



CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This study was to investigate effects of Cultural Experiential Instruction on students' English oral communication ability. The basic concepts and related documents are reviewed in order to acquire sufficient background information for the study. First, Experiential Learning Approach and Cultural Experience are discussed. Then, focus questions for Cultural Experience, contents, learning outcomes, learning activities, and teacher roles in the Four Cultural Knowings are described. Third, guidelines for teaching culture and the benefits of culture teaching to language learning are explained. Fourth, definition of oral communication ability, components of oral communication ability, the teaching methods of oral communication, classroom activities for development of oral communication ability, the assessment of oral communication ability, the criteria of oral communication ability assessment are reviewed. The importance of teaching English oral communication and world culture as well as studies on culture teaching in language classroom are also presented.

In this first section, Experiential Learning Approach and Cultural Experience are discussed.

Experiential Learning Approach

Experiential Learning Approach is based on experiential learning theory (Kolb, 1984). Experience plays as the important role in the learning process. It is a learner-centered approach which involved in a process of experiential learning.

A process of experiential learning can be described as a four-stage cycle: (1) concrete experience; (2) reflective observation; (3) abstract conceptualization; and (4) active experimentation. Each of the experiential learning cycle has its different learning purpose.

The first stage, concrete experience, lets learners experience and participate in activities, such as role play, simulation or game, or listening to a lecture, watching a film or slide show, practicing a skill, or completing an exercise. Then, the second stage, reflective observation, motivates learners to describe what happened in the activities undertaken during the experience. After that, learners develop to explain the meaning to the experience in the third stage, abstract conceptualization. Finally, learners experiment and begin to incorporate what they have learned into their lives in the last stage, active experimentation.

According to Moran (2001), he stated that the experiential learning cycle is very useful for culture learning because culture as an abstract word can be joined with culture learning through the four-stage cycle of experience. Students can experience culture and learn culture through experiential learning because they can naturally grasp cultural knowledge through their own experience (Harumi, 2002)

Thus, Moran (2001) adapted Kolb's experiential learning cycle to his own cultural experiential learning model which he called "Cultural Experience". The contents of cultural experience model will be presented in the next description.

The Cultural Experience

According to Experiential Learning Approach, Moran (2001) adapted the experiential learning cycle based on Kolb (1984) to his cultural experiential learning model which is called the **Cultural Experience**. The stages of Moran's model are adapted to directly incorporate the components of the cultural experience. The components of the cultural experience which is based on the three frameworks are (1) the Experiential Learning Cycle; (2) the Four Cultural Knowings; and (3) The Culture Experience: Culture as both content and process.

The detailed descriptions of the three frameworks are as follows:

1. The Experiential Learning Cycle

The Experiential Learning Cycle is based on Kolb (1984) which stated that learning occurs through experiences. Through a cycle of observation, theorizing, and strategizing, learners go from one experience to another and move toward mastery of the subject matter at hand.

The Kolbian stages are presented in Table 2.1

Table 2.1

Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle (1984)

Stages of Learning	Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle
1	Concrete experience
2	Reflective observation
3	Abstract conceptualization
4	Active experimentation

Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle (1984) can be described as follows:

1. **Concrete experience** is the first stage that learners participate in the experience and are engaged on a number of levels—intellectually, physically, emotionally, spiritually—depending on the nature of the content and the form of the experience itself.

2. **Reflective observation** is the stage which the learner pauses to reflect on what happened in order to describe what happened, staying with the facts of the experience.

3. **Abstract conceptualization** is the third stage which the learner assigns meaning to the experience by developing explanations or theories—either the learner's own or drawn from other sources.

4. **Active experimentation** is the point at which the learner prepares to reenter experience by devising strategies consistent with personal learning goals, the nature of content, and the form of the experience.

From the Kolbian stages, Moran (2001) adapted the four learning stages to the Four Cultural Knowings which parallel with Kolb's notion that all learning is experience. The Four Cultural Knowings are illustrated in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2

Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle (1984) and Moran's Cultural Experiential Learning Cycle (2001)

Steps of Learning	Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle	Moran's Cultural Experiential Learning Cycle
1	Concrete experience	Knowing how: Participation
2	Reflective observation	Knowing about: Description
3	Abstract conceptualization	Knowing why: Interpretation
4	Active experimentation	Knowing oneself: Reflection

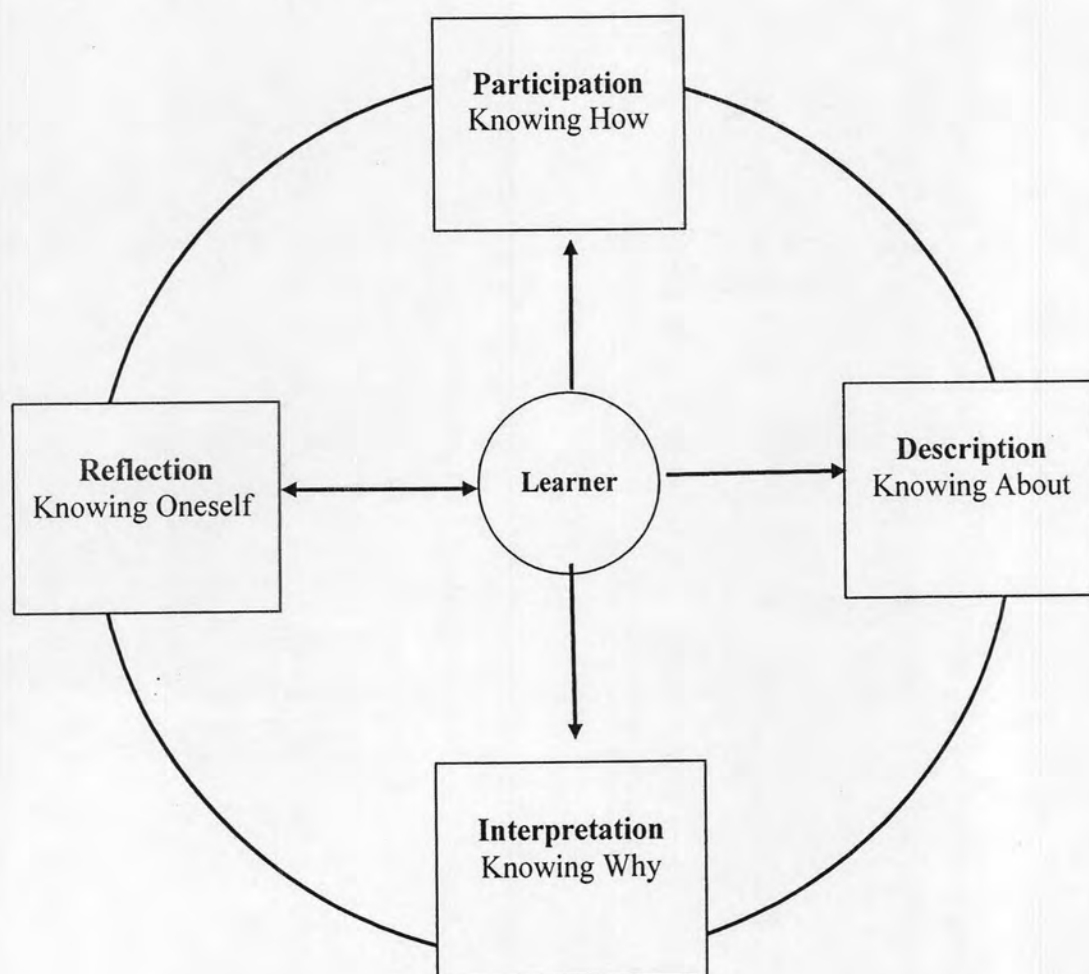
In terms of the stages of learning cycle in Table 2.2, Moran (2001) created his Four Cultural Knowings which paralleled with Kolb's experiential learning cycle. Firstly, Concrete experience becomes Participation on Knowing how, where students engage in the cultural experience through role plays, dialogues, drama, or simulation. Secondly, Reflective observation becomes Description, with a focus on Knowing about, where students learn to describe cultural information about teacher's and learner's direct or indirect experiences in the target culture or other cultures, and in culture and language learning. The next stage is Abstract conceptualization which becomes Interpretation, with an emphasis on Knowing Why. In this stage, students explore the value of cultures and interpret the similarities and differences between cultures in order to develop their cultural understanding. Lastly, Active experimentation becomes Reflection, with a concentration on self-awareness in Knowing Oneself. Students reflect upon their thought and feelings on the cultural experience they encounter.

Consequently, it can be obviously seen that the learning objectives of Kolb's experiential learning cycle and Moran's cultural experiential learning cycle are the same because experience is the heart of both learning cycles.

Apart from the above paralleled table, the following diagram also illustrates the Cultural Experiential Learning Cycle in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1

The Cultural Experiential Learning Cycle (Moran, 2001)



From the figure 2.1, the learner appears at the center of the cultural experiential learning cycle. Through the learner's experience, he/she participates in

cultural activities in the stage of Knowing How, describes cultural information in the stage of Knowing About, interprets the value of cultures and the similarities and differences between cultures in the stage of Knowing Why, and reflects his/her opinions and feelings on cultural experience in the stage of Knowing Oneself.

According to Woodward (2001), she promotes learning from experiences in culture learning because cultures change and things will be a little different from the time that students contact with the target culture. Besides, Parinchankol (2003) recommends that students be the centre of learning and learn language and culture from their direct or indirect experiences such as reading cultural notes in a language textbook, watching a film or a video clip, listening to music, or a teacher's stories about a trip to England. Similarly, Omaggio (2001) states that teachers should enliven cultural teaching with visuals, realia, and personal experiential stories. The authentic texts and materials can foster students' cultural experience and increase their cultural understanding (Galloway, 1980).

In summary, through Moran's cultural experiential learning cycle, learners play roles at the centre of the cycle. They are able to develop cultural behaviors, gather cultural information, discover cultural explanations, and build up their self-awareness. These are the keys to the Cultural Experience.

2. The Four Cultural Knowings Framework

The framework offers a means for describing culture in terms of what students need to do during learning culture. The framework is shown below in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3

Moran's Cultural Knowings: Content, Activities, Outcomes (Moran, 2001)

	Content	Activities	Outcomes
Knowing How	cultural practice	developing skills	cultural behaviors
Knowing About	cultural information	gathering information	cultural knowledge
Knowing Why	cultural perspectives	discovering explanations	cultural understanding
Knowing Oneself	Self	reflection	self-awareness

The Cultural Experience consists of four interconnected learning interactions as follows:

2.1 Knowing How

Knowing how is the interaction that involves acquiring **cultural practices**—behaviors, actions, skills, saying, touching, looking, standing, or other forms of ‘doing’. This calls for direct or simulated participation in the everyday life of the people of the target culture, according to their customs and traditions, using their tools or technology—and their language—to establish real relationships with them.

Learners need to be able to adapt and/or integrate into the culture—to say and do things in the manner of the people of the culture. This means changing behaviors to develop others that are appropriate for the culture.

These practices involve using language, other actions such as gestures, body posture, touching, eye contact, facial expressions, and other nonverbal elements.

2.2 Knowing About

Knowing about is the interaction which includes all activities that consists of gathering and demonstrating acquisition of **cultural information**—facts, data, or knowledge about products, practices, and perspectives of the culture. This is information about the specific culture and language, as well as about the nature of culture and the processes of learning and entering other cultures in general, or information about students' own culture.

2.3 Knowing Why

Knowing why is the interaction that deals with developing an understanding of fundamental **cultural perspectives**—the perceptions, beliefs, values, and attitudes that underlie or permeate all aspects of the culture. This is a process of learners' structured inquiry into observations, information, and experiences with the culture. Knowing why requires skills in probing, analyzing, and explaining the cultural phenomena that learners encounter, which necessarily involves a comparison with their own culture and themselves. Learners need to understand insider and outsider perspectives. The basic values of a culture are an important point of comparison with the values of the culture of the learners.

2.4 Knowing Oneself

Knowing oneself is the interaction which concerns the individual learners—their values, opinions, feelings, questions, reactions, thoughts, ideas, and their own cultural values as a central part of the cultural experience. It deals with **self-awareness**. The cultural experience is highly personal. Individual learners need to

understand themselves and their own culture as a means to comprehending, adapting to, or integrating into the culture. They need to recognize and manage the emotional highs and lows involved in the culture learning process. Eventually, it is the learners who decide the extent to which they engage in, accept, explore, or become part of the culture and develop expertise as culture learners.

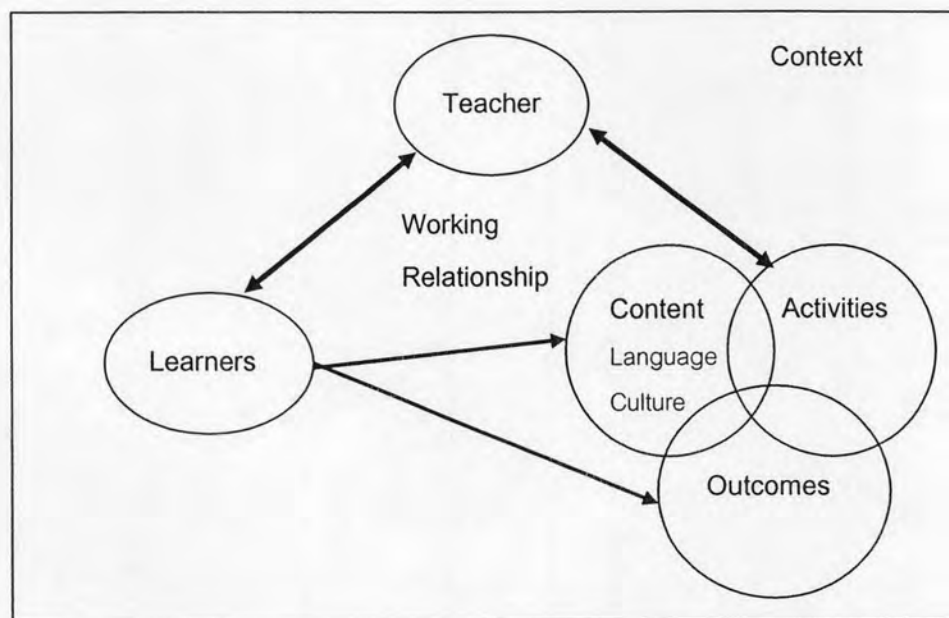
In sum, the interconnected Four Cultural Knowings: Knowing how; Knowing about; Knowing why; and Knowing oneself play significant roles in the Cultural Experience. All of the cyclical interactions appear in the process of the Cultural Experience.

3. The Cultural Experience: Culture as both content and process

The Cultural Experience contains content and process. The way of life is the content, and the learners' encounters are the process, the kinds of activities they undertake and the outcomes they achieve. Through a working relationship with the learners, the teacher is an integral part of this experience. Then, Cultural Experience can take place when the teacher, learners, and context are incorporated in the cycle and are at work as illustrated in Figure 2.2.

Figure 2.2

The Cultural Experience: Culture as both content and process (Moran, 2001)



It can be seen that the three frameworks in the Cultural Experience are intricately interwoven so they are inseparable. The teacher and learners cannot lose their close working relationship in the classroom. Learners can gain cultural knowledge through the Four Cultural Knowings in the Cultural Experiential Learning Cycle. Beginning with Knowing how, learners can develop cultural behaviors. Then, in Knowing about, they can gather cultural information. Next, they can discover cultural explanations in Knowing why, and finally, develop their self-awareness in Knowing oneself. All of the Four Cultural Knowings can be presented in the form of key questions that help learners learn at each interactive stage and help teachers acknowledge their roles and responsibilities. The details of the key questions will be discussed in the next section.

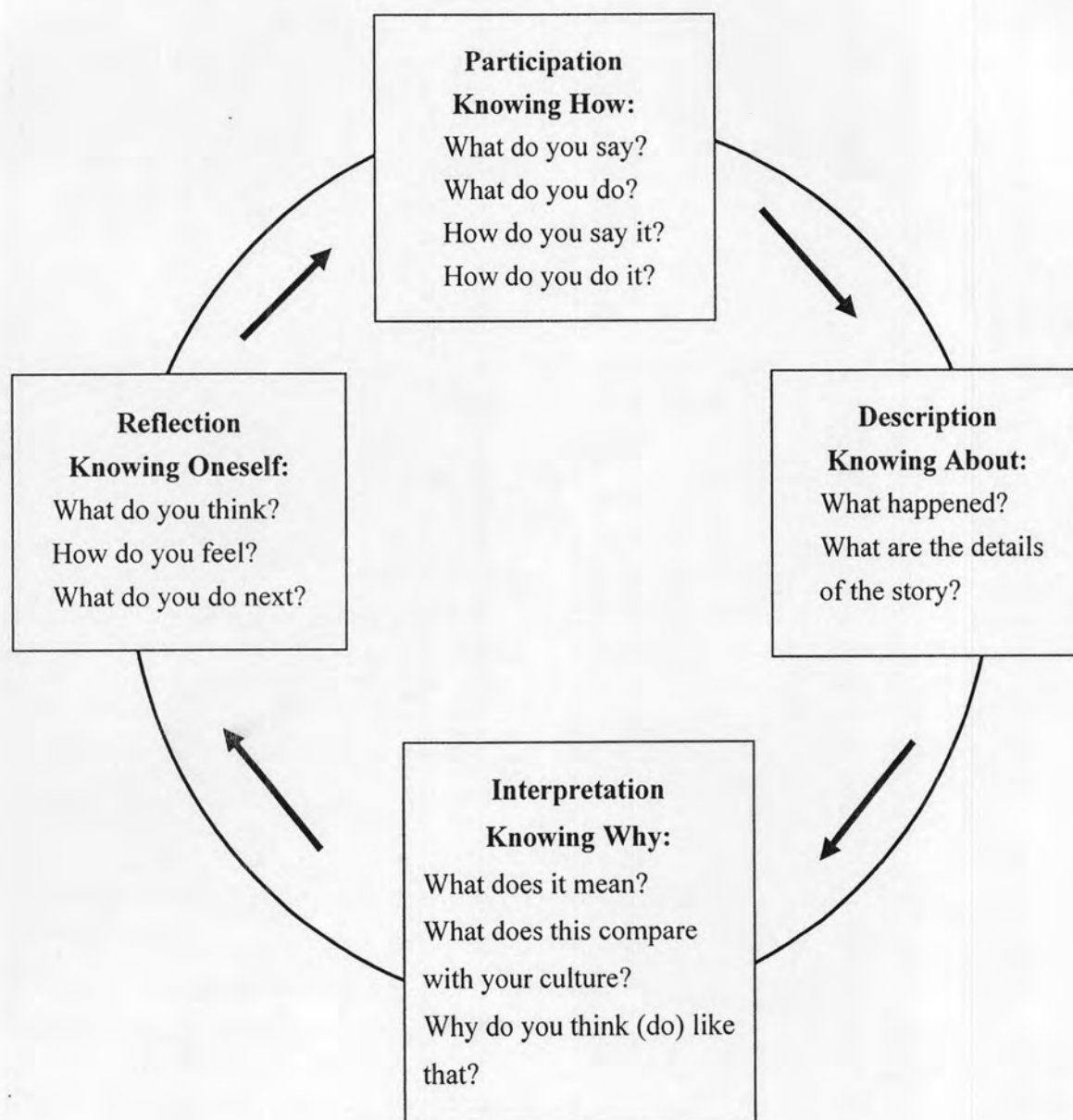
In this second section, focus questions for Cultural Experience, and contents, learning outcomes, learning activities, including teacher roles in the Four Cultural Knowings are described. Lastly, guidelines for teaching culture and the benefits of culture teaching to language learning are explained.

Focus Questions for the Cultural Experience

The Four Cultural Knowings correspond to the four stages of the cultural experiential cycle. When presented in the form of key questions, each stage has a particular focus as shown in Figure 2.3. These questions not only focus on the learning at each stage, they also emphasize on the teacher's roles and responsibilities. By holding to the questions at each phase and consciously playing the accompanying roles, teachers can guide learners through the cultural experience.

Figure 2.3

Focus Questions for the Cultural Experience (Moran, 2001)



Based on the focus question for the Cultural Experience cultural experiential learning cycle, Moran (2001) suggests that the sequence can begin with participation. Students directly participate in an experience, then follow in other stages.

Contents, Learning Outcomes, Learning Activities, and Teacher Roles in the Four Cultural Knowings

1. Knowing How requires a good deal of practice. It is all about actions: talking, doing, moving, dancing, singing, playing music, eating, or expressing oneself in the manner of the people of the culture. Thus, role-playing becomes a central learning strategy. Learners need to act differently in the new language and culture, like actors on stage.

As a model and a coach, the teacher shows learners what to do and how to do it. Modeling is rather straightforward, and consists of showing students the words or actions. Teachers can either perform the behaviors themselves or show learners other models, using audiotapes or videotapes or other outside sources. But coaching is different, and involves indicating to learners what to do as they are involved in actions, also involves offering encouragement, support, and guidance. The summary of Knowing How is demonstrated in Table 2.4.

Table 2.4

Summary of Knowing How

Content	Learning Outcomes	Learning Activities	Teacher Roles
<p>Cultural behaviors consist of the skills required to engage effectively and appropriately in the practices of the culture: operations, acts, and scenarios.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Language Mastery of the <i>linguistics</i> forms (phonology, lexicon, syntax) - Language and culture Ability to select and use linguistic forms and non-verbal behaviors that are appropriate for a given social situation, or in a particular situation through acts, operations, or scenarios - <i>Culture</i> Ability to manipulate the products of the culture in an appropriate manner 	<p>The primary learning outcome is that learners demonstrate performance of the cultural behaviors, or competence.</p>	<p>Cultural behaviors can be presented and practiced through many forms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Operations</i> - <i>Dialogues</i> - <i>Role-plays</i> - <i>Performances</i> - <i>Drama</i> - <i>Simulations</i> - <i>Field Experience</i> 	<p>The teacher plays two key roles in helping learners acquire cultural behaviors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>model</i> "Watch me do it." - <i>coach</i> "Do it this way."

2. Knowing About is the foundation of culture learning. Without a solid, well-rounded knowledge of the culture, learners' ability to develop cultural explanations will be limited or superficial. Information is not just about the culture under study, but in fact any aspects of culture can be presented and processed as information. The summary of Knowing About is shown in Table 2.5.

Table 2.5

Summary of Knowing About

Content	Learning Outcomes	Learning Activities	Teacher Roles
<p>Cultural information includes several topic areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>The target culture</i> Information about the culture(s) of the language - <i>The learner's culture</i> Information about the culture(s) that the learners bring to the classroom - <i>Concepts of culture</i> Information about the nature of culture—definitions and theories, along with the terminology - <i>Culture learning</i> Information about the nature of learning culture—acculturation, adaptation, identity development, and strategies for managing encounters with cultural differences - <i>Personal experiences</i> 	<p>The primary learning outcome is that learners demonstrate comprehension of the information presented:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - learners' ability to recall or restate the information presented - learners' ability to recognize the nature of the information presented—as "fact" or opinion 	<p>Cultural behaviors can be presented and practiced through many forms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Authentic material</i> - <i>Pedagogical material</i> - <i>Experiences</i> - <i>Personal accounts</i> 	<p>The teacher plays four key roles in helping learners acquire cultural information.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Source</i> "This is what I know. This is what I have experienced." - <i>Resource</i> "Read this." "Look at this." "Write this." - <i>Arbiter</i> "What did you read / see / hear?" "What happened?" - <i>Elicitor</i> "Tell me what you know about this."

3. Knowing Why is the most intellectually demanding of the knowings. Learners have to make sense out of the new cultural phenomenon. To do this, they bring their own worldview to the task, and their natural tendency is to explain what they see from their own outside perspective. To make accurate cultural explanations, they need the insider's view. Learners have to take on another worldview, to see from the viewpoint of the other and they need to use comparison and contrast with their own culture as the primary learning strategy. The summary of Knowing Why is illustrated in Table 2.6.

Table 2.6

Summary of Knowing Why

Content	Learning Outcomes	Learning Activities	Teacher Roles
<p>Cultural interpretations include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Emic perspectives</i> Perceptions, values, beliefs, and attitudes that the members of the culture use to explain themselves and their worldview - <i>Etic perspectives</i> Perceptions, values, beliefs, and attitudes from other cultures or from culture general concepts that the learners use to interpret the target culture - <i>Comparisons</i> Explicit juxtaposition of emic and etic perspectives to gain insight into the similarities and differences between (and among) cultures 	<p>The primary learning outcome is that learners demonstrate the ability to make cultural explanations. Explanations are of three types:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - understanding of the culture on its own terms - understandings of the culture using outside frameworks - understandings of the culture using outside frameworks - comparisons of the target culture to other cultures 	<p>Cultural interpretations can be presented and practiced through many forms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Cultural analysis</i> - <i>Research projects</i> - <i>Field experiences</i> 	<p>The teacher plays two key roles in helping learners acquire cultural explanations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Guide</i> “How does this compare with your culture?” “What are other possible interpretations?” - <i>Co-researcher</i> “In my inquiry, I found this..”

4. Knowing Oneself is the stage that learners react to their encounters with the culture through their cultural conditioning. They are in the process of exploring themselves and reflection on their lives and worldviews. The summary of Knowing Oneself is shown in Table 2.7.

Table 2.7

Summary of Knowing Oneself

Content	Learning Outcomes	Learning Activities	Teacher Roles
<p>The content of knowing oneself is the individual learner's worldview and personal competence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Reactions</i> Thoughts, feelings, beliefs, attitudes that emerge in reaction to the phenomena and experience of the target culture or culture learning. - <i>Responses</i> Reflections on one's reactions, on the choices one faces in entering or adapting to the culture. - <i>Focused talking</i> <i>Structured</i> conversations and discussions with others on these topics or questions - <i>Focused writing</i> Opportunities to reflect and write on these topics and questions 	<p>The primary learning outcome is learners' expressions of self-awareness:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - awareness of one's own culture - awareness of oneself as a cultural being - awareness of one's own feelings - awareness of one's own feelings, perceptions, beliefs, values, and attitudes 	<p>Self-awareness activities consist of opportunities for self-expression through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Reflection</i> <i>Structured</i> opportunities for learners to contemplate questions or topics as these relate to learners' lives and worldviews 	<p>The teacher plays three key roles in helping learners acquire self-awareness.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Listener</i> "How do you feel about it?" "What do you think about this?" - <i>Witness</i> "This is what I think you are saying / doing." - <i>Co-learner</i> "In my experience, I have felt this way about it."

In the third section, guidelines for teaching culture and the benefits of culture teaching to language learning are explained.

Guidelines for Teaching Culture (Moran, 2001)

Moran (2001) suggested 12 guidelines for teaching culture. The guidelines are described as follows:

1. Teaching culture consists of guiding learners through the cultural experience to develop Cultural Knowings.
2. Organizing the cultural experience involves joining cultural content and the learning process through the four stages of the experiential learning cycle.
3. The cultural content learners examine derives from an analysis of products, practices, and perspectives of the culture, which are set within certain communities and uniquely manifested in persons of that culture.
4. As learners move through each of the stages of the experiential learning cycle they develop cultural behaviors (Knowing how), acquire cultural information (Knowing about), discover cultural explanations (Knowing why), articulate personal responses (Knowing oneself), and, by repeatedly employing this process, build skills as culture learners (personal competence).
5. To engage in each of these stages, learners acquire the language and culture of participation, description, interpretation, and response.
6. The teacher needs to identify culture learning outcomes. Outcomes vary greatly depending on the educational context, the curriculum, the learners, and teachers, and they can range from culture-specific understanding in a foreign language context to assimilation into a second language context.
7. Every learner goes through the culture learning process in a unique way. Because of these individual variations, one of the primary tasks for the teacher is to help learners express and respond to their cultural learning experiences.

8. The experiential cycle, by organizing the learning process into four distinct stages, delineates language and culture content, activities, and outcomes. Each stage—Participation, description, interpretation, response—deals with a different aspect of culture and culture learning.
9. For each stage of the cycle, the teacher needs to select and structure particular content areas, learning activities, and accompanying learning outcomes. Thus, In each stage, learners are engaged in distinct tasks.
10. In teaching each stage, the teacher must play different roles. These roles stem from different teaching strategies and call for different outlooks or attitudes on the teacher's part. Teachers need to consciously interact differently with learners when teaching knowing how, knowing about, knowing why, and knowing oneself. The working relationship the teacher establishes with the learners through these roles is crucial.
11. Teachers need to be versatile. They need to be able to present or elicit cultural information, coach and model cultural behaviors, guide and conduct cultural research and analysis. They also need to be able to enter learners' worlds by listening, emphasizing, and sharing their own experiences as culture learners so as to help learners step out of their worlds into another language, another culture.
12. Teachers need to be learners of culture. They need to go through cultural experience that they propose for learners in their language classes. Such experiences will help teachers learn the culture of the learners and may also help lead teachers to new areas in their own cultural learning.

The Benefits of Culture Teaching to Language Learning

Due to the inseparability of language and culture, culture teaching appears in foreign language classrooms. Tsou (2005) stated that from her study, the culture lessons can help students develop their four language skills: listening, speaking, writing, and reading. They had more cultural knowledge and were more interested in language learning.

Additionally, McKay (2002) explained that culture is essential to the language learning because culture is really an integral part of the interaction between language and thoughts so it help students enhance cultural patterns, customs, and ways of life that are expressed in language.

Similarly, Richards (1994) agreed that culture content in general is motivating to students in language learning. Robinson and Nocon (1996) also reported that students have positive opinions and feelings on language study when teachers tie linguistic with cultural knowledge. Furthermore, Cheung (2001) proposed that since cultural content appeals to students, it motivates them to become responsive and active English learners. Besides, Wright (2006) indicated that cultural instruction and cross-cultural instruction play important roles in language learning since they can increase students' interests in language learning.

In conclusion, there are many advantages of cultural instruction to language learning. From those points of view, students' language proficiency scores are higher. Students' cultural knowledge is more increased, and their opinions through language learning are positive.

Hence, according to the benefits of culture teaching in language learning, the researcher is interested in adapting Cultural Experience Model (Moran, 2001) to her Cultural Experiential Instruction.

There are many advantages of Cultural Experience Model (Moran, 2001) that the researcher has found. First, the model promotes student-centered learning so students play an important role in culture learning. The researcher believes that Moran's model will help students interact in cross-cultural encounters. According to McKay (2002), she stated that the interaction in cross-cultural encounters is the goal of using culture in language teaching. Without encountering differences between cultures, students often react negatively (Mantle-Bromley, 1992). Secondly, the Four Cultural Knowings in the model enhances learning through experience. When time passes, cultures change. Therefore, students should learn cultural contents that take place at a particular time (Woodward, 2001). Next, culture as well as language is promoted to teach in each stage of cultural experiential learning cycle. Another strong point of this model is its learning process through experience. Students are involved in every stage of the cycle, so they can develop cultural behavior, acquire cultural information, discover cultural explanation, and build up their self-awareness. Lastly, unlike many EFL or ESL classrooms, the model highlights cultural teaching but still has a focus on language teaching.

However, there are drawbacks of Cultural Experiential Model (Moran, 2001). The cultural experiential learning cycle was too strict. Moran (2001) recommended that students begin with participation in Knowing How. They are followed by description in Knowing About, then proceed to interpretation in Knowing Why and finish with reflection in Knowing Oneself. However, the stage of Knowing About can sometimes come before the stage of Knowing How. That is to say, teachers should provide the cultural information or show students how to find the cultural information. For example, teachers should teach English words about food before teaching students how to order food.

Therefore, the researcher does not strictly follow Moran's cultural experiential learning cycle. The stage of Knowing How and the stage of Knowing About are sometimes switched in the study of the effects of Cultural Experiential Instruction on students' English oral communication ability.

With regards to language and culture, they are deeply embedded in linguistic and social aspects of communication (Zhang & Yan, 2006). Students use language as a tool to communicate a variety of cultural information in their real-life communication.

One of the communicative skills that are affected by cultural learning is oral communication. Based on the study of effects of culture learning during 2003-2004 in Turkey (Genc & Bada, 2005), it revealed that culture learning enhances the improvement of the four skills for communication. From the study, 42.6% of the students show that their oral communication skill is improved in culture class. Another communicative skill which 26.3% of the students expressed their opinion on their improvement was reading skill. Other 26.3% and 5.3% of students vote to listening skill and writing skill respectively. From the data, it is obviously seen that a great number of students can improve their oral communication skill after learning culture. In other words, culture learning promotes their oral communication ability.

In the fourth section, definition of oral communication ability, components of oral communication ability, the teaching methods of oral communication, classroom activities for oral communication ability development, the assessment of oral communication ability, the criteria of oral communication ability assessment are reviewed. The importances of teaching English oral communication and world culture as well as studies on culture teaching in language classroom are also presented.

Oral Communication Ability

Definition of Oral Communication Ability

Hymes (1972), Littlewood (1981), and Shumin (1997) defined that oral communication ability as the ability to use the language appropriately in social interactions.

Chen (2005) defined oral communication ability is the ability to efficiently orally express the meaning of language.

Similarly, Zuheer (2008) stated that oral communication ability is the ability to exchange oral information between two or more persons. In addition, it is an ability to clarify information, to express feelings, opinions, and attitudes, to explain and define something, and to talk about events.

Besides, oral communication ability can be referred to as speaking ability. Both relate to oral fluency through interpersonal communication. According to Tarone (1974), oral communication ability or speaking ability is the ability to communicate orally and simultaneously between or among people. This ability relates to a complicated communicative way that involves grammar, pronunciation, and the sound system such as stress, intonation, and rhythm.

It can be summarized that oral communication ability or speaking ability is the orally communicative and interactive process. It deals with the language usage, pronunciation, and the sound system.

Components of Oral Communication Ability

Oral communication or speaking is the process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal symbols. It is a complex language process. So, speakers should be aware of different components of oral communication ability in order to communicate with other people effectively.

Linder (1977) stated that there are 6 components of oral communication ability: (1) Fluency which means the continuity of speaking; (2) Comprehensibility which means the ability to understand completely; (3) Amount of Communication which means amount of information in oral communication; (4) Quality of Communication which relates to the language accuracy when speaking; (5) Effort of Communication which means attempt to make listeners understand one's speech, including body language.

Bussby and Majors (1987) said that components of oral communication ability consist of 6 features as follows: (1) Accuracy; (2) Clarity; (3) Completeness; (4) Appropriateness; (5) Liveliness; and (6) Economy

Similar to Bussby and majors (1987), Weir (1990) presented 4 components of oral communication ability. These components are Fluency, Appropriateness, including Accuracy, and Range which means the accurate grammatical structures that are able to use in oral communication.

Additionally, Zuheer (2008) pointed out that there are 8 components of oral communication ability: (1) Speech Sounds and Sound Patterns; (2) Stress, Intonation Patterns, and the rhythm; (3) Vocabulary; (4) Grammar; (5) Appropriateness; (6) Organization; (7) Values and Judgments; and (8) Fluency.

In sum, it is clearly seen that there are various components of oral communication ability: Amount of Communication, Quality of Communication; Effort of Communication, Accuracy, Fluency, Completeness, Appropriateness, and Liveliness. All of which are necessary for effective oral communication. Moreover, the sound system, vocabulary, and grammar are also important.

The Teaching Methods of Oral Communication

According to Richards (1990), he presented the two approaches in oral communication teaching. The first approach is an indirect approach which promotes interactive communication activities such as role play, simulation in language classrooms. Through this approach, students can naturally develop their oral communication ability. The other is a direct approach. It emphasizes on language usage such as grammar structures and supports students to have fluency and accuracy while communicating.

Furthermore, he suggests that teachers should blend both oral communication approaches in their language teaching. In teaching speaking, a direct approach is recommended to come before an indirect approach. In other words, teachers should teach grammar structures before they motivate students to practice speaking in communicative activities.

Aside from the both approaches from Richards (1990), Harmer (1992) divided the steps of teaching oral communication into 3 steps: (1) Introduction; (2) Practice; and (3) Communicative activities.

In the first step, teachers introduce students to know the meaning of sentences, and grammatical structures. The next step is to allow students to practice speaking

through dialogues related to grammatical structures that they have learned in the first step. The last step is the focus on communicative activities such as role play or simulation.

Besides, Bygate (1993) presented his idea on teaching oral communication in 2 aspects. Firstly, teachers should motivate students to form accurate grammatical structures, and to pronounce words correctly. Then, teachers create situations which are similar to real-life experience in order to allow students to practice oral interactive communication with their classmates.

Apparently, there are a lot of teaching methods in oral communication. Most educators suggested that teachers give the importance to grammatical structures and interactive skills in language classrooms. Moreover, teachers should create speaking contents and activities relating to students' real-life experiences.

In the study of effects of Cultural Experiential Instruction on English oral communication ability, the researcher adopted the Four Cultural Knowings in Cultural Experience Model (Moran, 2001) in Cultural Experiential Instruction in order to enhance students' English oral communication ability. The Four Cultural Knowings motivate students to learn cultural contents, grammatical structures and participate in cultural activities through their experience.

Classroom Activities for Development of Oral Communication Ability

Classroom activities are factors in developing oral communication ability. There are many activities as follows:

Rivers and Temperley (1978) stated that there are 14 activities in teaching oral communication. The activities are: (1) Establishing and maintaining social relations; (2) Expressing reactions; (3) Hiding one's intention; (4) Talking one's way

out of trouble; (5) Seeking and giving information; (6) Learning or teaching how to make or do something; (7) Conversing over the telephone; (8) Problem-solving; (9) Discussing ideas; (10) Language games; (11) Acting out social roles; (12) Entertaining others; (13) Displaying one's achievement; and (14) Sharing leisure activities.

Additionally, Harmer (1992) presented that in teaching oral communication there are 6 activities as follows: (1) Discussion which promotes communication without preparation; (2) Communicative game such as describing and arranging pictures which create students' creative thinking through speaking; (3) Story reconstruction; (4) Problem-solving which stimulate students to solve problems in unreal situations; (5) Interpersonal exchange; and (6) Simulation.

Similarly, Bygate (1995) proposed 4 activities in teaching speaking. They are: (1) Information-gap activities; (2) Communication games; (3) Simulations; and (4) Project-based interaction activities.

In summary, oral communication activities are built up to develop students' oral communication ability. Through these helpful activities, language teachers can motivate students to communicate with their peers, native speakers, or even teachers so that students can communicate a target language with other people in their real life.

In the study, the researcher focuses on Cultural Experience Model (Moran, 2001) which consists of the four Cultural Knowings. The activities in each step of Cultural Knowings are interconnected. Apart from promoting cultural behaviors, cultural knowledge, cultural understanding, and self-awareness, the oral communication activities such as dialogues, role plays, performances, drama, simulations, field experiences, research projects, discussion in the Cultural Knowings help students practice oral communication skills.

The Assessment of Oral Communication Ability

Heaton (1990) suggested 7 means to assess students' oral communication ability. The 10 means are: (1) Read aloud; (2) Re-telling stories; (3) Pictures for description; (4) Pictures for comparison; (5) Sequences of pictures; (6) Pictures with speech bubbles; and (7) Oral interview.

Weir (1993) presented that there are 4 assessment of oral communication ability as follows: (1) Interview / Conversation; (2) Role playing; (3) Information gap; and (4) Information transfer.

Underhill (1994) stated that there are 5 types of assessment as follows: (1) Conversation / Discussion; (2) Oral report; (3) Role play; (4) Interview; and (5) Describing a picture.

Ur (1996) recommended 5 assessment of oral communication ability. They are: (1) Describing pictures; (2) Telling Picture difference; (3) Asking; (4) Role play; and (5) Problem solving.

It can be summarized that there are a lot of means to assess students' oral communication ability. All of the assessments have focuses on interactive oral communication between students and students or between students and teachers.

In this study, the researcher constructs the pre/post paralleled English oral communication tests. The objective of the tests is to allow students to describe the cultural information in the pictures as well as to interpret the similarities and differences between Thai culture and world culture, and to reflect their opinions and feelings on Thai culture and world culture.

The Criteria of Oral Communication Ability Assessment

Harris (1990) divided 5 criteria of oral communication ability assessment. The 5 criteria are as follows: (1) Pronunciation; (2) Grammar; (3) Accuracy; (4) Fluency; and (5) Appropriateness.

Apart from the above criteria, there are 4 criteria based on University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate: PET SPEAKING (1996) Fluency, Accuracy and appropriateness of language, Pronunciation, and Task achievement are used to assess oral communication ability.

Besides, The Associated Examining Board Test cited from Weir (1993) presented 6 criteria. The criteria are: (1) Appropriateness; (2) Adequacy of vocabulary for purpose; (3) Grammatical Accuracy; (4) Intelligibility; (5) Fluency; and (6) Relevance and Adequacy of Content.

Additionally, the Test of Speaking English (TSE) Rating Scale (1995) uses the criteria including four categories as follows: (1) ability to perform the language function clearly and effectively (functional competence); (2) appropriateness of the response to the designated audience or situation (sociolinguistic competence); (3) coherence of the response and use of cohesive devices (discourse competence); and (4) accuracy in the use of linguistic features (linguistic competence).

In summary, there are a number of the different criteria of oral communication ability assessment. The criteria are used with regards to the objectives of the oral communication test.

In this study, the Test of Speaking English (TSE) Rating Scale (1995) is used to evaluate students' English oral communication ability. However, the researcher does not strictly follow TSE criteria because the English Oral Communication Test is culture-based. The 4 aspects above are not the focus of this study. It focuses on the overall communicative oral language performance on cultural content.

The Importance of Teaching English Oral Communication and World Culture

Nowadays teaching English oral communication and world culture has been promoted worldwide because of the global spread of English as a means of wider communication. Today, English is spoken by both English native speakers and non-native English speakers. According to Crystal (1997) cited from McKay (2002), English is not only spoken by the second largest L1 population (320-380 million), but is also most widely used as L2 (150-300 million) and as a foreign language (100-1,000 million). It is an official language of major international organizations. English is a major language of international trading, commerce, broadcasting, communication, safety, traveling, transportation, sports events, academic conferences, including IT technology. That is to say, English is now considered as a global language that is widely used for communication by people of different cultures (Harumi, 2002).

Since English is a global language, it is worthwhile to expose EFL students to various cultures around the world because they have relatively few chances to meet foreigners in their daily lives. Through direct or indirect experience, students will be able to acquire cultural knowledge and understand the value of different world cultures, including their own culture (Moran, 2001). It is important for students to understand not only differences but also similarities between cultures.

Consequently, teaching English oral communication and world culture is of vital importance in EFL classes. Students should not only be taught to overcome linguistic barriers for cross-cultural communication, but, more importantly, they should also be fostered cross-cultural awareness and understanding of peoples around the world through direct and indirect communication.

Studies on Culture Teaching in language classroom

There are some studies on effects of culture teaching. Studies have shown that culture teaching help students improve their language skills for communication.

According to Tsou (2005), she studied effects of culture instruction on foreign language learning. In her study, the combination of an anthropology process and task-oriented approach were applied to conduct the culture lessons. In each lesson, students were asked to discuss, in their native language, what they already knew about the topics to be studied in both their home culture and the target culture. After each lesson, additional information about the topic was often provided as supplementary materials for her students.

For the assessment, before and after the instruction, students were assessed on two different measures: English proficiency test (STYLE, Saxoncourt Tests for Young Learners of English, Level 1) and culture knowledge questionnaire. The test is a series of listening and reading-based comprehension tests for children.

After the instruction, the students gained higher score on language proficiency test their cultural knowledge had increased. Also, students can develop their four language skills. In addition, they became more interested in English and utilized more English words and sentences.

Furthermore, Genc and Bada (2005) studied students' opinions on the effects of the culture class. The data for their study was collected three months following the completion of the 28-hour culture course taken during the fall term of 2003-2004 academic year. During this course lecture-type sessions, research project presentations were held. Students taking this class made an assessment of the course, responding to a five-item questionnaire. The five-item questionnaire utilized in this study aimed to assess these aspects: (1) language skill; (2) cultural awareness (of both native and target culture; and (3) attitude towards the target culture.

The results in the study were shown in 3 aspects. First, students' language communicative skills were improved, especially oral communication skill. Secondly, culture learning in a language class helped them raise their cultural awareness on target cultures and their home culture. Finally, students' attitudes towards target cultures changed after learning those cultures.

In summary, from all the findings based on the quantitative and qualitative data seemed to confirm that culture teaching helped enhance students' language communicative skills.

Conclusion

From the literature review, the researcher adapted Cultural Experiential Instruction from Cultural Experience Model (Moran, 2001). This model promotes student-centered learning, so students play an important role in culture learning. The researcher believes that Moran's model will help students interact in cross-cultural encounters. Furthermore, the Four Cultural Knowings in Cultural Experience Model enhances learning through experience. Besides, the strong point of this model is its learning process through experience. Students are involved in every stage of the cycle, so they can develop cultural behavior, acquire cultural information, discover cultural explanation, and build up their self-awareness, including their oral communication ability through Cultural Knowing activities.

There are a lot of advantages in Cultural Experience Model (Moran, 2001); however, there is no research about Cultural Experiential Instruction based on Cultural Experience Model. Hence, the researcher is very interested in the implementation and effects of Cultural Experiential Instruction on students' English oral communication ability in an EFL classroom in Thailand.