main categories of culture and English Curriculum Guidelines for Elementary School Students.

Discussion of Research Results

Cultural Categories in the Target Textbooks

The results revealed that UC predominates in the target textbooks, with 84.83% of the cultural content coded as UC. This result is consistent with those of other researchers (Chao, 2011; Chiang, 2013; Hsu, 2018). However, the proportion of UC (84.83%) revealed in this study is much higher than that obtained by the aforementioned studies.

A possible explanation for the high percentage of UC content in the textbooks under investigation is that the students' language abilities limit the depth and the breadth of the textbook content. Books with a large proportion of linguistic practice may satisfy market demand in Taiwan. Because they contain abundant UC content, the target textbooks provide students with bountiful opportunities to practice their

listening, reading, speaking, and writing skills. However, supplying cultural elements within textbook content is essential to enable foreign language learners to acquire authentic language that involves culture-specific statements commonly used in communication. Tomlinson (2008) argued that the function of ELT materials and the responsibility of teachers are to develop language learners' ability to use English successfully. Therefore, teachers should emphasize the training of learners' linguistic skills rather than focusing on providing opportunities for acquisition and development, which may be a critical mistake.

Only 1.31% of the content in the textbooks was coded as SC. This result is consistent with that of Chao (2011); however, it is different from the finding of Matsuda (2002).

Examining an international ELT textbook for elementary level students, Chao (2011) found that SC content accounted for the lowest percentage of the content in the target textbook. By contrast, Matsuda (2002) reported that SC content was predominant in ELT textbooks in Japan.

A possible reason for this disparity is that the target textbooks in the current study were designed for international markets and for learners from different cultural backgrounds or countries. However, the importance of SC content should not be ignored. Nelson (1994) argued that recognizing and reflecting learners' SC in language is crucial because if teachers disregard learners' cultural circumstances, students' L1 and culture are being denied and undervalued.

IC content, which accounted for the second largest proportion, was more prevalent than TC in the target textbooks. This result differs from that of other researchers (e.g., Chao, 2011; Hsu, 2018).

Chao (2011) revealed that TC content had considerable coverage in the target textbook, second only to that of UC. Hsu (2018) investigated a series of junior high

English textbooks in Taiwan and found that SC and TC content were represented in nearly equal proportions in the target textbooks, with IC content having the lowest percentage (3.05%) of the five categories.

IC content being more prevalent than TC content may be attributable to the increasing importance of the inclusion of diverse cultures as the status of English as the world's lingua franca strengthens. EFL textbooks should include topics related to other countries instead of focusing simply on SC and TC content (Cortazzi & Jin, 1999).

Finally, content related to ICI accounted for 0.49% of the content in the six volumes. This result differs from that of Hsu (2018), who investigated textbooks used by junior high students and revealed that content relating to ICI accounted for 6.78% of overall content, similar to SC (8.51%) and TC (7.04%). By contrast, in this study, content coded as ICI was the least prevalent. This difference may be explainable by differences in the target audience (including the learners' language proficiency), which may have limited the depth and the breadth of the textbook content to varying degrees.

In summary, the six volumes of the target textbooks have large gaps between UC content and that of the other four categories. UC content was predominant in the target textbooks, whereas SC content was the second least prevalent of the categories. Ignorance of SC may result in local learners developing negative attitudes of their own culture or feeling inferior to native English speakers, thus increasing their desire to become a part of Western cultures (Chao, 2011).

Moreover, TC and IC content both accounted for less than 10% of the textbooks' cultural content, and the content related to ICI accounted for less than 1%. The ICI content can provide students with opportunities to develop profound intercultural understanding and the ability to compare cultures. The inclusion of culture teaching in

language teaching is strongly encouraged because it helps learners to be mindful of appropriate or inappropriate behavior and provides them with the opportunity to learn to behave similarly to a member of the TC (Thanasoulas, 2001).

Cultural Competence Indicators in English Textbooks

The second and third learning stages in Taiwan's Grade 1–12 English Curriculum Guidelines have seven cultural competence indicators. The current results indicated an obvious imbalance in cultural content related to the seven cultural competence indicators in the six volumes of the target textbooks. Competence Indicator 8-2-1 in the second learning stage is the same as 8-3-1 in the third learning stage—the ability to understand basic local and foreign greetings. Competence Indicator 8-2-2 in the second learning stage is also the same as 8-3-2 in the third learning stage—the ability to recognize the local festivals and customs in students' own culture introduced in class.

Of the three cultural competence indicators in the second learning stage, Competence Indicator 8-2-1 was represented in 24.76% of the content in Volumes 1–3 of the target textbooks, whereas none of the cultural content was coded as 8-2-2 or 8-2-3. This finding indicates that the three volumes contain no cultural content about local and foreign festivals and customs.

In the third learning stage, Competence Indicator 8-3-4 was represented in a larger proportion of the content than 8-3-1, and none of the cultural content was coded as 8-3-2 and 8-3-3.

The reason Competence Indicator 8-2-1, being able to understand basic local and foreign greetings, had the largest proportion of the three indicators is that beginner EFL learners must learn basic communication skills. However, in Volumes 4–6, the proportion of Competence Indicator 8-3-4 was higher than that of 8-3-1 in the third

learning stage because integrating cultural knowledge into English teaching is essential (Shahed, 2013).

The six volumes contained no cultural content related to local or foreign festivals and customs, which merits further discussion. Chang (2009) examined the representation of the cultural competence indicators in elementary English textbooks published locally in Taiwan under the scheme of Grade 1–9 Curriculum Guidelines (2008) for English learning areas and found that Competence Indicator 7-1-1 (knowledge of foreign and local festivals and holidays) was applied 59 times (11.82%) and Competence Indicator 7-1-2 (understanding the expressions of local festivals and holidays) was applied 26 times (5.21%). Feng (2009) reported that combining Chinese festival stories with Readers Theater can be a useful teaching method to help EFL underachievers in elementary school improve their English reading motivation and oral reading fluency. Feng (2015) observed that the teaching of holiday culture strongly stimulated students' cultural knowledge and English learning interest. Furthermore, when learners have the opportunity to converse with foreigners, the SC content on local festivals and customs contained in the textbooks would be a valuable conversational resource; therefore, learners should be taught how to express their own cultural values in English; if not, the language learning process in the EFL context simply involves life experience. The teaching of festival culture should not be neglected. This is also one of the foreign language education goals of the latest English Curriculum Guideline.

In summary, the six volumes of the target textbooks did not strike a balance between the cultural competence indicators.

Discussion of Possible Factors Contributing to Research Results

The conclusion drawn on the basis of the results of the present study was that the

proportion of UC in the target textbooks was much higher than that in the textbooks in other studies and that the cultural competence indicators in the target textbooks were imbalanced. The target textbooks did not contain cultural content about local or foreign festivals or customs. The target textbook editors and writers did not provide much emphasis on cultural or intercultural topics. The following sections detail the possible reasons for the current findings, including student competencies, the education system, the backgrounds of the editors and the target textbooks, and the inherent difficulties of teaching of cultural awareness in an EFL classroom.

Students' Competencies

The *Let's Go* series was first released in 1990 and is targeted at EFL elementary students; therefore, the content of the textbooks is constrained by the audience's language competency. For EFL students, the purpose of learning English is to obtain communicative competence. The EFL students start learning English from simple vocabulary and sentence patterns, and the topics focus on social interactions such as greetings, expressing apology or gratitude, and asking for help or information. A certain level of proficiency is required for EFL learners to learn more difficult concepts.

The Education System

With the influence of Confucianism, Taiwan remains a diplomaism country. Most parents believe that if their children can enter a higher-ranked school, they will have a better career in the future. To achieve the goal, many parents send their children to cram schools for extra instruction. Therefore, numerous cram schools exist in Taiwanese communities, and their main purpose is to enhance students' academic performance at school and in entrance examinations. English is one of the academic courses for entrance examinations. Because of the time constraint, most of the teachers in cram

schools may choose textbooks that can improve students' learning outcomes for vocabulary, grammar, and reading (Lai, 2017); thus, teachers can teach more content that is tested in entrance examinations, but they neglect the fifth skill, namely culture. The aforementioned observations could be the reason why the series has been adopted by many cram school teachers and has been the top-selling English textbook series at Caves Books in Taiwan for years.

Background of Compilers and Target Textbooks

Let's Go is a series of American-English based EFL textbooks developed by Oxford University Press, and the series was written by two US-based EFL/ESL teachers and two Asia-based teachers. The first edition was released in 1990, the second in 1998, the third in 2006, and the fourth in 2011; the series is now in its fifth edition, which was released in 2019, while the third series is still in print. The initial target market of the series was Asia, especially Japan. The education system in Japan is similar to that in Taiwan. In many Asian countries, English is not only a language ability but also an academic course for examinations. Therefore, textbooks used in cram schools may influence how editors and writers edit and compile the textbooks (Lai, 2017). Over 20 million copies of the series had already been sold by 2000 because of its useful and easy book design. Because it was popular in the beginning, the book design has not changed much through the five editions.

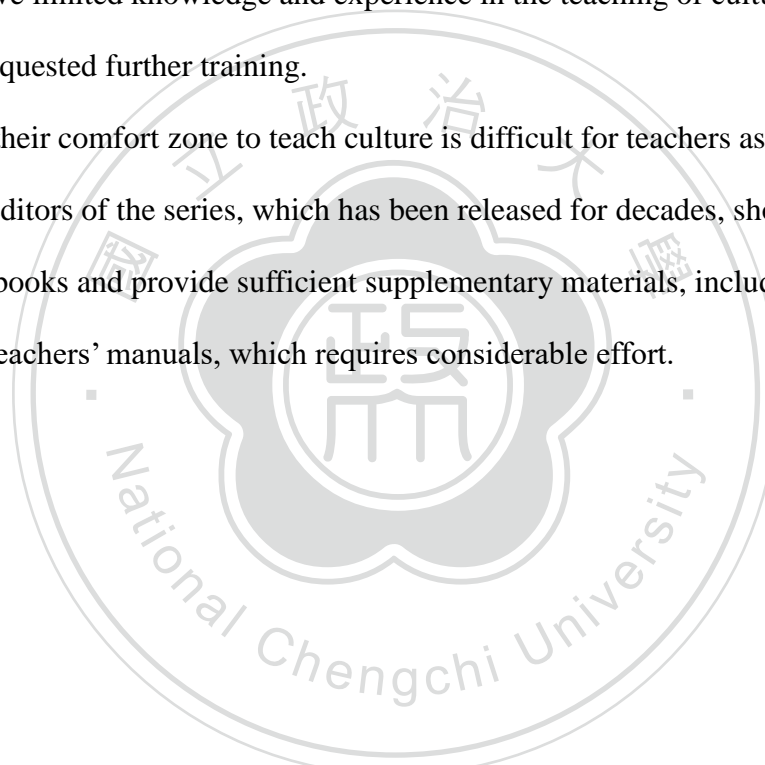
Difficulties in the Teaching of Culture in an EFL classroom

Most EFL teachers agree that language and culture cannot be separated and that the teaching of culture is important in an EFL classroom. However, despite the importance of culture for language learning, the teaching of culture is often neglected in reality. The teaching of culture is often considered as something to append to four

basic language skills (Kramersch, 1993).

Teachers encountered difficulties in integrating culture into foreign language teaching for the following reasons: (1) teachers' belief and negative attitudes toward the teaching of culture (Yang & Chen, 2016) and (2) teachers' lack of cultural knowledge (Kuo, 2017). According to Yang and Chen (2016), instructors believe that culture is complex and elusive, and they have not recognized the close relationship between language and culture. In Kuo's (2017) study, 8 of 12 teachers considered themselves to have limited knowledge and experience in the teaching of cultural awareness and requested further training.

Expanding their comfort zone to teach culture is difficult for teachers as well as for editors. The editors of the series, which has been released for decades, should redesign the textbooks and provide sufficient supplementary materials, including workbooks and teachers' manuals, which requires considerable effort.



CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

This study aimed (1) to examine how cultural and intercultural topics are presented in *Let's Go* 1–6 and (2) to identify the extent to which the cultural competence indicators in Taiwan's English Curriculum Guidelines are represented in these textbooks.

In response to the first research question (how cultural and intercultural topics are presented in *Let's Go* Volumes 1–6), a major finding was that in general, the importance of SC in language teaching is increasingly recognized by language teachers; however, this tendency was not reflected in the target textbooks, where SC content accounted for less than 2% of the content associated with the five categories assessed in this study. Regarding the other cultural categories, many units of the target textbooks consisted of general content that emphasized the practice of linguistic knowledge, coded as UC in the study; by contrast, the proportion of TC content was the third lowest of all the categories, which is inconsistent with the findings of previous research (Chao, 2001; Han & Bae, 2005).

Regarding the second question, *To what extent do the target textbooks meet the cultural objectives in Taiwan's English Curriculum Guidelines for Elementary School Students*, a critical finding is that cultural content related to foreign or local festivals and customs was completely absent in the target textbook series. Therefore, in the latest English Curriculum Guidelines, two of the three cultural objectives at Stage 2 and two of the four cultural objectives at Stage 3 were not fulfilled.

The content analysis of the textbooks revealed that most of the content does not contain sufficient cultural elements. Target textbook evaluation can reveal the shortcomings of the textbook and help teachers acquire knowledge and skills to adapt the material according to student needs. Implications for editors and teachers are proposed in the following section.

Implications

The current findings may provide insights to editors of EFL textbooks as well as in-service teachers and practitioners.

Implications for Editors

On the basis of the present results, four suggestions are offered to editors.

First, editors should attempt to include the neglected foreign or local festivals and customs when planning the next edition of the series. Celebration of traditional festivals is a core aspects of any culture, and presentation of such celebrations is an effective means of exposing students to the foreign culture.

Second, the current findings suggest that editors should be mindful of the diversity of cultural representation in their textbooks. UC clearly predominates in the target textbooks because of the promotion of the four language skills and market demand. However, culture teaching is increasingly being regarded as a fifth language skill, thus meriting greater attention.

Third, editors should favor authentic context and pictures over illustrations. For example, one of the units in Volume 1 is about families; the content can be designed for beginners as in Figure 6.1. Two families from different countries can be introduced, and learners can acquire not only vocabulary about family but also knowledge of different cultures. The average American family is typically understood to be a nuclear family, whereas the extended family is emphasized in Japan.

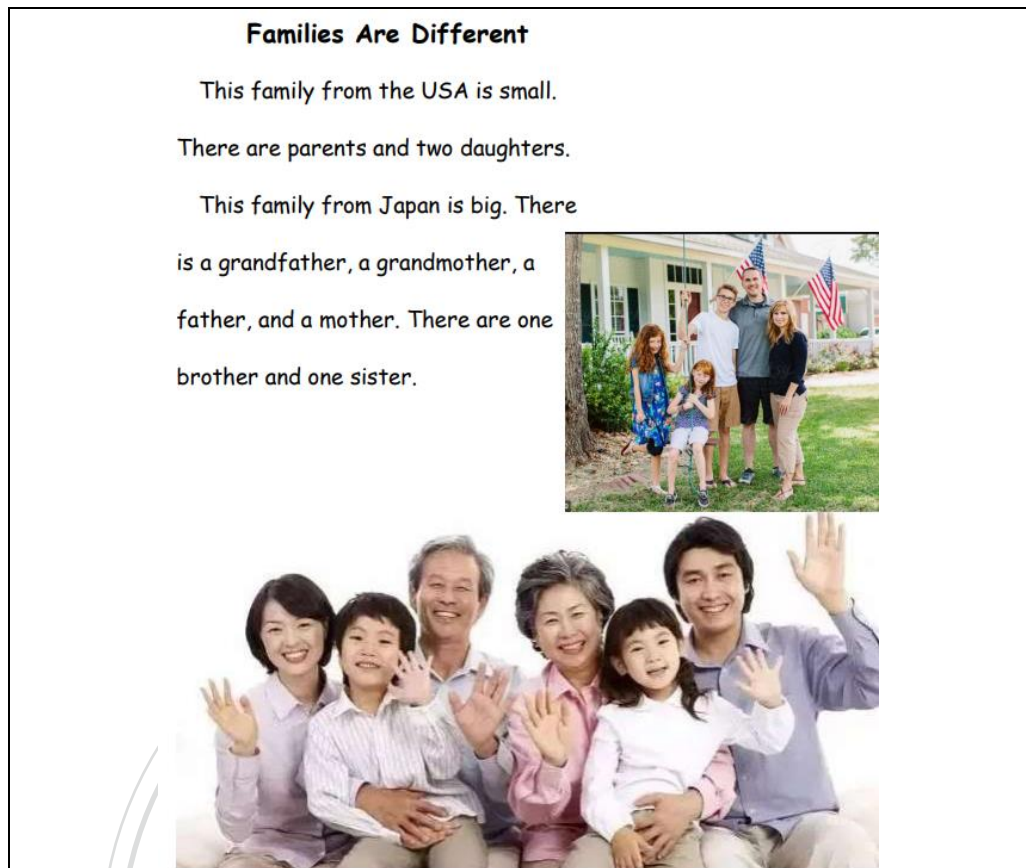


Figure 6.1. A Cross-Cultural Awareness Feature Entitled “Families Are Different.”

Fourth, editors should propose questions related to cultural topics at the appropriate time so that teachers can instruct students to conduct online research as an assignment and then have discussions in the next class. In this manner, students can learn more about cultural differences. Figure 6.2 presents an example of the questions in a unit about food. Students can be divided into groups, look up the information on the Internet, and give a presentation in class.



Figure 6.2 A Cross-Cultural Awareness Feature Entitled “Do You Know?”

Implications for In-service Teachers

Selecting appropriate textbooks for students is a teacher’s responsibility. The current findings indicate that the distribution of cultural content in the target textbooks is unbalanced. Teachers should be aware of this deficiency in cultural content and develop appropriate supplemental materials, especially for the most neglected aspect: local and foreign festivals. Teachers have the ability to adapt and adjust teaching material according to the levels and needs of students. Employing thought-provoking books as supplementary materials may be an effective approach to compensate for teachers’ deficient culture teaching abilities. For Taiwanese English teachers, a book on Taiwanese culture and customs can be a powerful tool to assist in culture teaching.

For example, *Everyday English in Taiwan* (Wen & Dibello, 2005) is a book covering dozens of fascinating topics about Taiwan, including holidays, social issues, education, disasters, food and drink, and modern technology. Figure 6.3 presents one of the units in this book on the Moon Festival. Students can rapidly acquire new words and expressions regarding Taiwanese customs through the text by relying on their own background knowledge, which is consistent with schema theory. With knowledge on how to introduce their own culture, learners can more easily start conversation with foreigners.

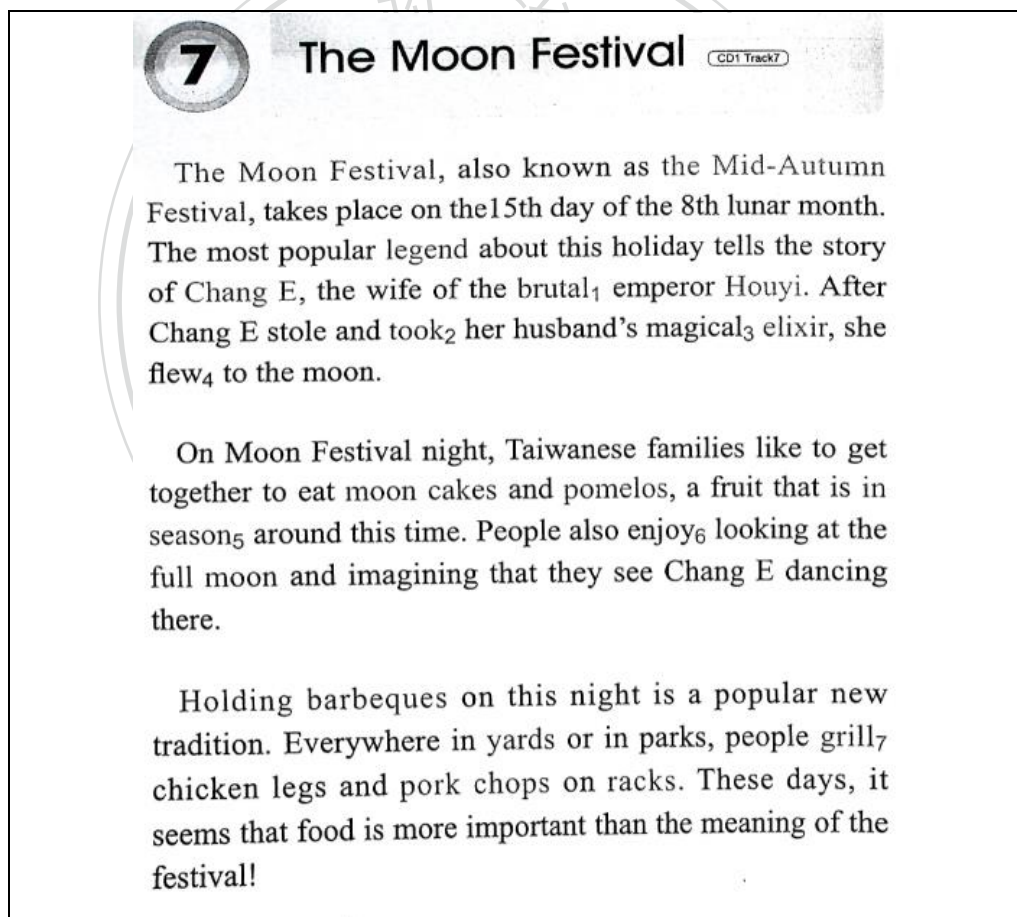


Figure 6.3. A Cultural Awareness Feature Entitled “The Moon Festival” (Page 64).

Since the 1970s, pedagogical approaches have evolved to make learners the center of language instruction; in this context, textbooks should be regarded as

teaching resources. Textbooks should not be the sole source of culture teaching. Al-Sofi (2016) indicated that language and culture can “be acquired from other sources beyond the classroom boundaries; online communication tools are but one of them” (p. 99). In this regard, teachers can enhance culture teaching by using tools such as the Internet and media. For example, teachers can use WebQuest to integrate the Internet into culture teaching. WebQuest, developed in 1995 by Bernie Dodge of San Diego State University, is an inquiry-oriented activity in which students obtain all relevant information for task completion from the Internet. Teachers create a WebQuest and provide the links to specific websites; subsequently, students retrieve the information they need from these websites. In this manner, students apply information rather than merely finding and presenting it.

To equip students with relevant and up-to-date knowledge, teachers play a central role by integrating culture, as a fifth language skill, into the classroom and highlighting its equal importance to other skills.

Limitation of the Study

Although this study was conducted with considerable effort, it has several limitations. First, because of constraints related to time and number of researchers, only six volumes of *Let's Go* were examined. Second, the images in the target textbooks were not examined in this study because categorizing and calculating metrics for such images was deemed potentially problematic or confusing. Third, two coding schemes were employed to examine the target textbooks, which was arguably insufficiently comprehensive.

Suggestions for Future Research

Suggestions for addressing the aforementioned limitations are as follows: First,

EFL textbooks other than those scrutinized in this study can be examined to compare cultural content in different textbook series. Second, previous editions of *Let's Go* can be investigated to determine whether the cultural content has developed over the five editions. Third, a series of textbooks, workbooks, and teacher's manuals can be evaluated to obtain an overview of the complete arrangement of cultural content. Finally, future researchers may consider using other schemes to investigate the various cultural elements of the textbook series.



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