



EMaDA & RIA Interim Progress Sharing Event

Integrating the teaching of English and culture in Junior High School classrooms

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Nottingham Trent University

Supported by



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Project brief

- To conduct an analysis of rural junior high school English teachers' need for resources that can improve the development of cross-cultural education through English language teaching.
- To develop context-appropriate, culture theme-based digital resources for English teachers in rural and disadvantaged areas.
- This is in line with national level priorities supporting equality and improved quality of education in rural areas through the digital medium.

Target schools



Project plan

- Review of the literature and best practice
- Detailed analysis of target learner and teacher needs
- Development of resources and teacher guide
- Piloting of materials in target schools
- Training for teachers in the effective use of the materials
- Dissemination of materials in target regions

Literature review

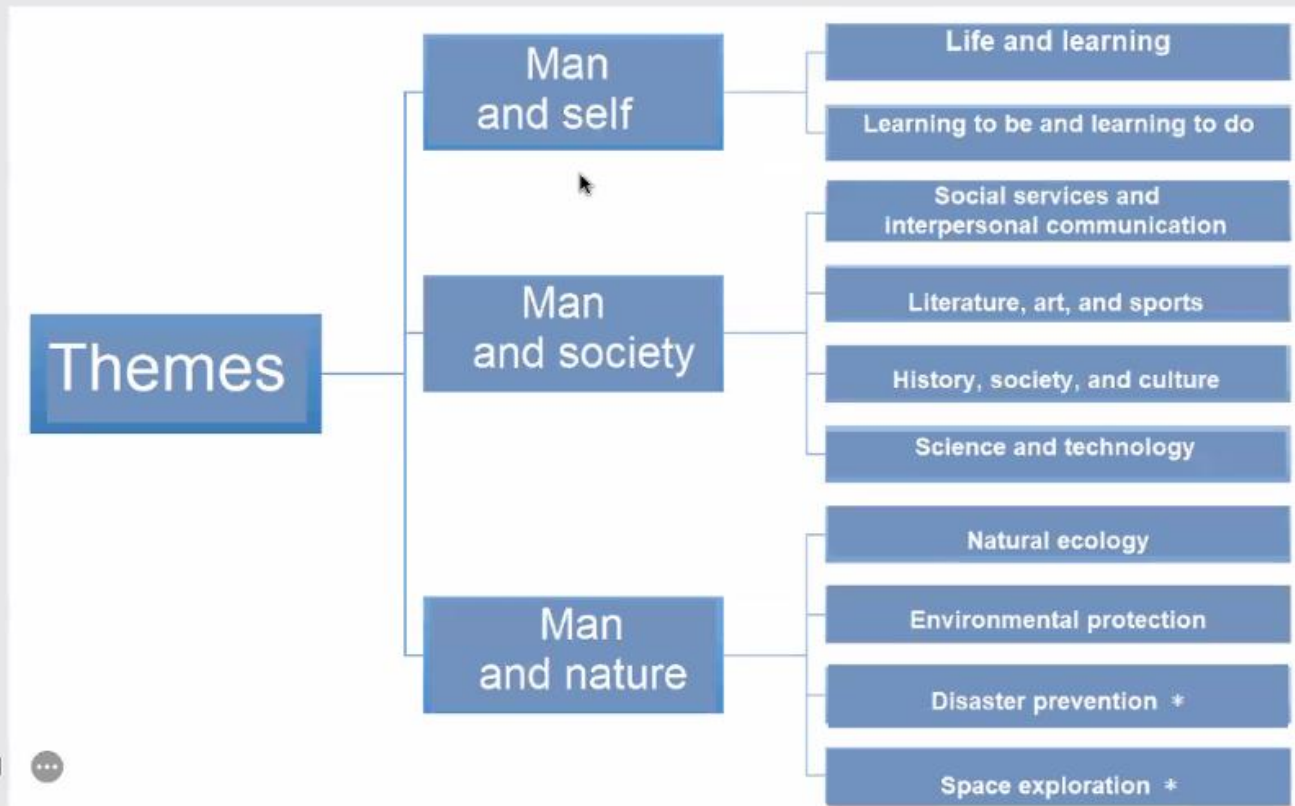
- belief that the goal of language learning is not just about developing linguistic skills or collecting cultural information, but about becoming an ‘intercultural speaker’ who can mediate between different cultures and different viewpoints (Hua, 2014).
- objective of language and cultural learning is not replacing learners’ native language and culture with a different language and culture, but learners defining for themselves a ‘third culture’ or ‘third place’, (Kramsch, 2009) where their own and the target culture interact with each other.
- studies have shown that bespoke language learning materials that enable intercultural exploration improve young learner motivation (e.g. Kanoksilapatham, 2015).
- International Posture - a tendency to see oneself as connected to the international community, have concerns for international affairs and possess a readiness to interact with people other than your L1 community (Yashima, 2009).
- International Posture has been positively linked, directly or indirectly, to several desirable outcomes in language learning motivation (Botes et al, 2020).

New National Curriculum

- ‘Cultural Awareness’ now defined as one of 4 ‘Core Competencies’.
- “Students will develop understanding of the concept of ‘a global community of shared future’ and of globally shared values; ... learn about different cultures, respect cultural diversity and differences, and make their own judgments based on ... cultural comparisons; establish international perspectives, and build confidence in sharing their own culture.”
- Cultural awareness “isn’t limited to understanding and remembering specific knowledge, the more important thing is to discover and judge the attitudes and values behind them.”
- New emphasis on ‘thinking capacity’ – “Students will be able to develop the ability to think through learning English and to improve English learning while building thinking capacity. They will be able to observe and understand the world and look at things from multiple dimensions.”
- “... teaching should be led by themes and supported by texts, encouraging students to learn language and cultural knowledge in an integrated manner ..., so they can express personal views and attitudes ... , solve real problems, and achieve the purpose of developing their core competencies.
- “Teachers should avoid excessive development of learning materials of tutoring type similar to the textbook content, such as practice questions, test questions, and study guides. In addition, ... development and use of curriculum resources should be need based.”

New National Curriculum

Themes: provide a selection of resources for language learning and student development



Research tools

- Survey of junior high school EL learners in target areas
- Survey of junior high school EL teachers in target areas
- Interviews with sample of target teachers

Teacher survey

- questionnaire consisted of Likert-scale items, multiple-choice items, and open questions.
- the following areas were targeted:
 - confidence in teaching English through English
 - beliefs about native-speakerism
 - perceived cultural competence
 - beliefs on the role of culture in language teaching
 - perceived obstacles to integrating culture-themed activities in class
- core questionnaire was made up of four multi-item scales either adapted from published examples freely available via the IRIS database or developed in house
- all scales were piloted with 15 teachers from the target population and reliability analysis conducted -based on this analysis, some items were removed or rewritten

Teacher survey

- final questionnaire converted to an electronic platform and sent to target teachers
- after data collection, post-hoc reliability analysis was conducted and underperforming items removed before items were collapsed into scales
- here are the scales and their associated Alpha values:
 - Confidence in teaching English through English – 6 items (0.948)
 - Beliefs about native-speakerism – 5 items (0.715)
 - Perceived cultural competence – 4 items (0.614)
 - Beliefs about integrating culture with language teaching – 7 items (0.854)

Student survey

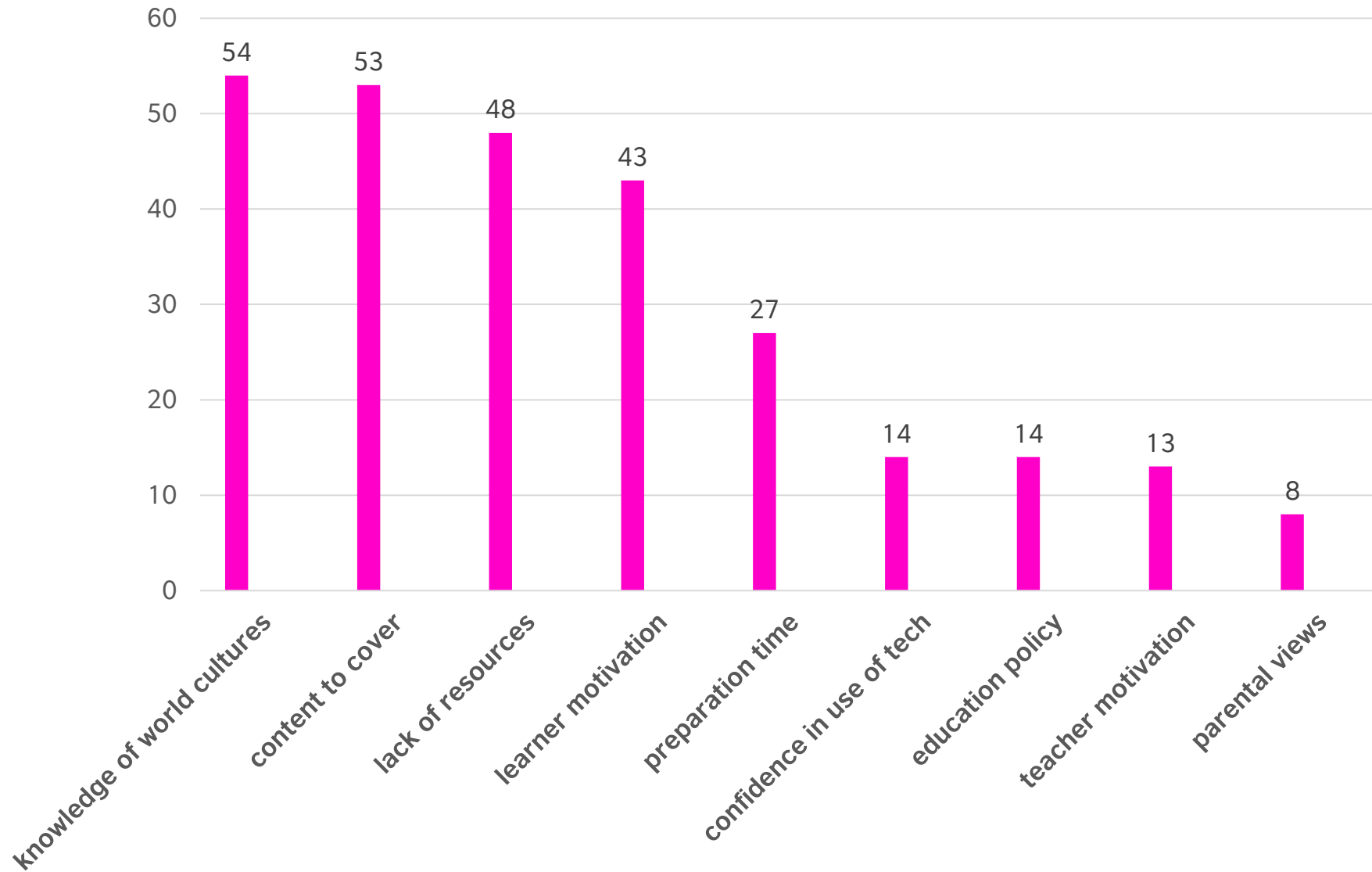
- questionnaire consisted of Likert-scale items, semantic-differential scales, and open questions
- the following areas were targeted:
 - international posture
 - attitude to learning English
 - perceived level of English
 - key areas of interest in world cultures
 - access to digital technology at home
- two multi-items scales, adapted from published questionnaires (e.g., Yashima 2009)
- piloting with 30 learners from the target population, and reliability analysis was conducted after both the pilot and the main data collection
- final scales and their associated Alpha values were as follows:
 - International Posture -17 items (0.907)
 - Attitude to learning English - 8 items (0.936)

Teacher survey – summary of findings

- Total number of respondents: 330 (Female = 77%, Male = 23%)
- Number of schools = 133
- Teaching experience: ≤ 5 years = 21%; ≥ 16 years = 44%
- Teacher qualification: Bachelor = 85%, Masters = 11%, Doctorate = 1%
- Experience abroad: visited 20%; lived 10%
- Access to AV equipment/internet in class = 95%/93%

- Confidence in teaching English through English (1-5): $M=3.88$; $SD=0.79$
- Beliefs about native-speakerism (1-5): $M=3.40$; $SD=0.74$
- Perceived cultural confidence (1-5): $M=3.52$; $SD=0.54$
- Beliefs about integrating culture with ELT (1-5): $M=3.77$; $SD=0.38$

Main challenges to integrating culture teaching in ELT



Teacher views on what aspects of world cultures most interest their learners

- Cultural differences
- History
- Festivals
- Customs
- Daily life
- Diet

(Based on a frequency analysis of nouns used in responses to open question)

Student survey – summary of findings

- Total number of respondents: 4281 (Female = 53%, Male = 47%)
- Number of schools = 28
- Age range = 12-15
- Grades = 7-9

- International posture (1-5): M=3.53; SD=0.77

- Attitude to learning English (1-5): M=3.65; SD=1.00

- Self evaluation of English proficiency (1-10): M=4.90; SD=2.4
 - reading M=5.01
 - writing M=4.65
 - listening M=5.21
 - speaking M=4.73

What aspects of world cultures most interest learners

- Cultural differences
- History
- Living habits
- Food
- Language
- Customs

(Based on a frequency analysis of nouns used in responses to open question)

What do learners enjoy doing in their free time?

- Reading books
- Playing computer games
- Watching TV
- Learning English
- Eating
- Listening to songs
- Chatting online
- Drawing
- Dancing
- Taking pictures
- Traveling

(Based on a frequency analysis of nouns used in responses to open question)

Headlines

- Teachers are broadly positive about integrating EL and culture teaching in the classroom but see their lack of knowledge of world cultures and the absence of appropriate resources as the main obstacle.
- Teachers also see a problem in finding space for new culture-related content in an already crowded curriculum and feel that their learners may lack the motivation to engage with it.
- Teachers are fairly confident in their ability to teach English through English but see the native speaker as the most appropriate model for their learners.
- Learners have a positive attitude to EL learning and a desire to learn more about world cultures.
- The vast majority of classrooms are equipped for the use of audio-visual resources and have internet access.
- Most learners have access to smartphones at home though relatively few have computers or tablets.

Implications for our teaching resources

- The design of the resources we develop must be driven by the data.
- The resources developed need to be easy for teachers to use, with clear guidance and not too demanding on their preparation time.
- Resources must be clearly linked to the existing language syllabus – recycling language already taught rather than introducing too much new vocabulary and grammar.
- Topics and activities must be engaging for learners, based on **their** interests and motivations.
- Resources should be designed with flexibility in mind so they can be integrated with the core syllabus as teachers find appropriate.

Next steps

- To complete the teacher interviews, analyse the resulting data and cross reference with survey data.
- To continue detailed analysis of survey data.
- To revise draft resources already produced in the light of data.
- To pilot resources in selected target schools.
- To host events to introduce teachers to the resources.

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