EIL and the adult ESL context in the UK: an investigation into immigrant's beliefs about the aspects of culture learning that are important for social integration in the UK

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British Council ELT Master's Dissertation Awards: Commendation

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TLM30

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MA ELT

Dissertation

University of Brighton

November 2015

Abstract

As English has become *the* global language in the world and is increasingly being used cross-culturally in international contexts, English educators are faced with finding new ways of teaching English and culture to help their students become truly proficient. This is especially the case when teaching English in an ESL context such as in the UK as the social integration of these learners depends on how well they speak English and understand British culture. The ESL classroom can become a training ground for these learners to explore and be equipped with the language and culture tools they need to live socially integrated lives in British society. The literature review discusses this opportunity in depth and the qualitative action research case study conducted among adult immigrants through a focus group interview and an ethnographic approach to language and culture teaching reveals valuable insights. It highlights relevant topics which can be taught in this context, how the students would like to learn about British culture, aspects of British society that make it difficult for ESL students to integrate socially. It also highlights that an ethnographic approach to language and culture teaching in this context can help these students to develop a cross-cultural vision, practise their speaking skills, gain cultural awareness and facilitate cultural exchange between the language learners and the target community. The conclusions from this study lead to valuable recommendations for classroom practice, curriculum development, continual professional development and further research.

Acknowledgements

My special thanks go to my husband Darren for his encouragement, support and patience while undertaking my MA studies. Thank you so much for helping me to make this dream come true and for all the cups of tea / cappuccinos you made me!

I would like to thank my family and friends who cheered me on over these two years. Thank you for your support, for listening to me and for sharing my ups and downs with me when I was working on assignments and eventually on my dissertation.

In terms of academic guidance, I thank my supervisor Barbara Chamberlin for her advice and support.

A special 'thank you' goes to all the students at All Nations Language Centre who I had the privilege to get to know and teach over these last two years. Your lives and stories are an inspiration to me and I have learned so much from you. Thank you for opening up your lives to me for this research project and for your valuable and fascinating contributions!

I acknowledge that this dissertation was proof-read by D. Osborne.

Word count: 15,950

Table of Contents

List of Figures

List of Tables

1. Introduction

As English is *the* global language in the world (Crystal 2003; McKay 2002) it can be argued that it is an international language and therefore a language of intercultural communication (Sharifian 2009). English today is used extensively in cross-cultural contexts and not just for native – non-native encounters. It is therefore argued (Tomalin and Stempleski 1993; Sharifian 2009; McKay 2012, 2002; Matsuda 2002; Byram 1998) that in order for a language learner to become a proficient user of English, intercultural competencies are required besides language skills. This view is supported by Nault (2006) who argues that as English is now an international language, English teachers must find new ways of teaching both language and culture. Matsuda (2002:436) takes this notion further and argues that 'English classes could serve as a starting point for international understanding'.

However, Atkinson (1999) referring to Davis (1995), Holliday (1996) and Lazaraton (1995) acknowledges that studying culture is important in the ELT classroom but at the same time points out that culture teaching is underexamined, underappreciated and underused. This stands in sharp contrast to the understanding that language and culture are interwoven and influence each other (Nault 2006 referring to Bhaba 1994; Buttjes 1990; Hinkel 1999; Jian 2000; Kramsch 1998; Witherspoon 1980; Johnson and Rinvolucri 2010). Various authors have shared their views on how culture can be taught in the classroom (Matsuda and Friedrich 2011; McKay 2002; Johnson and Rinvolucri 2010; Tomalin and Stempleski 1993; Smith 2012) but there appear to be no research studies regarding immigrants' beliefs on the content and effects of culture teaching in and outside of the ESL classroom.

The researcher's interest in investigating immigrant's beliefs about the aspects of culture learning that are important for social integration in the UK stems from teaching adult ESL learners and from managing a UK registered charity project called 'All Nations Language Centre' in southern England. The centre has been running for about two years and reaches out to around 40 adults from 17 different countries on a weekly basis. The centre currently has 9 volunteer teachers who are all qualified teachers and offers English classes ranging from beginner to upper-intermediate level, including a grammar and conversation class. Most of the students at the centre are permanent immigrants in contrast to only very few students who tend to only stay between one to three years in the UK. From teaching these students, the researcher is aware that due to their limited English skills, lack of contact with English people and understanding British culture, the students tend to stay either in their own language communities or international communities. The contradiction is that for nearly two years the students have repeatedly expressed a real interest in getting to know English people and learn about British culture and society.

The researcher has therefore decided to investigate culture teaching in depth in order to help the students to integrate socially into British society. The findings will be used to improve the researcher's own teaching practise, for teacher development at the centre and therefore help develop good practise of culture teaching in this context. In order to gain a deeper understanding of immigrants' beliefs about the aspects of culture learning that are important for social integration in the UK, the researcher decided to investigate the following:

1. What aspects of British culture do the students consider relevant for helping them integrate socially?
2. How would the students like to learn about culture?
3. Are there aspects of British culture and society that make it difficult for the students to integrate socially?
4. What are the student's opinions regarding an ethnographic approach to help them develop their language and cultural skills?

The study is based on a qualitative approach, using a focus group interview to explore research questions one to three and an ethnographic approach to explore research question four.

The study is structured into five chapters: a literature review which explores the topic of culture teaching in the ESL context, a methodology chapter which provides the framework and foundation for the primary research, an analysis and discussion of findings in light of the literature review and finally conclusions of the study with recommendations.

Chapter 2: Literature review

2.1 *Overview*

In order to investigate immigrants' beliefs about the aspects of culture learning that are important for social integration in the UK, the literature review will begin with outlining the diversity of the ESOL context in the UK, highlighting that English is now an international language (EIL) and provide an insight into the cultural and linguistic landscape of the UK. This will be followed by a discussion of the cultural dimension of language teaching and also then more specifically in ELT. Following that there will be an exploration of why culture teaching is important for the ESL context, how this can be done and what topics can potentially be studied in the classroom. The literature review will then draw to a close by raising the issue of acculturation and identity and evaluating to what extent culture teaching might indeed support ESL student's successful social integration in the UK.

2.2 *ESOL context in the UK*

According to Khanna et al (1998) ESL students bring with them a rich cultural and linguistic diversity. Schellekens (2007) points out that there are four main groups that make up ESL students in the UK: refugees, new Commonwealth citizens, European Union citizens and those from outside the European Union. A further categorisation where ESL students come from is provided by Kachru (1992) who sees the world through an English-speaking lens. In his view, there is the 'Inner Circle' (where English is spoken as the mother tongue), the Outer Circle (English is used as an official additional or second language) and the Expanding Circle (English is spoken as the primary foreign language). A more specific classification of ESL learners in regards to their first language in comparison with the English language system is provided by Paton and Wilkins (2009:15) who point out that 'many ESOL learners do not speak a European language or even a language belonging to the Indo-European language family'. Paton and Wilkins (2009) furthermore state that ESL students have a variety of reasons why they come to live in an English-speaking country, such as escaping persecution or prejudice, escaping from war, famine or natural disaster, to find work, to marry or to join family. There is also great diversity in regards to ESL student's academic and educational backgrounds. It can range from no formal schooling to PhD level (Mathews-Aydini 2008; Schellekens 2007) and even their native literacy levels can vary from advanced to pre-illiterate (Jordan 1995). There is also great diversity among the students regarding their reasons for wanting to learn English.

These can range from being able to live and work in the UK, to manage their everyday lives, to undertake further study, attend doctor's appointments, to speak to neighbours or to gain friends (Schellekens 2007; Jordan 1995). Khanna et al (1998) categorise ESL student's English needs into social and informal (to make friends, to interact with people, to become independent, to be able to access social, leisure and recreational activities) and transactional (at the doctor, for shopping) and for work (to get a job or promotion, for business, to get qualifications). Given the diversity of ESL student's cultural, linguistic, educational and professional backgrounds it makes it a real challenge for teachers to plan suitable English programmes for these learners (Schellekens 2007). A useful and in depth 'context and needs analysis' based on McGrath's (2002) 'context and needs analysis' (Appendix 1) has been undertaken by Osborne (2014) and sheds further light on this context.

It is not only the ESL students, who bring with them a rich diversity. The use of the English language and its various forms are today equally diverse, reflecting the increasingly international nature of human interaction and life in the UK.

2.3 *EIL and the cultural and linguistic landscape of the UK*

English as an International Language (EIL)

According to McKay (2002:1) 'to be considered an international language, a language cannot be linked to any one country or culture; rather it must belong to those who use it.' This is closely linked to Smith's (1976:38) view who coined the phrase of an 'international language' as pointed out by McKay (2002). He defines an international language as 'one which is used by people from different nations to communicate with other people.' Bowers (1992) points out that English is the natural or official language of about thirty nations around the world today. This underlines that English has become an international language and even *the* global language (Crystal 2004; McKay 2002; McArthur 2001). Kachru (1997) as pointed out by Qiong (2004) estimates that the proportion of people who use English in non-English-speaking countries and English speaking countries lies around 2-4:1. This is furthermore supported by Modiano (1999) who points out that there are more non-native speakers of English than native speakers today. Qiong (2004:26) draws the conclusion that therefore 'English is now no longer the exclusive property of its native speakers.' Given that English is an international language which is used on such a large scale, it can be argued that it occupies a special role in the world – linguistically and culturally. This view is supported by Matsuda (2012) who argues that it is a language which brings people from different linguistic, cultural and national backgrounds together and enables them to interact and communicate with each other.

Matsuda and Friedrich (2011) therefore point out that the goal of EIL is to help learners become competent English users in international contexts. According to Sharifian (2009:249), the concept of 'being proficient' in EIL goes beyond knowing grammar and lexicon; the 'more proficient' speakers 'show familiarity with various systems of cultural conceptualizations, participating with flexibility in EIL communication'. This notion is shared by McKay (2002:81) who argues that culture is an important element in EIL 'because the use of EIL involves crossing borders, both literally and figuratively, as individuals interact in cross-cultural encounters. This view is furthermore supported by Nault (2006) who argues that the ELT profession needs to move away from the understanding that English learners learn the language to primarily be able to communicate with native speakers. McKay (2002) supports this notion and argues that students should be made aware of the international status and use of English and its varied use in cultural and social contexts with other L2 speakers. In her view, teaching EIL should move away from primarily focusing on the cultures of inner-circle countries to learning about many other cultures and cultural values to help students to develop sensitivity for cross-cultural differences. This links with Wandel's (2002) view as pointed out by Nault (2006:320) who argues that if the ELT profession is serious about the status of English as a world language, then the teaching of the language must include non-mainstream cultures. Sharifian (2009:4) shares this view and points out that 'communication *across* Englishes, is an issue which lies at the heart of EIL'.

Given the diversity of ESL learner's backgrounds and needs, teaching EIL can therefore provide a valuable way of helping students to become socially integrated and linguistically and culturally competent users of English. This view connects on both levels with the reality and needs of ESL learners in and outside of the classroom. Schellekens (2007:17) argues that 'cultural differences can form obstacles to language learning' in the classroom and that it can be challenging for students to live in a culturally and racially diverse country such as the UK if they come from homogenous societies. Matsuda (2002:436) supports the view that EIL teaching is the way forward and argues that 'English classes could serve as a starting point for international understanding. This notion is crucial and is also closely connected to social integration of ESL learners.

The cultural and linguistic landscape of the UK

When one combines the backgrounds and needs of ESL learners, as previously outlined, with the reality of the cultural and linguistic landscape of the UK then the approach to teaching EIL in this context becomes even more apparent. Melchers and Shaw (2003) highlight that the demographics of Britain has changed in recent times through large-scale immigration, especially from areas such as the Caribbean and south Asia.

Nault (2006) also points out the these demographic trends have the effect that communicating in English is taking place increasingly in multi-cultural settings. In the view of Stock (2004) as pointed out by Nault (2006:317) it is not only the demographic of Britain which has been changing, as immigrants from these areas 'are redefining traditional notions of British culture and even adding new words to the English language.' Crystal (1999:18) shares this view and argues that 'the spoken British English of Britain is already a mass of hybrid forms, with Celtic and immigrant language backgrounds a major presence.' Sharifian (2009) furthermore points out that many speakers from Outer Circle and Expanding Circle countries now live in Inner circle countries and that therefore native speakers are also exposed to World Englishes. This is supported by Matsuda (2012:3) who argues that 'a closer look at the current sociolinguistic landscape of the world presents a picture of English that is linguistically and culturally diverse' and calls for a pedagogy that goes beyond just teaching the students about Inner Circle English varieties, its people and cultures. This view is shared by McKay (2002:82) who believes that 'it cannot be assumed that the culture of any particular country, especially an Inner Circle country should provide the basis for cultural content when teaching EIL.' This understanding is shared by Prodromou (1988:83) who states that teachers should 'recognize the rich and varied uses of English on both a global and local scale, and, wherever possible, to make pedagogic capital out of languages and culture in contact'.

With such a diverse body of ESL students, English being an international language and the rich cultural and linguistic landscape of the UK, the questions arise as to *how* ELT can contribute towards ESL student's social integration into life in the UK? How deeply are culture and language connected? In what way can the ELT classroom be both: a cultural *and* linguistic training ground for ESL students to prepare them for life in the UK?

In order to shed some light on these questions and to understand the topic in more depth, this next section will explore the cultural dimension of language learning.

2.4 *Cultural dimension of language learning*

According to Jiang (2000:328) 'it is commonly accepted that language is a part of culture, and that it plays a very important role in it'. Nault (2006:314) even argues that language and culture 'represent two sides of the same coin'. Jiang (2000) sees language as a reflection of culture as it is influenced and shaped by it and points out that it is a 'symbolic representation of a people, since it comprises their historical and cultural backgrounds, as well as their approach to life and their ways of living and thinking'.

Byram and Esarte-Sarries (1991) add to this notion and highlight that language is the carrier of culture, beliefs and values and state that 'language is both a part of and an expression of a culture and its beliefs and values'. Buttjes (1991) on the other hand draws a connection between one's individual culture and language and highlights that a person's unconscious subjectivity and identity has been formed by being members of a specific gender, social class, religion or nation and that language plays an important part in this process from a young age. This 'interwoven' relationship between language and culture (Brown 1994 as pointed out by Jiang 2000:328) indicates that *both* language and culture have to be taught in the classroom. This view is shared by Valdes (1990) who argues that culture teaching has to be part of teaching a language. Witherspoon (1980) and Hinkel (1999) add further weight to this view and argue that linguists and language teachers have become more aware of the fact that languages cannot be studied without including the cultures in which they are spoken. Byram and Morgan (1994:5) strongly underline this point and state that 'it is axiomatic in our view that cultural learning has to take place as an integral part of language learning, and vice versa'. The deep relationship between language and culture is important when teaching a language as it can be argued that language learners are unlikely to become proficient in a new language unless they also become familiar with its culture. This view is shared by Nault (2006:314) who argues that 'this language / culture link has great significance for language education, for if learners are to become truly proficient in their target language, it stands to reason they must be familiar with that language's culture'. Hence it can be argued that culture teaching has an equal significance in the language classroom as language itself. This angle is supported by Kramsch (1993) as pointed out by Sowden (2007:306) who anchors language and culture deeply into language teaching and argues that 'if language is seen as social practice, culture becomes the very core of language teaching'. Jiang (2000:329) provides a pragmatic view of the relationship between language and culture which furthermore underlines the significance of culture learning in language teaching:

> Communication is like transportation: language is the vehicle and culture is traffic light. Language makes communication easier and faster; culture regulates, sometimes promotes and sometimes hinders communication.

The importance for immigrants to settle in successfully on a linguistic *and* cultural level in order to become active and integrated participants in society, makes the understanding of culture teaching in the classroom seem even more crucial.

This view is supported by Buttjes (1991:7) who argues that:

> The conviction is growing that narrow linguistic notion of language that disregard the social and cultural context of language use and learning can do justice to neither the language learning process nor its objective of cross-cultural communication.

It can therefore be argued that teaching a language and neglecting its cultural context is leaving the language learning process in jeopardy.

In order to gain an even deeper and more specific understanding of the relationship between culture in ELT, this next section will look at the more specific issues in this area.

2.5 Culture teaching in ELT

Goodenough's (1964) definition of culture as pointed out by Byram (1989:81-82) provides a valuable insight into culture and what gives it its meaning:

> A society's culture consists of whatever it is one has to know or believe in order to operate in a manner acceptable to its members…it does not consist of things, people's behaviour or emotions. It is rather an organization of these things. It is the form of things that people have in mind, their models of perceiving, relating, and otherwise interpreting them.

Kramsch (1998) as pointed out by Nault (2006:315) sees culture in a similar yet more of a community-belonging perspective and argues that culture is a 'membership in a discourse community that shares common social space and history, and a common system of standards for perceiving, believing, evaluation, and acting'. These definitions of culture are in contrast to Geertz's (1975) more 'static' and 'generational' definition of culture as pointed out by Byram (1989:82):

> An historically transmitted pattern of meaning embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in a symbolic form by means of which men communicate, perpetuate and develop their knowledge about attitudes towards life.

From the researchers own perspective 'culture is an internal lens through which we see the world and the birthplace of an individual's identity' (Osborne 2015). This expresses a choice and changeability in how a person sees culture which can change from a mono-cultural view to a multi-cultural and therefore even a multi-dimensional one. From experience, this can happen if a person has lived in multiple places in the world and speaks different languages. Whether a person is mono-cultural or multi-cultural, that perspective will 'birth' his / her view about culture and his / her own identity.

These different definitions of culture point towards the fact that culture is multi-layered and many individuals today are multi-cultural and so is the nature of the English language. It can therefore be argued that 'the culture of English' should include a multi-cultural dimension in the classroom. This view is shared by Nault (2006:314) who argues that many experts (Byram and Fleming 1989; Byram and Riesager 1999; Lange and Paige 2003) 'recommend an explicit focus on culture in English Language Teaching (ELT)'. However, Atkinson (1999:625) highlights that 'culture is a central yet underexamined concept in TESOL'. With a changing language such as English also becoming an increasingly 'pluralistic world language' (Kachru 1989 in Nault 2006:320), Nault (2006:314) argues that 'English teaching professionals need to rethink the answers to such questions as whose culture should be taught, what goals should guide culture teaching, and how culture-related course materials should be designed and selected'. He furthermore calls for curriculums that reflect the international and multicultural flavour of the English language. This view is supported by Prodromou (1988) who argues for the use of local varieties of English in the ELT classroom as a means of being sensitive to teaching EIL and also valuing the cultural backgrounds of learners. This also links with the notion, as outlined previously, that the UK is a very multi-cultural place and that therefore ESL learners will have to be prepared to not only communicate with native speakers of English but to also use it cross-culturally. The understanding that learners will use English mainly for native-encounters and should therefore accept Inner Circle norms does no longer reflect reality; it can therefore be argued that focusing only on British culture is therefore inadequate (Nault 2006). The researcher therefore believes that exploring the cultural diversity of ESL students in the classroom in combination with focusing on countries of the Inner Circle and World Englishes would provide a good starting point.

It is also worth noting here that when teaching culture to prepare students to use the English language successfully in a variety of encounters and settings such social, informal, transactional encounters or in work situations (Khanna et al 1998), sociolinguistic aspects also play an important role. It is the realisation that every culture has a wide variety of sub-cultures and successful communication in English requires a student to be aware of the different 'registers' to use within these sub-cultures. This point is supported by Mc Grath (2002:19) who points out that a linguistic need of a language learner is to be aware of the different 'contexts and situations of use, which may require different levels of formality or different registers'.

In order to explore the topic of teaching culture in the ESL classroom in more depth, this next section will look into why culture teaching is important, how it can be done and what topics could be explored. It can be argued that this following section is already indirectly providing an insight into the potential answers to the questions that will be explored during the research stage. However, this was a conscious decision by the researcher as it is believed that the content of this upcoming section can provide a valuable foundation for the research process and stimulate exploration of the research questions by the participants. Furthermore, as the researcher is undertaking this project for CPD (continual professional development) purposes the following section also serves as a 'toolbox' for improving teaching practice and as prompts to try out new approaches in the future. This 'toolbox' will later on be extended through the insights gained from the upcoming primary research among ESL students.

2.6 *Teaching culture in the ESL context in the UK*

Why it is important

It was established earlier, that there exists a powerful and deep connection between language and culture which also overflows into the teaching and learning of a second / foreign language. Given the changing inter-cultural nature of how English is being used today, the often multi-cultural identities that learners bring with them to the classroom and the reality of multi-cultural societies such as the UK, it can be argued that teaching English in its cultural and social context is crucially important.

Meyer's (1991) model of 'foreign language and intercultural learning' visually expresses the different roles (functions) which culture can play in a foreign language classroom *if* inter-lingual and inter-cultural competences are intended.
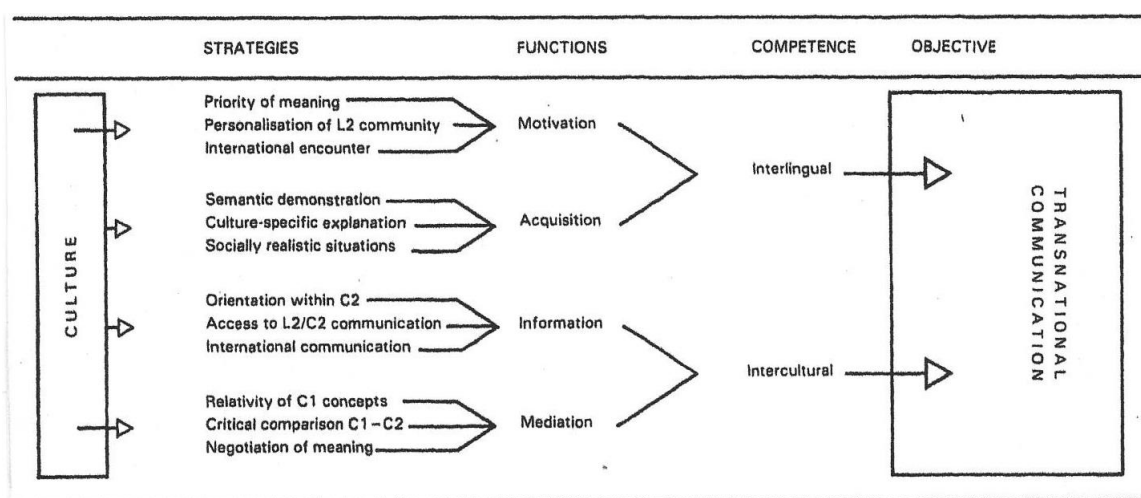
Figure 1: Meyer's model of foreign language and intercultural learning

The model was developed for a foreign language context, however the researcher believes that it can be transferred into the ESL context as the roles of culture are essentially the same. For the purpose of this literature review and the upcoming research, the researcher finds the intercultural competence aspect of particular interest. The model indicates that learning ('information') about culture provides guidance to the language learner, creates access to the target community and is beneficial when communicating internationally. The concept also indicates that teaching about culture helps learners to see their world in relative terms, can enable them to draw comparisons between their own culture and the target culture out of which inter-cultural awareness can develop. All of these points are of great value and importance for ESL learners as they provide what the researcher calls 'key-access competencies' for living a socially integrated life in a new country.

How it can be done

Meyer's model provides a valuable insight into the importance and link of culture teaching in connection with learning a second / foreign language. However, it does not provide expertise of *how* this can be achieved. The researcher believes that Byram's (1989) model of foreign language education provides an insight into how exactly the teaching of language *and* culture can be achieved on a practical level.
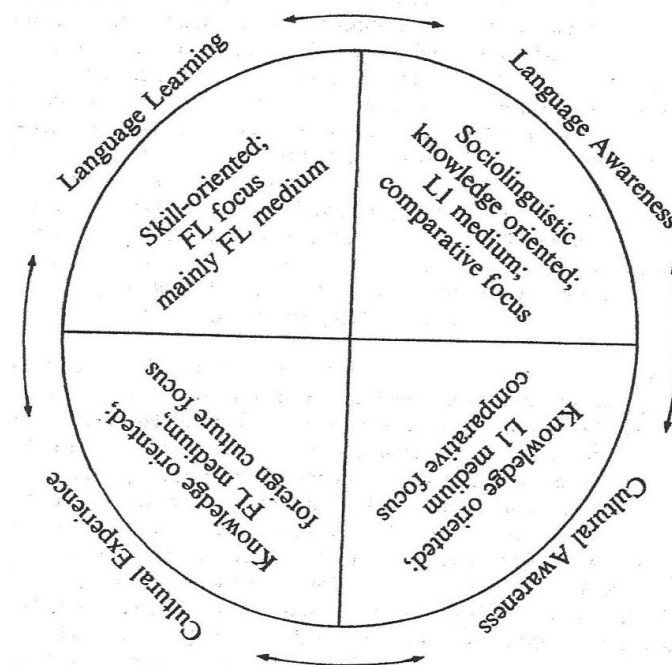
Figure 2: Byram's model of foreign language education

Although the model was originally developed for the foreign language context, the researcher believes that this model provides a unique blend of the right 'ingredients' for teaching culture in the adult ESL context as its components can be applied to this context.

However, the two main differences to the ESL context are that all teaching will have to be done through the 'medium' of English as usually the teacher and students do not share the same L1 and that ESL learners live in the target culture on a daily basis. Hence they have much more exposure to and contact with the host culture. The model recognizes the relationship and inter-dependency of both language and culture for successful language learning and moves way beyond the fact-learning of culture to a much higher level, which is that of the language learner becoming an inter-cultural language learner. The researcher believes that the blend of the four parts in the model provide 'key-access qualities' for ESL learners to linguistically, culturally and socially integrate into life in a new country. However, based on the understanding gained from this literature review, the researcher believes that Byram's model needs to be adapted slightly for the ESL context:

Figure 3: Adaptation of Byram's model of foreign language education for the ESL context (Osborne 2015)

This adaptation includes the understanding that codeswitching is encouraged in the EIL classroom and used as a learning strategy (McKay 2012); that a variety of Englishes such as World Englishes should be included in the language awareness part to allow student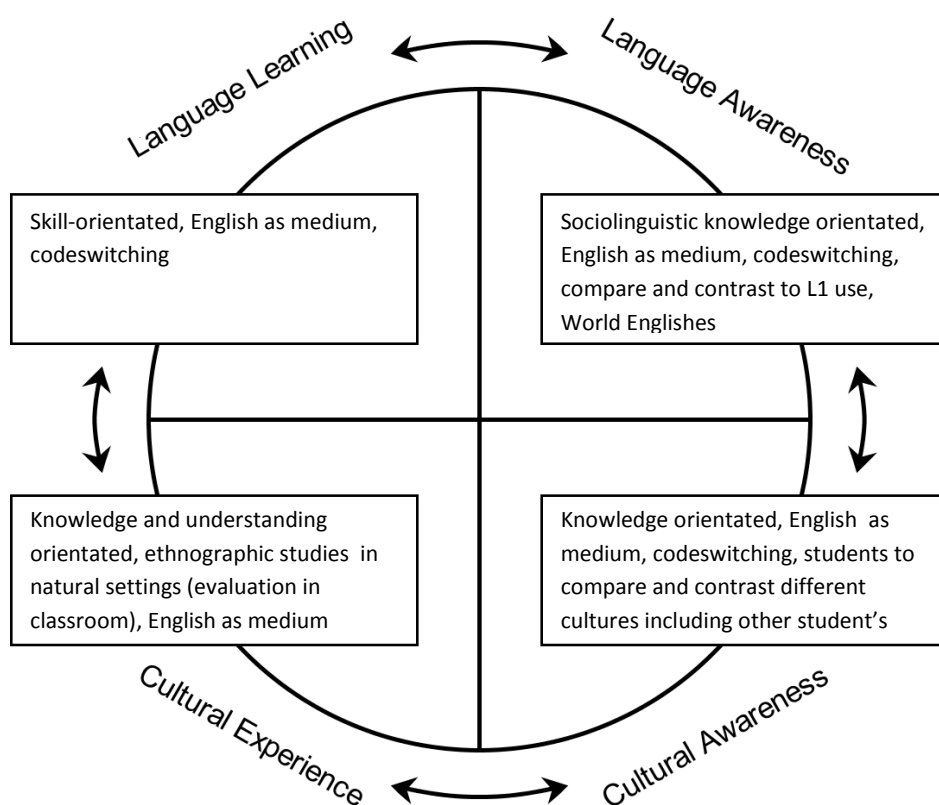s to gain a wider linguistic perspective than just English of the Inner Circle (Prodromou 1988); that different cultures should be compared and contrasted including those of the student's in the classroom to 'make pedagogic capital out of languages and culture in contact' (Prodromou 1988:83); and to use an ethnographic approach for the students to explore the target culture in context, to gain a deeper cultural understanding and be able to cognitively analyse a foreign culture (Byram and Esarte-Sarries 1991). Closely connected to Byram's model is the understanding that language learners can develop all four components of the model from an ethnographic perspective. The researcher argues that this links with the reality of ESL students who live in naturalistic settings in the target culture on a daily basis. Buttjes (1991:8) underlines this view and argues that 'it seems that ethnography is providing the missing link between language and culture studies'.

Byram and Feng (2004:155) also contribute to this understanding and argue that 'an ethnographic perspective in language education, first of all, takes naturalistic settings as most effective and central to culture learning'. Being 'ethnographic language learners' would enable ESL learners to consciously develop their language and culture skills independently, outside of the classroom and potentially increase their chances of successful social integration as it would help them to develop cultural understanding in and for their new environment. This is supported by Byram and Esarte-Sarries (1991:11) who argue that language learning from an ethnographic perspective encourages learners to learn 'language for cultural understanding'. This view is shared by Byram and Feng (2004:158) who point out that 'the purpose of ethnography is 'to make the strange familiar and the familiar strange''. For this reason Appendix 2 provides an insight into three examples of what an ethnographic approach for language learners can look like and ideas of how to prepare them for it. For the researcher the ethnographic approach provides a very valuable approach especially for ESL learners who often struggle to linguistically and socially integrate and to find their way in a new culture.

The view of becoming a 'linguist ethnographer' provided by Roberts et al (2001) as pointed out by Byram and Feng (2004:156) captures the reasons why this is such a valuable approach for the ESL context:

> Language learners as ethnographers are inevitably engaged in otherness of their new environment not just as an opportunity to improve linguistic competence and their ability to produce appropriate utterances, but as a whole social being who are developing, defining and being defined in term of their interactions with other social being. As ethnographers and intercultural speakers, they negotiate a particular relationship with those around them…

However, literature also points to some other approaches which could prove useful for the ESL context. Some of them have been compiled and evaluated by the researcher (Appendix 2). Byram and Feng (2004) point out that the facts-based approach is the most conventional yet also the most criticised one in culture teaching. Kramsch (1991) as pointed out by Hinkel (1999:5) adds to this view and notes that 'in many language classrooms culture is frequently reduced to foods, fairs, folklore, and statistical facts'. Byram and Feng (2004) furthermore argue that a facts-orientated approach is likely to lead to the teaching of stereotypes. Hu and Gao (1997) as pointed out by Byram and Feng (2004) argue that it is risky to teach stereotypical knowledge as facts are likely to result in only superficial learning and might even reinforce stereotypical thinking and ethnocentrism'. Hu and Gao (1997) have therefore developed an approach (Appendix 2) which blends stereotypical learning with awareness raising which can then lead to inter-cultural understanding.

Byram and Morgan (1994:42) argue that 'there is a central role for comparative methods in language and culture teaching'. However, there is also a chance that comparing and contrasting between one's own culture and the foreign culture could 'oversimplify the richness and variety within cultures…and could even lead to 'cross-cultural paralysis' if the differences are perceived as too great by an individual (Guest 2002:154). Although this approach may seem rather simple at first glance it can be argued that it provides a 'stepping stone' and valuable foundation for learning about another culture, for realising its depth, facets and other people's schemata out of which intercultural awareness can develop. Byram (1989:24) calls this process 'a modification of monocultural awareness' when a person goes from an ethnocentric viewpoint to acquiring an intercultural awareness. Byram and Morgan (1994:48) therefore argue that teaching about a country's people and culture should not be regarded as just 'background' information 'for the link between cultural learning and linguistic learning is indissoluble in principle'. They suggest moving students from a comparing and contrasting stage to being able to analyse 'complex values and meanings of a national culture and other cultures for example, literature, film, history, political parties, social welfare, education' (Byram and Morgan 1994:50). It is worth noting that this will depend on the learner's language levels, especially in the ESL context where learners speak different languages as supposed to the foreign language context where students tend to share the same L1.

Appendix 3 (based on Brooks 1986) provides an overview of suggested cultural topics, including some recommended instructions by the researcher, of how these topics can be explored in the classroom. Appendix 4 (based on Byram and Morgan 1994) outlines an adapted version for the ESL context in the UK of suggested cultural themes and topics. Both these appendices include 'hands on' cultural topics which the researcher finds suitable for teaching culture in the ESOL context. However, appendix 4 includes more specific examples of topics relating to the teaching of EIL in the British ESL context. In both appendices, the researcher has commented on how these cultural themes can be explored in the classroom and hinted that a task-based approach to culture teaching such as outlined by Tomalin and Stempleski (1993), with plenty of pair and small group work by the students, discussion opportunities and exploring the topics in the light of each other's and British culture would be a good approach to use.

What topics to teach

The question arises as exactly *what* topics to explore with ESL learners in the UK that might facilitate their social integration. Given the limited funding available to colleges and institutions around the UK to provide ESOL classes, it comes as no surprise that there are only limited resources available for this market. This next section of the literature review will look into the most currently published ESOL materials and provide an overview of their topics. It is worth noting that these materials do not cover all of the resource books available on the market but rather have been selected to give a current 'snapshot' and 'flavour' of the topics which are considered by the authors / publishers as relevant to ESL learners. The topics of these materials will provide a starting point for the upcoming research to investigate which of these topics ESL students find worth exploring and helpful for their *social integration* into the UK. Hence the material will not be evaluated from a pedagogical-design view but rather from a practical one from the standpoint of ESL learners through the upcoming research study. Appendix 5 provides an overview of topics based on the Cambridge ESOL series 'ESOL activities' for entry 1-3 and Cambridge's 'Exploring British Culture' publication. The first three publications were produced for ESOL teachers in colleges and schools in the UK and are linked to the Adult ESOL Core Curriculum (AECC) whereas the last one can also be used internationally. This publication has more of a focus on intercultural awareness as:

> Learners are also given the change to explore their own cultural and social practices and make comparisons with the habits of their everyday lives. It is hoped these activities will encourage greater understandings of the wide range of values, beliefs and concerns held by people in the UK. It will try to identity / explain how British people live their lives and how British society works (Smith 2012:7).

Hence this publication might be particularly useful for the ESL context in the UK. However, the question arises of whether the mentioned approaches and topics really hold in them the potential to support ESL student's social integration in the UK and whether culture teaching is the 'magic formula' for building a bridge between the students and British society.

2.7 *Acculturation and identity*

According to Kramsch (1993b) as pointed out by Hinkel (1999:5) migrants who have been living in a new country for a long period of time often still report of not 'really belonging to the host culture' and of being on the outside. Extending the picture of culture teaching being a potential bridge between ESL learners and the target community, one realises that it can be walked upon from both sides. It can therefore be argued that this principle also applies to the acculturation process of immigrants – it is a process to which *both* the ESL learners and target community can contribute positively or negatively. This view is supported by Schumann (1978:29) who defines acculturation as 'the social and psychological integration of the individual with the target language (TL) group' and argues that 'certain social factors can either promote or inhibit contact between the two groups and thus affect the degree to which the 2LL group acculturates which in turn affects the degree to which that group will acquire the target language' (Schumann 1978:30). (Appendix 6 provides an overview of these factors). Padilla and Perez (2003:39) add that a person's 'family structure and function, adherence to certain religious beliefs and practices, gender, power relationships between the majority and minority groups, personality characteristics, and age of onset of intergroup contact' are also factors which play a role in acculturation together with how much an immigrant's ethnicity, race, religion, language and dress differs from that of the target community as these factors can contribute towards being or feeling discriminated. However, it can also be argued that there are issues in connection with the imbalance of power between the two groups. This is underlined by Norton (1998:15) who argues that 'immigrant language learners are generally in a relatively powerless position with respect to the target language community and that their group identity, culture, and values may be under siege.' The reality of many migrants is that they often have very limited opportunities to practise their English with people from the target community and therefore struggle with their social integration. This is supported by Norton (2000:113) who points that in natural language learning situations language learners 'struggle for access to social networks that give them the opportunities to practice their English in safe and supportive environments'. Cooke (2006:61) adds to this and highlights that her research revealed that 'most people spoke of their limited opportunity to speak English with local English speaking communities'.

However, acculturation is not only affected by external influence that ESL learners are exposed to in their new environment, there are also internal factors which have to be considered. It can be argued that learning a new language is also connected with constructing a new identity as the learner also has to learn 'to be' in the foreign culture as one cannot simply transfer the L1 cultural knowledge and understanding to the new L2 context. This is underlined by Brown (1986:34) who argues that learning a second language means the acquisition of a second identity and having to learn a second culture, hence 'a person's world view, self-identity, his system of thinking, acting, feeling, and communicating, are disrupted by a change from one culture to another'.

2.8 Summary

The literature review has highlighted the ESOL context in the UK and revealed a rich cultural, linguistic, educational and professional diversity among these learners and their reasons for wanting to learn English. It was argued that this makes it challenging for teachers to plan and deliver suitable English programmes. It was then pointed out that English is now an international language with many more non-native speakers than native ones and hence is a language which is increasingly used in international and therefore cross-cultural contexts. It was argued that this calls for a change in how English should be taught, moving away from just teaching about Inner Circle countries to a much wider, inclusive approach where the students learn about many different countries and cultures including World Englishes. It was revealed that the classroom can become a starting point for international understanding. The literature review revealed that this international angle of EIL links very much with the existing cultural and linguistic diversity of the UK and the need to prepare ESL learners to communicate successfully in such a diverse context as the UK.

The literature review then revealed the deep and interwoven relationship between culture and language learning. It highlighted that both have to be taught together in order for language learners to become truly proficient in a new language. This notion was then explored more precisely in connection with ELT and it was revealed that culture plays an important role in the ELT classroom but is still an underexamined concept. Due to the increasing international and therefore cross-cultural use of English around the world, including in Inner Circle countries like the UK, it was argued that new ways of teaching culture need to be developed. For these reasons two models of foreign language and intercultural learning were explored and their benefits highlighted for the ESL context. It was argued that both models provide a good insight and starting point for how language and culture can be taught in the ESL.

Especially the second model was considered very valuable as it enabled the students to become inter-cultural language learners, a quality highly useful when learning English due to its international usage. However, as the limitations of both models also became obvious the researcher introduced an adapted version which in the view of the researcher has the right blend and 'ingredients' for successfully teaching English and helping the learners to become inter-cultural language learners. The literature review revealed that an ethnographic approach for developing both language and cultural skills might be a very valuable tool for the ESL context, especially because of ESL student's life in the target language and culture. It was highlighted that an adapted version of the facts-based approach and comparative methods for teaching culture in the ESL context could also be useful tools. The literature review also introduced an overview of various cultural topics regarded as useful by the researcher for the ESL context in the UK together with some ideas by the researcher of how to use them. It was argued that a task-based approach would be a good approach to use for exploring cultural topics, as it allows for plenty of pair / small group work and discussion opportunities to explore the topics from each other's angle and British culture viewpoint. The literature review then gave an overview of the contents of four currently published ESOL books. This was done to give a flavour of which topics are considered relevant for these types of learners and to use them as a basis for the upcoming research among ESL students. It was highlighted that the social integration of ESL students is closely connected to issues regarding acculturation and identity. It was argued that it is a two-way process to which both the ESL learners and target community can contribute to positively and negatively. It was highlighted that there are social factors, together with an imbalance of power between the language learners and the target community, issues regarding access to social networks of local British people and the difficulty of constructing a new identity in the new language and culture which all play an important role in contributing and hindering ESL student's social integration into their new target community.

The literature review overall revealed that the social integration of ESL learners into a new target community is a complex task but also indicated that the ESL classroom *can* become a training ground for both language and cultural preparation of ESL learners for life outside the classroom. This literature review has provided some valuable insights and provided a good foundation for understanding the complexity of this topic. However, in order to gain an even deeper understanding of the topic from the perspective of ESL students, a small-scale research study was conducted among ESL students in an adult education centre in the UK where the researcher has been teaching for nearly two years. This next section explains the purpose of the study, together with how this study was designed and carried out.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Purpose

The reason for investigating culture teaching in the adult ESL context in the UK stems from the identified gaps and issues of the literature review and from the researcher's insights of teaching these students. The literature review highlighted the importance of culture teaching in the ESL classroom yet also identified that culture teaching is still an under-researched area in ELT, that new ways of teaching culture need to be developed due to the increasing cross-cultural use of English and that an ethnographic approach for developing both language and cultural skills might be the missing link. The literature review also revealed various approaches of how culture could potentially be taught, including topic ideas by different authors. Using insights gained from both the literature review and the researcher teaching ESL students, it has emerged that due to the student's often limited English skills, lack of knowing local English people and understanding British culture the students often tend to live in either their own language communities or international communities. Consequently, the often expressed interest by the students in the classroom of getting to know British people and the opportunity to learn how things work in the UK on a cultural and social level remain unmet.

In order to gain a deeper understanding of immigrant's beliefs about the aspects of culture learning that are important for social integration in the UK, the researcher believes it is important to hear *their* voices and opinions. Therefore the research questions are as follows:

1. What aspects of British culture do the students consider relevant for helping them integrate socially?
2. How would the students like to learn about culture?
3. Are there aspects of British culture and society that make it difficult for the students to integrate socially?
4. What are the student's opinions regarding an ethnographic approach to help them develop their language and cultural skills?

3.2 Research paradigms

Given that this study aims to investigate immigrants' *beliefs* about the aspects of culture learning that are important for social integration in the UK, the researcher decided that a qualitative approach for exploring the topic was the most suitable. This is underlined by Kumar (2011:104) who points out that 'the main focus of qualitative research is to understand, explain, explore, discover and clarify situations, feelings, perceptions, attitudes, values, beliefs and experiences of a group of people'. This view is furthermore supported by Berg (2009:8) who states that 'qualitative research properly seeks answers to questions by examining various social settings and the individuals who inhabit these settings'. One of the main features of qualitative research and possibly even one of the key qualities in connection with this study is the fact that 'it gives voices to participants, and probes issues that lie beneath the surface of presenting behaviours and actions' (Cohen et al 2011:219). However, when comparing qualitative with the quantitative approach to research its limitations also become apparent. Findings based on a qualitative approach cannot easily be replicated or retested and researcher bias can also be an issue as qualitative research is more flexible and not so strictly controlled (Kumar 2011). This stands in contrast to quantitative research which relies primarily on numbers (Berg 2009).

3.3 Research methods

Given that this study has a very practical and applied focus in that it aims to develop both the quality of culture teaching in the adult education centre where the researcher has been teaching and also the researcher's own teaching practice, it was decided that action research would be the most appropriate research method to use. This view is supported by Cohen et al (2011) who point out that action research is a good research method if teachers want to conduct research in their own institutions and highlight that it is often also referred to as 'practitioner based research' (McNiff 2002 in Cohen et al 2011:344). Hence it is therefore closely connected to CPD of teachers, such as improving teaching skills or developing new methods of learning (Cohen et al 2011). Newby (2014:63) furthermore highlights that action research can provide a link between theory and practice as its main characteristic is to bring about development, implement change and therefore 'uses research findings to inform and shape personal and organisation action'. Figure 4 provides an overview of the different stages of the action research cycle (Kumar 2011).
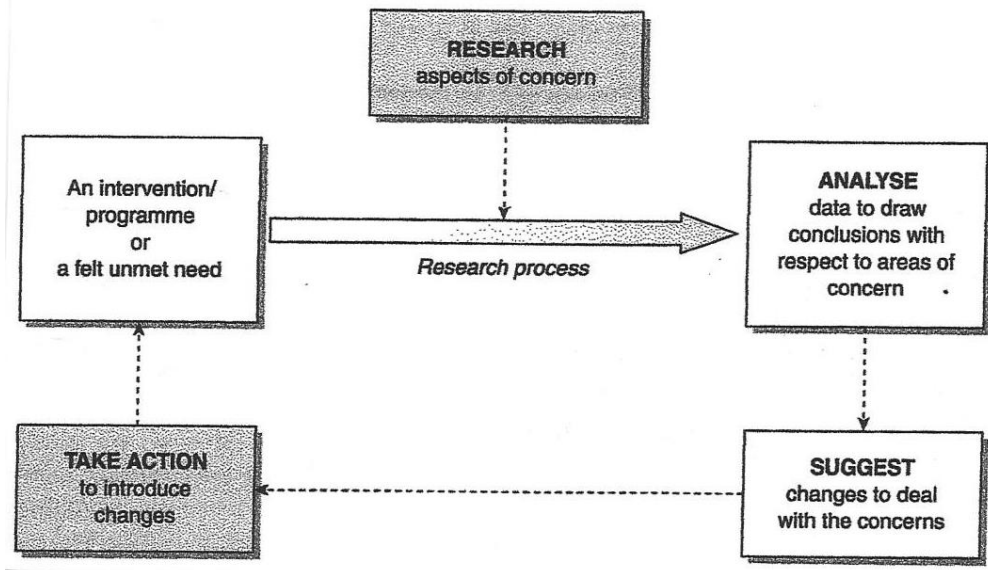
Figure 4: Action research design (Kumar 2011)

The different cycles in connection with the researcher's study are explained in Figure 5.
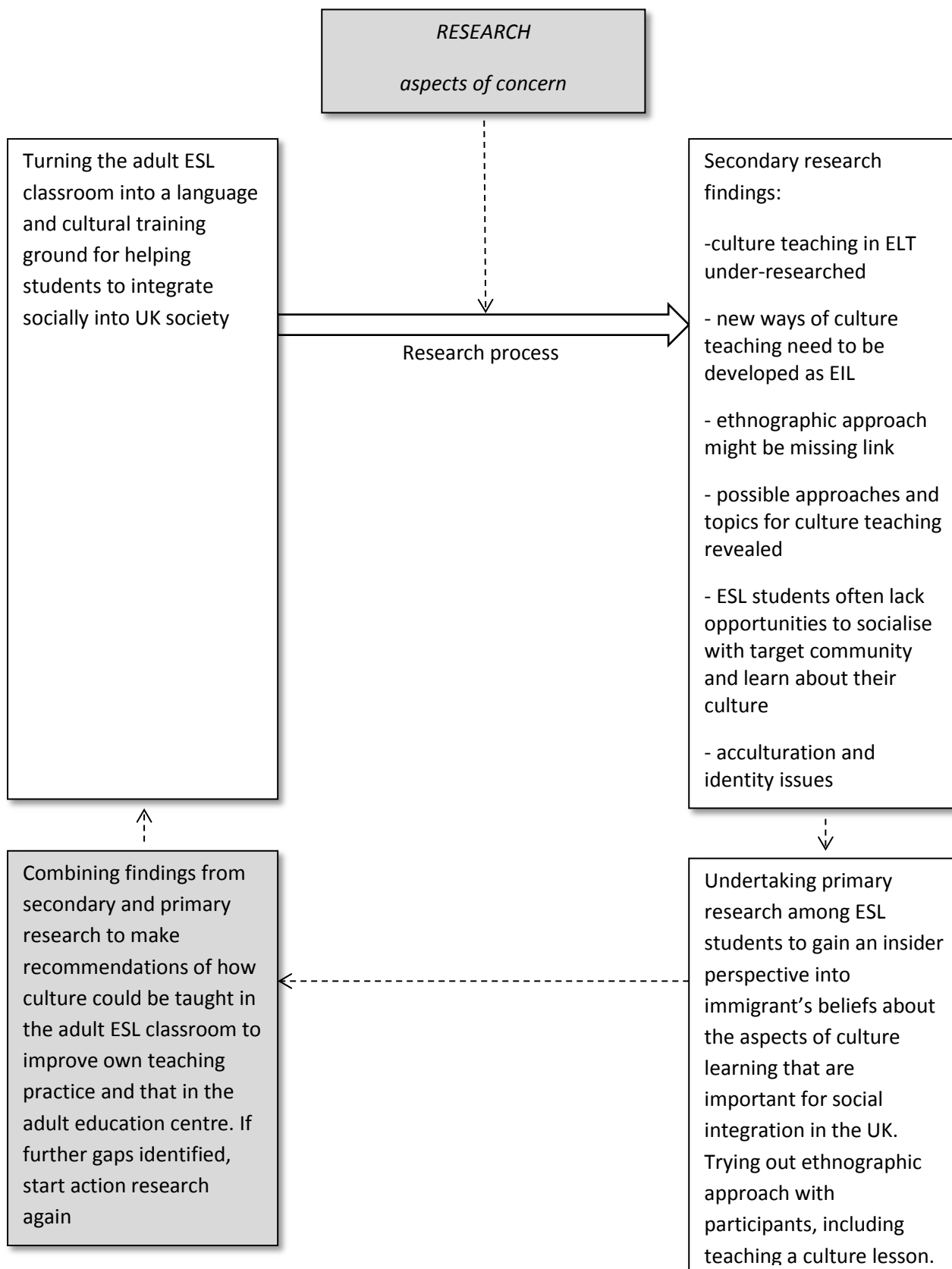
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                            ┌─────────────────────────┐
                            │       RESEARCH          │
                            │                         │
                            │    aspects of concern   │
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┌─────────────────────────┐                              ┌─────────────────────────┐
│ Turning the adult ESL   │                              │ Secondary research      │
│ classroom into a language│                             │ findings:               │
│ and cultural training   │                              │                         │
│ ground for helping      │                              │ -culture teaching in ELT│
│ students to integrate   │ ──── Research process ────▷  │ under-researched        │
│ socially into UK society│                              │                         │
│                         │                              │ - new ways of culture   │
│                         │                              │ teaching need to be     │
│                         │                              │ developed as EIL        │
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In order to use action research most effectively, the researcher decided to use case study as a means for carrying out action research in the adult education centre. This view is supported by Hult and Lennung (1980) and McKernan (1991) as pointed out by Cohen et al (2011:346) who argue that action research often uses case study. Furthermore, Newby (2014:53) points out that 'a case study is a detailed analysis of an individual circumstance or event that is chosen either because it is typical or because it is unusual or because there was a problem or because something worked well'. The researcher sees a strong connection between using case study as a means of carrying out action research as a small number of participants can provide very valuable insights into the research topic. This is underlined by Kumar (2011:127) who argues that case study is particularly useful if 'the focus of a study is on extensively exploring and understanding rather than confirming and quantifying'. This also means that no generalisations can be drawn from case study data beyond those with a similar population (Kumar 2011). However, the cases studied can be an in-depth exploration into a topic and therefore 'a single case can provide insight into the events and situations prevalent in a group from where the case has been drawn' (Kumar 2011:126).

3.4 Research strategy

Focus group interview

In order to gain insights into research questions 1-3, the researcher decided that setting up a focus group would be the most insightful strategy. It allows the researcher to explore attitudes, opinions and perceptions through a discussion among members of a group and also enables the researcher to participate by raising issues or asking questions (Kumar 2011). Another important feature of this strategy in connection with this study is that it 'allows the researcher to develop an understanding about *why* people feel the way they do' (Bryman 2004:348) and that it can be run with only four students (Bryman 2004) which matched the number of participating students in this study. The reasons a focus group was chosen over one-to-one interviews or an in-depth questionnaire is that this strategy is much more interactive as it allows the participants to challenge and question each other's views and it therefore allows the researcher to gain a wider perspective and insights into the topics (Bryman 2004). Furthermore, more ideas, issues, topics, and even solutions to a problem can be addressed than through individual conversations (Berg 2004). It also matches the chosen action research method for this study as 'it places participants on a more even footing with each other and the investigator' (Berg 2004:127). However, when comparing it with the depth of data that can be collected from a long semi-structured interview, then data from a focus group cannot quite match this depth (Berg 2004).

A general approach to questioning, which is common when conducting focus group research, was adapted which allows the participants to raise issues of their own (Bryman 2004). The researcher therefore chose a semi-structured interview format which can be located somewhere between the questionnaire and the evolving interview (Newby 2014). It allows the researcher to ask follow-up questions, to clarify a viewpoint and to even find explanations and answers to question that were not included in the interview schedule (Newby 2014). The researcher developed an interview schedule (Appendix 7) with predominantly open-ended questions common for focus group interviews (Berg 2004). The interview questions are based on the research questions (Appendix 7 gives an overview of the link between the literature review and the interview questions), with prompts and probes to encourage discussion and be able to expand on certain topics, with a logical sequence which guides the interviewees through the topics and had the more general questions at the beginning (Drever 1995). The researcher also tried to use appropriate and clear language for intermediate ESL learners (Drever 1995). Before the interview was conducted the researcher had the interview schedule 'shredded' (Drever 1995) and commented on for feedback by a Taiwanese immigrant friend. However, the focus group interview could not be piloted due to lack of access to immigrants with intermediate / upper-intermediate English skills.

Ethnography

The literature review revealed that an ethnographic approach to language and culture teaching might be the missing link between the two and that it could provide a very valuable approach especially for ESL learners who live in the target culture on a daily basis. According to Roberts, Byram and Barro (2001:3) 'ethnography can be broadly described as the study of a group's social and cultural practices from an insider's perspective'. The key idea to this approach is that language learners are encouraged 'to learn language for cultural understanding' and 'to achieve a capacity for cognitive analysis of a foreign culture, people and its artefacts…and for affective response to experience of another culture' (Byram and Esarte-Sarries 1991:11). In order to explore this idea in the ESL context and to address research question number four, the researcher decided to try out the ethnographic approach as part of this action research study. The researcher based the procedure of the ethnographic task (Appendix 10) on Damen's (1987) 'pragmatic ethnography' steps (Damen 1987 in Byram and Feng 2004:156-157). These steps were originally developed for teachers using ethnography but Byram and Feng (2004) highlight that they could also be used for language learners using ethnography as a tool.

As each research situation is unique the researcher decided to adapt this procedure slightly but to keep its main points: selecting a target group for ethnographic study, finding informants to represent the group, interviewing the informants, analysing the interview data, reflecting on data in order to understand behaviours / meanings and applying insights into teaching practice. The idea for the observations in the ethnographic task (Appendix 10) and recommendations of how to undertake ethnographic observations and interviews are based on an ethnographic study undertaken by high-school students in France (Byram and Morgan 1994). The idea of asking the participants to undertake an ethnographic interview (Appendix 10) is based on a successful research project of American university students (Robinson-Stuart and Nocon 1996) who interviewed local Spanish speakers. The researcher decided to try out ethnographic interviewing as the study revealed that the student's understanding of their own culture and that of the local Spanish speakers was enhanced. The topics for the interviews are adapted and based on suggested cultural topics (Appendix 3) by Brooks (1986). The idea to assess participant's cultural learning by letting them produce a reflective document (Appendix 10) was adapted from the same study of American university students as mentioned above. The questions (Appendix 10) which the researcher asked the participants to address in this reflective document are mainly based on exploring research question 4. As this study uses action research as the chosen research method, the researcher decided to explore the participant's ethnographic experience and use their experiences and gained knowledge as the basis for a cultural awareness lesson. This lesson (Appendix 11) then became part of the action research process.

3.5 *Sampling*

The four participants selected for this action research study were all linked to an adult education centre in southern England. The centre provides English classes to adult immigrants and currently has around 35 students from 18 different countries. All four participants were university educated immigrant females from Russia, Vietnam, Spain and China who had been living in the UK between one and nine years and their ages ranged from 25 – 51 years. Two students were previous students who attended classes at the centre last year and who were part of a class the researcher taught at that time, the other two students currently still attend classes there but do not attend classes taught by the researcher. Due to very limited access to students with sufficient English skills to participate in this study, the researcher decided to use convenience sampling. This is supported by Bryman (2004:100) who points out this sampling method 'is simply available to the researcher by virtue of its accessibility'. In the case of this study, the four participants were therefore purely selected on linguistic grounds and on the basis that they are linked to the language centre through a previous or current class.

Using this sampling strategy means that the findings from the study cannot be generalized as it is not known of what population exactly the sample is representative (Bryman 2004). However, the researcher still decided on this sampling strategy as the most appropriate one for two reasons: firstly given the difficulties of accessing students with sufficient English skills in the centre and secondly because it is a small-scale action research study with a case study angle and hence the findings from even just four participants selected using convenience sampling can provide valuable insights and be a 'springboard' for further research (Bryman 2004:100) and be 'useful in preliminary study of an issue, to identify what may be the key features to investigate in more detail' (Newby 2014:257).

3.6 *Research process*

Once the researcher had selected the participants, a lot of time was invested in establishing a good rapport with the participants as this is an important part before the actual data collection phase should begin (Kumar 2011). The researcher mainly contacted the participants via text and 'whatsapp' messages to arrange the focus group interview and the ethnographic culture lesson. Even though these exchanges were all formal in nature, the researcher made sure each message had a friendly and professional tone to it. Special attention was given to the two participants who had not been previously part of the researcher's class last year. The researcher met up with one of them for about 25 minutes before a lesson at the centre to introduce herself, get to know the participant and to explain the project. The other student was known to the researcher and vice versa through a social event held by the language centre earlier this year and the researcher introduced herself again to the student by exchanging various 'whatsapp' messages and established a good rapport that way.

Focus group

As all participants were intermediate ESL learners and therefore had limited English language skills, the researcher decided to send the interview schedule for the focus group interview together with the 'extended focus group activity' (Berg 2004) and a cover letter (Appendix 8) to the students one week before the interview. This enabled the participants to familiarise themselves with the questions and to look up any vocabulary or expressions for the interview. As the researcher was interested in finding out which ESOL topics the students find useful in recently published ESOL books, the researcher decided to make this the 'extended focus group activity' to save time on the actual day and to give the participants more time to think about their answers. This is common practise in preparation for a focus group interview and gives the participants an opportunity to reflect on and think of their opinions ahead of the interview (Berg 2004).

The focus group was held in one of the classrooms at the language centre, hence in an environment very familiar to all four students. For the day of the focus group interview, the researcher developed a moderator's guide (Appendix 9) which is an important tool for inexperienced researchers who will be both the researcher and moderator on the day of the focus group. This guide outlines the main stages of the procedure on the day and reminds the researcher of the main points (Berg 2004). The researcher adapted Berg's guide and the main points became: introductory activities, paperwork (signing consent form and demographic information sheet), statement of the basic rules for the interview and diplomatic ways of how to end the focus group. Before the interview started, the researcher did a quick sound check and made sure that the equipment worked. The interview was then conducted for 48 minutes. During this time the researcher made sure that a balance was found between conducting the interview and not getting too involved, making sure that nobody dominated the interview and encouraging participation from the more quiet participants which are all delicate areas to handle during a focus group interview (Bryman 2004). The researcher also used a tone and words that the participants would be comfortable with and was also empathetic to what each participant shared as this is 'the key to successful interviewing' (Newby 2014).

Ethnographic task

At the end of the focus group interview the researcher shared with the class the rationale for the ethnographic task and linked this approach to the context of this research study. The researcher then handed out the ethnographic task sheet including some recommendation of how to conduct ethnographic observations and interviews (Appendix 10) and asked the students to undertake ethnographic observations for one week and conduct an interview with an English person during the same week. Given the limited time available for the participants to find an interview partner, the researcher had already established contact with local English people who were well-known to the researcher and then gave the contact details of the interview partner to each participant. After precisely one week, the researcher taught a cultural awareness lesson (Appendix 11) to the three participants (one participant was unable to attend) to explore the findings and knowledge gained through their ethnographic task and to further develop inter-cultural awareness through two additional cultural activities during the lesson (Appendix 11). In order to find out the students' opinions regarding the effectiveness of the ethnographic approach to language and culture learning, the researcher gave the participants precise questions (Appendix 11) to address and gave them one week to write a reflective document addressing these questions. This document was then coded and analysed to mainly gain an insight into research question number 4.

3.7 *Data analysis*

As the basis for analysing the transcript and reflective document, the researcher used coding which is the starting point for most types of qualitative data analysis (Bryman 2004). Cohen et al (2011:559) point out that 'a code is simply a name or label that the researcher gives to a piece of text that contains an idea or a piece of information'. The researcher applied Bryman's (2004) steps in coding and read both documents repeatedly, making marginal notes on each document about significant remarks or observations; these initially basic marginal notes of key words gradually then lead to assigning themes to the data. The researcher then used this index of emerged themes from the primary research to compare and contrast it with the literature review. Following on from Bryman's (2004) steps in coding, the researcher also reviewed the codes to make sure that no double-coding for the same theme had been given and tried to establish whether any of the codes given matched with themes identified in the literature review.

3.8 *Data quality issues& limitations*

Validity

According to Cohen et al (2011) the principle of validity in qualitative research is very different from that in quantitative research in many ways, such as that the data is generated from natural settings, is socially situated, descriptive and analysed inductively. However, Maxwell (1992) as pointed out by Cohen et al (2011) argues that the notion of 'authenticity' and 'understanding' should replace the term 'validity' in qualitative research as it captures this concept more precisely for this context. This notion is furthermore supported by Agar (1993) in Cohen et al (2011:181) who argues that 'in qualitative data collection the intensive personal involvement and in-depth responses of individuals secure a sufficient level of validity and reliability'. The researcher strongly agrees with this view as the data collected from the participants through the focus group and reflective writing task give such rich, unique and personal insights that the validity of the data *is* secured in the voices of each participant.

Reliability

According to Newby (2014:130) 'one particular issue for qualitative researchers to be aware of is the influence of the relationship between the researcher and the subject'. A once neutral, professional relationship can evolve into more of a social relationship and can hence influence the research outcomes.

This was an area that the researcher managed carefully during the data collection phase as the researcher had a lot in common with the participants (immigrant background, age, educational background, experiences of British culture) and contact with the participants could have easily lead to social relationships. For these reasons the researcher maintained a friendly distance during the data collection period and kept a professional manner which was respected by all participants. However, given that the researcher was on very even ground with the participants and was therefore able to be very empathetic to what they shared, there is a chance that his helped the participants to be open about their opinions and experiences. This is supported by Hitchcock and Hughes (1989) in Cohen et al (2011:204) who point out that 'because interviews are interpersonal, humans interacting with humans, it is inevitable that the researcher will have some influence on the interviewee and, thereby, on the data'. In order to minimise bias in this area, the researcher was empathetic but did not share personal experiences with the participants during the focus group interview to either confirm or object to participant's views and opinions. In connection with reliability there is also a chance that the participants responded in a way that they thought they should respond. For this reason, the researcher made it clear before the focus group interview and also when giving the participants the reflective writing task that there are no right or wrong answers and that they should express their opinions freely. When developing the interview schedule, the researcher also avoided leading questions to avoid bias (Cohen et al 2011) and had it 'shredded' for feedback (Drever, 1995) by a Taiwanese immigrant friend to make sure the interview schedule was clear and suitable for intermediate / upper-intermediate ESL students. The researcher would have liked to apply the process of triangulation (Newby 2014) to demonstrate reliability and validity of the study. However, this process was not applied as the researcher did not have access to another researcher to repeat data collection and access to students of the language centre with sufficient English skills was too limited.

Language issues and cross-cultural research

Given that all four participants had an intermediate / upper-intermediate level of English it can be argued that the data generated from the focus group interview and writing task is limited on two levels: linguistically and personally. Expressing yourself in a foreign language to such an extend as was required in this study was a challenge for all participants. Hence the data generated might not reflect the participant's full range of opinions and views as they might have not been able to express some of them in English due to lack of vocabulary and expressions. Sometimes communication also broke down and participant's replies were either not understandable or audible.

Another area which is important to bear in mind is the fact that this was cross-cultural research. All four participants were from different countries, including the researcher herself and hence everyone spoke to each other in a foreign language. This means that communication and therefore the data is likely to have been affected by communicating cross-culturally (Liamputtong 2010).

Participants

Due to lack of access to students at the language centre with high enough English levels, the overall study could only be designed with four participants. All four students took part in the focus group interview but it is worth noting that not all four participants responded to every question during the interview. The data might be limited in connection with research question four as one participant was unable to continue after the focus group interview and one submission had been written completely off-topic which made the document unusable for analysis. Hence the analysis of research question four is based on two submitted reflective writing tasks instead of four.

Preparation for ethnographic task

Due to time constraints on the side of the participants, the researcher was only able to aid the process of the ethnographic observations and interviews by providing a document with recommendations and ideas of how to do them (Appendix 10). In the research studies which the ethnographic task was based on (Byram and Morgan 1994, Robinson-Stuart and Nocon 1996), the students had been given much more time (up to a semester) to explore ethnographic techniques for culture and language learning. Hence it can be argued that the observations and interviews lacked ethnographic foundations on behalf of the participants and might have affected student's perceptions regarding the effectiveness of the ethnographic approach.

3.9 *Ethical considerations*

The conducted research was approved at Tier 1 by the University of Brighton. When the participants were approached to take part in the research project they were informed what the project was about. According to Howe and Moses (1999) in Cohen et al (2011) informed consent is 'a cornerstone of ethical behaviour'. Therefore the researcher took the participants through the contents of the consent form and asked them to read the information carefully and then to sign the form before the researcher started with the focus group interview and ethnographic task.

In addition, for both the focus group interview and ethnographic task, the participants were sent info-packs including a cover letter (Appendix 8 and 10) which explained the rationale behind each research phase and what would be expected on the day. The participants were also informed that the focus group interview would be recorded and that their identities would not be revealed. For this reason, the researcher anonymised the transcript and reflective writing task. The participants were also made aware that they could have dropped out of the project at any time without giving a reason.

According to Cohen et al (2011:165) 'all educational research is sensitive; the question is one of degree'. Given the qualitative, in-depth nature of the research study and that participants were asked to give insights into their private lives as well as personal cultural experiences the researcher was aware that this study is sensitive research. This is underlined by Cohen et al (2011) who point out that sensitive research can be linked to researching taboo or emotionally charged areas, situational and contextual circumstances, people's private lives and deep personal experiences. This is furthermore supported by Sieber (1992) and Tilman (2002) in Cohen et al (2011) who argue that researching cultural and cross-cultural factors is linked to sensitive research. The trigger of the researcher for undertaking such delicate research stems from the findings of the literature review and experiences from teaching adult ESL learners. Often ESL learners find themselves in a relatively powerless situation in a new country given their limited English skills and limited opportunities to access the target culture. Hence the researcher wanted to specifically hear the participant's voices. This notion is closely linked to sensitive education research as 'it can act as a voice for the weak, the oppressed, those without a voice or who are not listened to' (Cohen et al 2011:166).

Chapter 4: Analysis and discussion of findings

In this chapter, an overview of the findings for each research question will be given. This will be followed by a discussion of the findings and how they relate to the literature review.

4.1 Research question 1: What aspects of British culture do the students consider relevant for helping them integrate socially?

The findings below relate to the pre-focus group task (Appendix 8) where participants were asked to circle those topics which they find most useful to learn about:
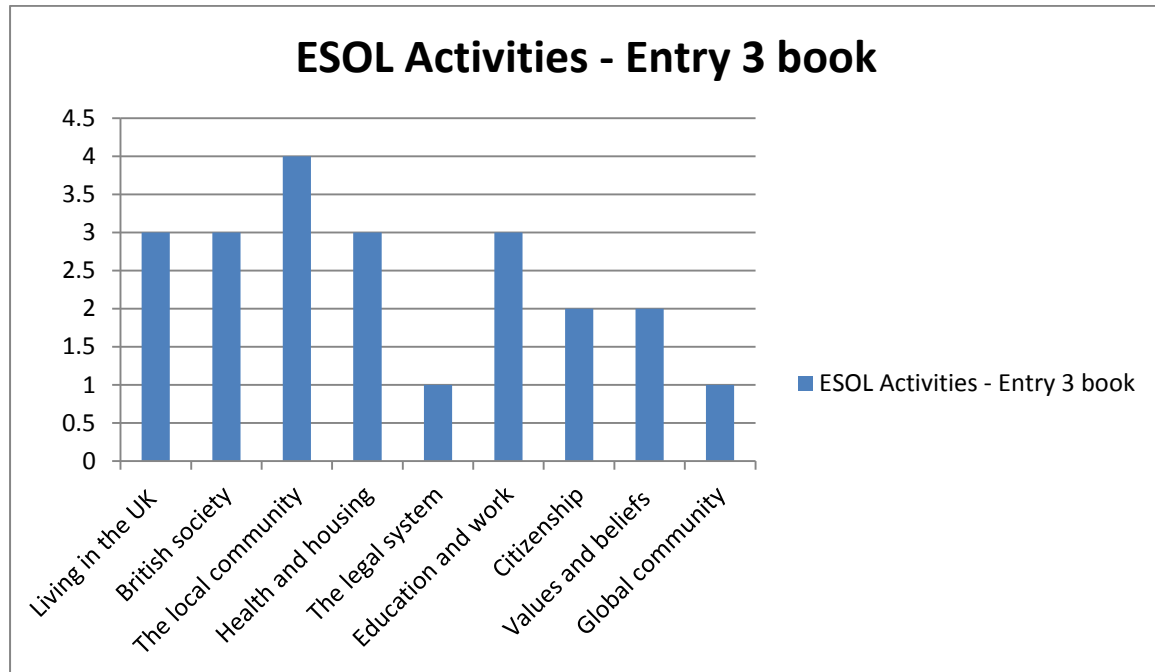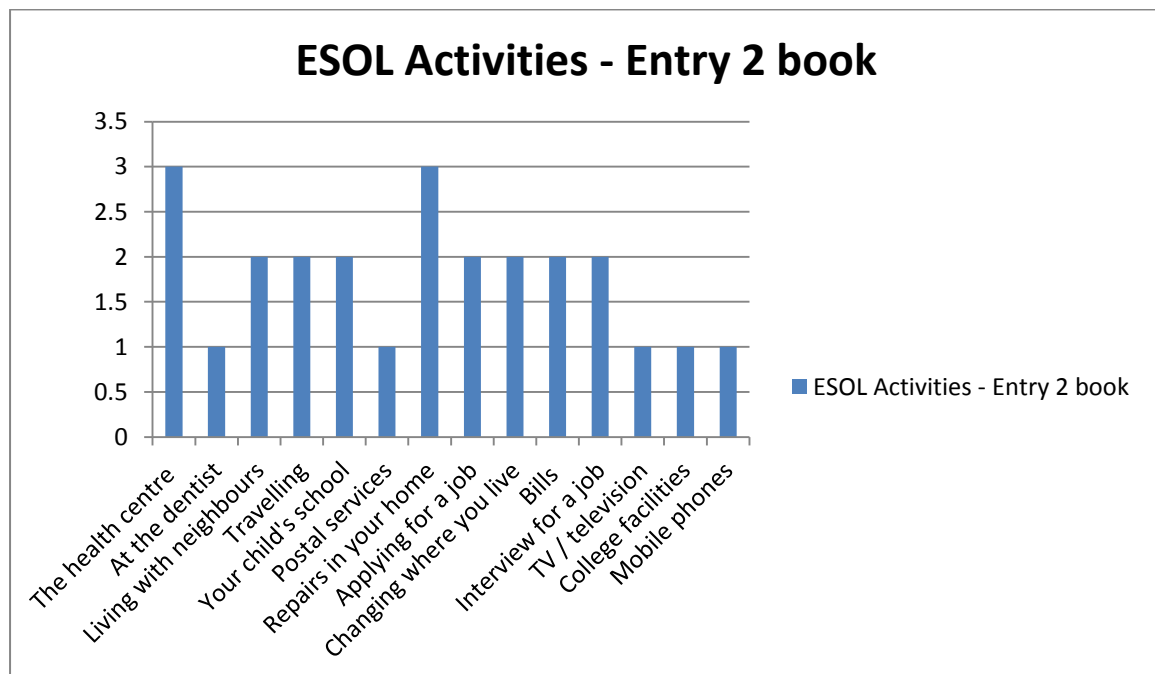
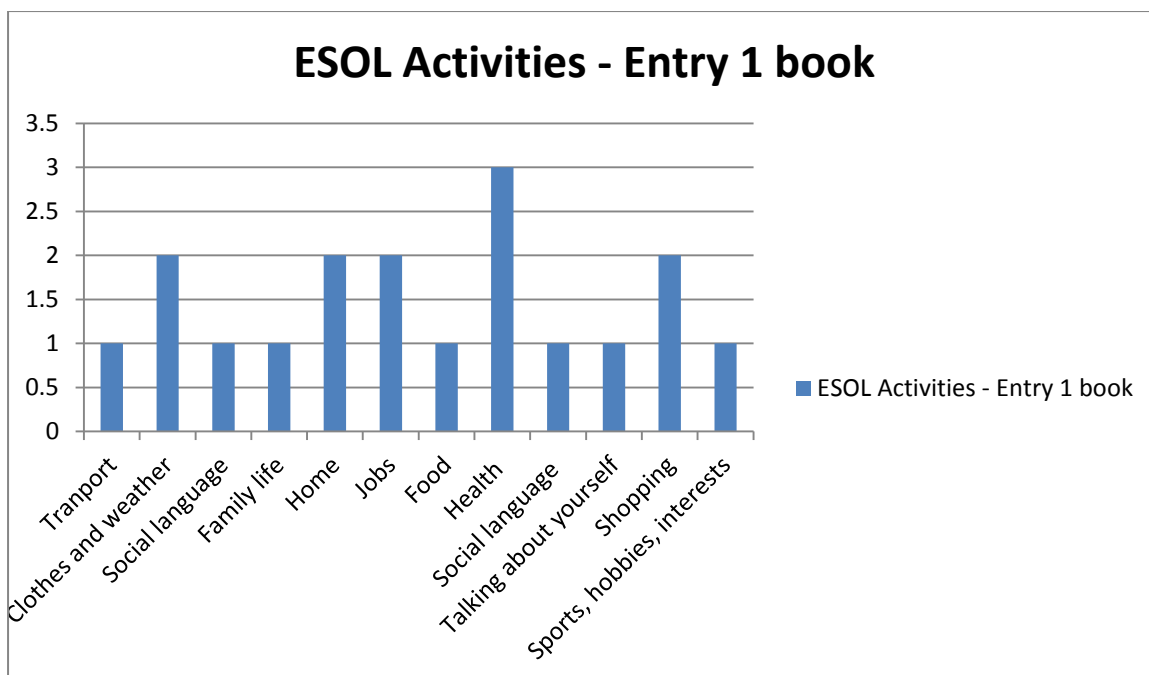**ESOL Activities - Entry 3 book**

Figure 6: Result – ESOL Entry 3 book

ESOL Activities - Entry 2 book

Figure 7: Result – ESOL Entry 2 book
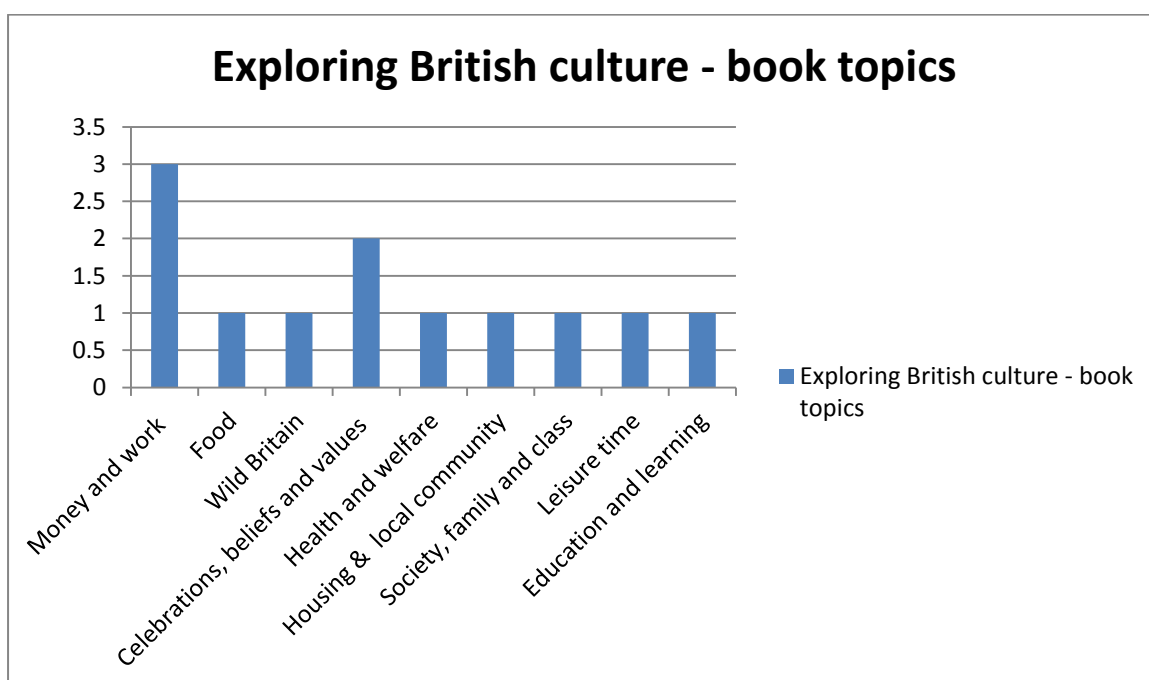
Figure 8: Result – ESOL Entry 1 book

Figure 9: Result – Exploring British culture book

The graphs indicate the participant's desire to break into British culture. Learning about the local community is *the* top priority of all four participants. This is closely followed by learning about living in the UK, British society, health, housing, education and work. These topics reflect the key 'ingredients' of living socially and economically integrated lives here in the UK and indicate that participants are very interested in learning the 'tools' of how to integrate into British society.

This links to the findings in the literature review as it was highlighted that there are often issues in connection with imbalance of power between immigrants and the host community (Norton 1998) and that often immigrants find it difficult to access social networks to practise their English (Norton 2000). A surprising find is the participant's interest in learning about how to do repairs in their home. This could potentially be linked to the lack of being socially integrated as often these things are carried out / done by local friends who know how everything works and where to get everything from in the target culture. Hence this could reflect the lack of a local support network. A further surprise is that not more interest was shown towards learning about British celebrations, beliefs and values. It could be argued that these topics are perhaps not seen as essential 'survival knowledge' by the participants but rather as additional information that may be useful as and when it is needed.

The focus group also revealed that the participants find the topics in the books interesting and useful on two levels: learning about life in Britain and understanding British people, their behaviour and how to be close to them. It was also commented on that it is a very useful way of combining English teaching with learning about British culture. This links closely to the notion of the cultural dimension of language learning (Jiang 2000; Nault 2006; Byram and Esarte-Sarries 1991), the realisation that language and culture have to be taught together (Brown 1994; Valdes 1990; Witherspoon 1980; Hinkel 1999; Byram and Morgan 1994) and that proficiency in a new language requires familiarity with its culture (Nault 2006; Kramsch 1993) as identified in the literature review.

The focus group also revealed additional topics which participants would like to learn about: finding information about sport groups, clubs and volunteering opportunities. The idea of volunteering was considered a way of facilitating social integration. Both are new concepts which did not come up in the literature review. Volunteering and sport/social clubs could provide a gentle way of facilitating social integration of ESL learners as they could provide a low-pressured environment of combining language learning with gaining cultural competencies in and for the target community.

In order to gain a deeper insight into the research question from a cultural and linguistic view, the researcher also asked the participants the following questions:

Question	Emerged themes from coding
Q3: With whom do you mainly speak English?	• Functional use versus personal use
Q4: How interested are you to learn about people from other cultures and countries ('international people') who live here in the UK?	• Low interest versus personal development
Q5: In what way do you think it would be useful to know something about their cultures and countries when talking to them in English?	• Avoiding offence

Table 1: Research question one – emerged themes from coding

The coding analysis revealed a tendency that participant's use of English is divided into a *functional use* of English with English people (host community) such as at work and through daily activities and a *personal use* of English such as in friendship exchanges which tend to take place more with international people. This links to the findings in the literature review as often immigrants who have lived in a country for a long period of time still find themselves not really belonging to the host culture and of being on the outside (Kramsch 1993). In addition this also links to the notion that often immigrants find it difficult to access social networks to practise their English (Norton 2000). However, the focus group also revealed that connections made from sport and social clubs as well as connections with English families / mums can be ways of gaining access to native speaker circles.

A surprise finding was the low interest of participants to learn about people from other cultures and countries and an understanding of the benefits that could have on communicating with them in English. Their views differed widely: that it can widen a person's horizon, change a person's visions about life and enable the person to compare and contrast with not being interested at all in this area unless there is a personal connection with someone from another country. This finding could indicate a potential low awareness by the participants that English is used as an international language (EIL), especially in such a culturally diverse country as the UK. The low interest in this area is contrary to the findings in the literature review which revealed that English is now an international language (McKay 2002; Crystal 2004; McArthur 2001), that it is language which brings people from different backgrounds together (Matsuda 2012) and that the goal of EIL is to help learners to use the language effectively in international contexts (Matsuda and Friedrich 2011; McKay 2002).

However, the focus group revealed that knowing about another person's culture when talking to them in English was considered important by one participant as it can avoid offending the other person.

4.2 Research question 2: How would the students like to learn about culture?

In order to gain an insight into research question two, the researcher asked the participants three sub-questions. The coding analysis revealed the following themes:

Question	Emerged themes from coding
Q6: How useful would you find it to learn facts about British culture?	• Confidence boosting • Avoiding mistakes • Understanding people • Examining stereotypes
Q7: How useful would you find it to compare and contrast between British culture and your own culture? How useful would you find it to compare and contrast between your own culture and the culture of other students in the class?	• Useful versus not often done • Family integration • Interesting but not useful
Q8: What do you think about the language and culture learning model?	• Combining versus separation

Table 2: Research question two – emerged themes from coding

Learning facts about the UK was considered useful as it was expressed that it can help build confidence as it enables the person to avoid mistakes. The focus group also revealed that learning about facts can help with understanding English people and to think beyond stereotypical knowledge. This is a surprise finding as it stands in contrast to the findings in the literature review. The literature review revealed that the facts-based approach to culture teaching is the most criticised approach and could lead to the teaching of stereotypes (Byram and Feng 2004). Hu and Gao (1997) raised the point that such an approach could even lead to reinforcing stereotypical thinking. However, data from the conducted focus group suggests that participants find this approach useful.

One participant pointed out that learning facts about British food for example would have helped her in the past to realise that the stereotypical knowledge about unhealthy food in the UK is not true. This seems to link with findings from the literature review, as Hu and Gao's (1997) approach of blending stereotypical learning with awareness raising was pointed out as a helpful tool for developing inter-cultural understanding.

The focus group interview revealed that participants consider it useful to compare and contrast between their own and British culture but only to quite a limited extend. The responses ranged from finding it useful, especially in connection with one's personal integration into their extended family, to not finding it useful for their own lives. A similar picture emerged in connection with comparing their own culture to those of students in the class. The response was minimal and it was argued that it is interesting knowledge but not useful. This is a surprise finding as it is in contrast to the findings in the literature review which highlighted the international and inter-cultural use of English as an international language (EIL). However, the findings in this section relate to the findings for research question one (sub-question 4 / see previous section and discussion) where the findings revealed a low interest in learning about other people's cultures and countries. As in the previous section, this finding could indicate a potential low awareness by the participants of English being used as an international language (EIL) and the benefits of knowing about other cultures and countries when communicating cross-culturally in English.

The language and culture learning model was discussed widely by the participants and the responses ranged from preferring a predominantly integrated approach of language and culture learning to one student preferring a separated approach (concerns were raised about the potential lack of depth of skills teaching if combined with culture teaching). These positive views of the model connect to the findings in the literature review as it was widely argued that language and culture should be taught together for a learner to become truly proficient in the target language (Jiang 2000; Nault 2006; Valdes 1990; Witherspoon 1980; Hinkel 1999; Byram and Morgan 1994; Kramsch 1993). Participants pointed out that they like learning about language and culture *together* in an integrated approach. As one participant puts it 'because you learn about the language and about the culture together'. Another participant points out that she studied English (especially grammar) extensively in China but when she came to the UK her English did not help her much. She highlights that

'But when compare useless. This is didn't told you English…I have learned lovely English in China. Coming here, oh dear, useless'…When I first came here I don't understand everyone talk about…They use phrase or something, or slang or everything or grammar'.

A positive example of where an integrated approach to culture and language learning was experienced came from the Vietnamese participant. She was taught by inner-circle English teachers who explained the grammar according to how it is used in different inner-circle countries. She pointed out that 'they taught English with different…they explained it with the culture. If you speak this English in Australia it will be like this…in England it would be like that…It is really useful'.

4.3 Research questions 3: Are there aspects of British culture and society that make it difficult for the students to integrate socially?

In order to gain an insight into research question three, the researcher asked the participants two sub-questions. Question number ten, as stated in the interview schedule, was left out purposely as the participants had already answered this question in section one. The coding analysis revealed the following themes:

Question	Emerged themes from coding
Q9: How comfortable do you feel living here in the UK?	• Emotionally uncomfortable
Q10: How much contact do you have with English people on a social level?	-------
Q11: In what way do you think does British society help you or hinder you to integrate socially?	• Functional relationships • Distant • Polite rejection • Lack of empathy • Glass-house life • Unwelcoming

Table 3: Research question three – emerged themes from coding

The focus group revealed that the majority of participants feel emotionally uncomfortable living in Britain; however the spectrum differs. One participant expressed feeling comfortable only because she has international friends.

She points out that 'I'm feeling comfortable because I have international friends. Because if they weren't here I would feel so lonely'. In her view English people (in connection with the family she lives with) lack empathy for the life of an immigrant like her and says that 'they don't know what means to come here, being far away from your family and need to learn a new language'. Another participant states that 'emotionally I don't feel myself comfy' and expresses that she feels uneasy about her integration into British society as 'I don't feel this country will accept me totally'. On the far end of the spectrum, another student expresses how she has suffered severe emotional stress from working with English people and states 'I started work…I came home…I cried a few times…I cannot open my mouth to say that they are racist but I feel it. I want to go home. I cried hard…I feel I'm not…I'm not welcome in this country'.

The majority of participants pointed out that they have functional relationships with English people through their children / playgroups or hobbies. Only one student commented that these people are her real friends. She is also the only participant who considers English people as genuinely friendly, easy going and open-minded. She pointed out that she has many English friends and states 'so many friends are the English. So I find them quite easy going and many open their mind'.

However, this seems to be a fortunate but rare situation as all other participants pointed out various aspects of how British society hinders their social integration. For example the perceived distance which English people keep from them. As one participant points out 'I don't feel we…we…we can get closer to English people because English people they are very, very…ah…in themselves. They don't know, they don't mind up the live to the foreigners.' Another participants points out that 'I think to have a friendship with an English person is very difficult but when you get that friendship it's forever'. There also appears to be a very contradictory behaviour perceived by some participants which is that of polite rejection. They perceive English people to be too polite and friendly to them which in turn does not come across as genuine. One participant pointed out that 'it is a sign of they don't accept me like the person of their own country. They are too polite…too polite…like you're a guest'. She feels she always has to be at her best behaviour to gain the favour of English people and to be a good ambassador for people of her country. A similar view was expressed by another participant, the one who experienced severe emotional stress at work as mentioned previously. She points out that 'they…they…nice to me, they are polite to me…but I guess they don't want to show that they're racist'.

These findings link with the acculturation and identity issues identified in the literature review; especially that immigrants even after having lived in a country for a long time often still report of not being part of the host culture (Kramsch 1993), the imbalance of power between the immigrants and the host culture (Norton 1998) and the complex and interwoven factors which can positively or negatively hinder acculturation (Schumann 1978). When comparing the data with Schumann's acculturation model (Appendix 6), no pattern emerged of which factors exactly (social distance / psychological distance) play a key role in the lives of the participants. The only factor which stood out was that of 'attitude' as the majority of participants and their experiences with English people seem to express quite negative attitudes towards each other.The data reveals precious insights into the lived realities of the participants and identified that the perceived distance, polite rejection and lack of empathy by English people makes them feel unwelcome and emotionally uncomfortable which in turn appears to hinder their social integration into British society.

4.4 Research question 4: What are the student's opinions regarding an ethnographic approach to help them develop their language and cultural skills?

In order to gain insights into research question four, the participants were asked to do an ethnographic task which included doing observations, an interview with an English person and participating in a cultural awareness lesson (Appendix 10). In order to assess their learning, participants had to address four specific questions in a reflective writing task. The following emerged:

Question	Emerged themes from coding
a) How useful do you find the ethnographic approach for culture and language learning? What are the benefits and issues?	• Confidence building • Cross-cultural vision • Speaking practice • Cultural inclusion • Identity loss
b) In what way do you think can this approach facilitate social integration?	• Preparation
c) How much and what did you learn about English culture and your own culture?	• Rich insights • Physical contact • Social behaviour • Customs & traditions
d) What are your thoughts about connecting an ethnographic task with a culture lessons? What did you learn from it? What are the benefits and issues?	• Speaking practice • Cultural exchange • Preparation • Cultural awareness (No issues mentioned)

Table 4: Research question four – emerged themes for coding

These insights from the data confirm the findings in the literature review that indeed, ethnography seems to be the missing link between language and culture studies (Buttjes 1991). The perspective of language learning from an ethnographic perspective to enable learners to learn a language for cultural understanding (Byrman and Esarte-Sarries 1991) appears to achieve very positive results with ESL students and can therefore be seen as a valuable tool for their social integration. The data also reveals *why* the participants find this approach useful and provides new insights gained through the research process as the literature review did not reveal such deep understanding.

Participants regard the ethnographic approach as culturally and linguistically confidence building. It helps them to develop a cross-cultural vision of life and of themselves rather than losing their identity in trying to become British. They welcomed the opportunity to practise their English through the interview and in the culture lesson and revealed that the process made them feel culturally more included into society. One student points out that 'it can give the possibility to get close to real British life' and another shares that 'knowing how to behave, the way of interact with people from other countries is really important because it will make you feel like you belong to that country'. The data also reveals that the ethnographic approach is seen as a preparation for becoming socially integrated. It was argued by the participants that this approach helps breaking down stereotypical views about the target community and can help avoiding cultural mistakes by enabling language learners to gain useful cultural knowledge about the target culture (for example in the areas of physical contact, social behaviour, customs and traditions). As one participant points out:

> Ethnographic approach can give students some ideas about British lifestyle, habits, traditions and interests. Using this knowledge students possibly will be more prepared for active communication and integration in new culture and language.

The idea of combining the ethnographic approach with a cultural-awareness lesson was considered very beneficial as it was seen as good speaking practice, enriching in terms of developing cultural awareness and preparation for social integration. As one participant points out 'now I know more I can apply me new knowledge to improve my social, cultural and professional life here in the UK'. Another enriching insight was that of the ethnographic approach being seen as facilitating cultural exchange between the language learners and target community. As one participant highlights:

> Getting through an English person's heart is extremely difficult but with this approach you can start a relation because the native speaker will notice that you are interested in their world, you are asking them questions and you try and be emphatic…This can end up being a cultures' exchange and understanding'.

The findings indicate that the ethnographic approach could help with developing cultural understanding and foster more positive attitudes towards the target community.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusions

In summary, the research findings match in many ways with the findings of the literature review. However, on a deeper level the data does reveal some very insightful points in regards to getting closer to finding out 'why' things are the way they are in terms of social integration issues of adult ESL learners. In addition the findings of all four research questions together, in combination with the conducted action research and ethnographic approach, provide quite a good 'package' of useful insights into how culture can be taught in the adult ESL classroom. The research revealed that learning about the local community is the most important topic for the participants of this study as it helps them to learn about life in Britain, understanding English people, their behaviour and how to be closer to them. It was also revealed that learning about sport groups, clubs and volunteering opportunities was considered a way of facilitating social integration and breaking into native-speaker circles. The data revealed a tendency that participant's use of English is divided into a functional use of English with English people (host community) and a personal use of English (friendship exchanges) which tend to take place more with international people. A surprise finding was the low interest of participants to learn about people from other cultures and countries and a lack of understanding the benefits that could have on communicating with them in English. It was pointed out that this could indicate a potential low awareness by the participants of English being used an in international language (EIL). The data revealed that a facts-based approach to learning about British culture is seen as more beneficial than comparing and contrasting between British culture and their own culture or that of other students. The underlying notion of Byram's (1989) model of foreign language education of blending culture and language teaching was mainly regarded as a useful approach. The research revealed an emotional discomfort by the participants of living in the UK which stems from the perceived reality of British society hindering their social integration by being distant, politely rejecting them, lacking in empathy, having to live a glass-house life and by feeling unwelcome. The ethnographic approach to language and culture learning was regarded as a very useful approach for building cultural and linguistic confidence for living in the target community and is seen as a way of preparing for social integration. The research revealed that this approach can help developing a cross-cultural vision, practising speaking skills, gaining cultural awareness and facilitating cultural exchange between the language learners and the target community. The data also reveals that this approach has the potential to facilitate more positive attitudes towards the target community and therefore contribute positively towards cultural understanding.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the literature review and the conducted research study, the researcher would like to make recommendations for three different areas: classroom practise and language centre management, CDP (continual professional development) and further research. Given that this study applied action research, the researcher decided to present these recommendations as action points rather than in text format to facilitate clarity for further action.

5.3 Classroom practise & language centre management

- Embedding the ethnographic approach into the curriculum of the language centre where the researcher teaches to help students explore British culture through:
  - ➢ Ethnographic observations
  - ➢ Ethnographic interviews between ESL students and English people

- Based on this study, the researcher suggests formative assessment of learning through feeding back findings in a culture lesson and summative assessment of learning through a reflective writing task with set questions

- Adding information about sport groups, clubs and volunteering opportunities in the local area to the list of cultural topics to be explored in the classroom

- Inviting British guest speakers and run Q&A sessions to enable students to ask cultural questions and about life / society in the UK

- Raising awareness of English as an international language (EIL) by
  - ➢ Using World Englishes material in the classroom
  - ➢ Inviting guest speakers from outer and the expanding circle to model different varieties of English and to highlight the importance of knowing about other cultures to help communicate effectively cross-culturally in English

- Combining the teaching of British culture with setting up volunteering opportunities with local charities to enable students in a low-pressured environment to:
  - ➢ Learn about British life, culture and society
  - ➢ Break into native-speaker circles
  - ➢ Practise their English skills
  - ➢ Build their cultural and linguistic confidence
  - ➢ Help them prepare for social integration into British society

5.4 *Continual professional development (CPD)*

- Start training teachers at the centre to become familiar with the ethnographic approach
- Trying out the ethnographic approach with a whole class
- Learning how to become an cultural mediator as a teacher (Byram and Feng (2004) between the students and the target community

5.5 Further research

The researcher believes that more studies in relation to culture teaching and the social integration of ESL students are needed in the academic arena. Similar studies to the one carried out can help practitioners understand the needs of these students in more depth and support their teaching practise in the area of culture teaching to ESL students. Hence the researcher would like to echo Byram and Feng's (2004:149) view:

> There is need for more empirical research but also for a research agenda such that we can build up a systematic knowledge of language and culture teaching, the acquisition of intercultural competence by learners inside and beyond the traditional classroom, the relationship between linguistic and intercultural competence, the effect of both or either of these on social identities, and so on.

In addition the researcher believes that it would also be valuable to explore the effects of the ethnographic approach through a longitudinal study. This would enable British people and ESL students to explore each other's cultures / worlds over a longer period. The data gathered from such a study could potentially provide rich insights into the ways this approach could help facilitate positive attitudes towards one another, enable cultural exchange between ESL students and the target community and therefore contribute towards the social integration of ESL students in the UK.

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Appendix One

Context and needs analysis

Appendix 1

<u>Note:</u> This context and needs analysis originates from my work on the TLM56 essay (academic year 2013-14)

Context and needs analysis - based on McGrath's (2002:19) approach to material evaluation in connection with adult immigrant students in the UK

Context analysis

Learner factors	Evaluation	Source
1. Age range	Mostly adults of 25 years and above. Can range from 16 to 60 plus.	Khanna et al (1998) Jordan (1995)
2. Proficiency level in the target language	Highly variable levels of English. Some are not literate in any language. Different levels of competences across the four language skills.	Khanna et al (1998) Jordan (1995)
3. First language	Wide variety of different mother tongues.	Khanna et al (1998)
4. Academic and educational background	Can range from no formal schooling to PhD holders. Students' native language literacy levels can vary from advanced to pre-illiterate.	Mathews-Aydini (2008) Mathews-Aydini (2008) Schellekens (2007) Jordan (1995)

Learner factors	Evaluation	Source
5. Socio-cultural background	Diverse ethnic and socio-linguistic backgrounds. Fairly poor socioeconomic backgrounds.	Khanna et al (1998)
6. Occupation	Unemployed people, housewives, qualified engineers and doctors.	Khanna et al (1998) Schellekens (2007)
7. Reasons for studying the target language	To live and work in the UK, to manage their everyday lives, to undertake further study, attend a doctor's appointment, to speak to their neighbours, to gain friends.	Schellekens (2007) Jordan (1995)
8. Attitudes to learning	Students tend to be very motivated to learn English to help them find work, to manage their everyday lives and even aid further study. Have often fled traumatic circumstances, hence can be 'non-volunteers' of learning English . Can suffer from psychological and emotional issues which affect learning.	Schellekens (2007) Long (2009) Schellekens (2007)

Learner factors	Evaluation	Source
9. Previous language learning experience	Students' native language literacy levels can vary from advanced to pre-illiterate. May or may not therefore had exposure to the English language.	Mathews-Aydini (2008) Schellekens (2007)
10. Language learning aptitude	Even if students appear to have a low level of education, there is often a lot of undiscovered potential once they have access to education. Students can find it difficult to concentrate on their language development due to work and family commitments which can prevent them from regular attendance.	Schellekens (2007) Jordan (1995)
11. General expectations	Will depend on their circumstances, whether they want to learn English for their everyday lives, to find employment, gain access to better employment, pursue further study, to break out of their isolation and have a place to interact with people outside of their cultural / family circles, to be able to speak English	Schellekens (2007) Cooke (2006)

Learner factors	Evaluation	Source
12. Specific wants	Two main wants seem evident: to be able to find work and to break out of their social isolation and get access to the target language.	Schellekens (2007) Cooke (2006)
13. Preferred learning styles	Will have to be discovered on the course, no source was found.	---
14. Sex distribution	Male and females but majority tend to be females.	Khanna et al (1998)
15. Interests	Socially: to understand and interact with English people, to make friends, to become independent Work: for business, to get a job /promotion and to get qualifications	Khanna et al (1998) Cooke (2006)

Context and needs analysis - based on McGrath's (2002:19-20) approach to material evaluation

Needs analysis

Learner needs	Evaluation	Source
1. Dialect (e.g. British versus American English)	It would be appropriate for the students to be exposed to British English as this is their context.	---
2. Language – skill emphasis	Speaking appears to be quite important as the classes are often the only opportunity for the students to actually speak / practice any spoken English.	Cooke (2006) Roberts & Cooke (2009)
3. Contexts and situations of use, which may require different levels of formality or different registers	Socially / informal language: to understand English people, to make friends, to interact with English people, to become independent, to be able to access social, leisure and recreational activities Transactional encounters / formal language: at the doctor, shopping Work / formal language: for business, to get a job /promotion and to get qualifications	Khanna et al (1998)

Learner needs	Evaluation	Source
4. Subskills	- intercultural competence - 'managing talk' (structures for turn-taking, how to use discourse markers, repair strategies) - appropriateness of language (matching the language to its social context and functions - expression of their views, taking part in meaningful conversations, be taken seriously as people	Thornbury (2005) Cunningsworth (1984) Cunningsworth (1984) Klippel (2011)
5. Notions	Can be linked with the area above 'subskills'.	---
6. Functions	Students need to learn the linguistic and extralinguistic knowledge for speaking English in the following situations: - social / interpersonal encounters (interpersonal functions) - facilitate the exchange of goods and services (doctor, shops..) (transactional functions)	Thornbury (2005)

Learner needs	Evaluation	Source
7. Language – system (grammar, vocabulary, phonology) emphasis	The students have the need of all three but the crucial point is that they learn it in the context of social interaction / they need to learn the relationship between form and function.	Cunningsworth (1984)
8. Language forms (e.g. structures, vocabulary items, features of stress or intonation)	Grammar, vocabulary, discourse and phonology are all equally important for the students in this context.	---
9. Whether language system will be used productively, receptively or both	Students have an immediate need to practice speaking English and therefore need to be able to use the language productively (although listening also plays a major role here).	---
10. Attention given to mechanics (handwriting, spelling, punctuation)	Attention to spelling should be given since the class provides an opportunity for the students to get feedback and learn from their mistakes	---

Appendix 2

Approaches of culture teaching

Appendix 2

Overview of approaches seen as appropriate by the researcher of *how* to teach culture in the ESOL context

Approach	Source
Three different ways of how culture can be taught (based on Cortazzi and Jin 1999) ❖ 'source culture materials' that draw on the learners own culture as content ❖ 'target culture materials' that use the culture of a country where English is spoken as a first language ❖ 'international target culture materials' that use a great variety of cultures in English and non-English speaking countries around the world	McKay, S.L. (2002) *Teaching English as an International Language*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. *Evaluation / comments*: Would work well in UK ESOL context as it would make great use of cultural diversity among students and raise awareness of Inner Circle as well as Outer Circle cultures. A very inclusive and multi-cultural approach
How to teach EIL / using teaching materials that introduces different varieties of English a) supplementing textbooks with 'textual, audio, and visual samples' b) pointing out differences in vocabulary, grammar and usage / one can use media texts or other written materials c) Using Internet communities and social networking sites (SNS) > can all help to expose students to different varieties 'The important thing is that students understand that diversity among varieties is not only a matter of different pronunciation features, but rather a much more encompassing manifestation of cultural, linguistic and other values.' (p.338)	McKay, S.L. (2012) Principles of teaching English as an International Language. In Alsagoff, L., McKay, S.L., Hu, G., Renandya, W. (ed.), *Principles and Practices for teaching English as an International Language*. Oxon: Routledge. 28-46. *Evaluation / comments:* A varied and 'hands on' approach, good for ESOL context.

Teaching culture from an EIL angle 1. Developing an awareness of topics which are of interest to the global society as a whole (for example world peace, environment conservation..) 2. Studying several countries and regions from each circle 3. Developing an awareness of students' own culture and for the students to learn how to explain their own cultures to others	McKay, S.L. (2012) Principles of teaching English as an International Language. In Alsagoff, L., McKay, S.L., Hu, G., Renandya, W. (ed.), *Principles and Practices for teaching English as an International Language*. Oxon: Routledge. 28-46. *Evaluation / comments:* Draws learners together as English learners, reduces cultural boundaries, very inclusive, values student's own cultures. Very good for ESOL context.
Turning stereotypical knowledge into a valuable learning experience (based on Hu & Gao 1997) 'They warn of the risks and negative implications in teaching stereotypical knowledge as they point out that facts only will inevitably lead to superficial learning, and may enhance stereotypes and ethnocentrism.' (p.161) 'To deal with this paradox, they propose an approach where ❖ first learners are taught stereotypical knowledge (to build an open 'bridge' in their figurative terms). ❖ Immediately, this knowledge is put under scrutiny, by providing learners with a variety of representations of the cultural product or concept under discussion. This is to make learners aware that there are hidden 'barriers' along the seemingly straight, easy-to-cross 'bridge'. ❖ The repetition of the process will effectively make learners culturally sophisticated and eventually obtain the 'key' to becoming intercultural speakers.' (p.161)	Byram, M. and Feng, A. (2004) Culture and language learning: teaching, research and scholarship. *Language Teaching* 37: 149-168. *Evaluation / comments:* It's a bit of a risky approach but very valuable when done properly, teacher has to be selective about stereotypes to not offend students from the same culture.

Idea of language learners as ethnographers (suitable for students and teachers)
 	
7-step pragmatic ethnography (based on Damen 1987)
 	
    1. Select target group for ethnographic study
 	
    2. Find informant(s) able to represent the group
 	
    3. Find information about the group through secondary sources such as handbooks and journals, etc.
 	
    4. Interview the informant(s)
 	
    5. Analyse the interview data with the information obtained from secondary sources to form cultural hypotheses
 	
    6. Reflect on own references in order to understand given behaviours and meanings
 	
    7. Apply the insights into teaching materials selection, lesson planning and classroom teaching
	Byram, M. and Feng, A. (2004) Culture and language learning: teaching, research and scholarship. *Language Teaching* 37: 149-168.
	
	Evaluation / comments:
	
	Great idea for the ESOL classroom as students live and work in target language on a daily basis. Classroom can then be used to evaluate and discuss findings.

Idea of language learner as ethnographers (high school students)
 	
    ❖ Students undertook a survey (observations) on a particular aspect of life in a town abroad (for example they focused on shops and food, housing, leisure facilities..)
 	
    ❖ Students then interviewed people on the streets
 	
(Note: students received help from teachers with drawing up questions and questionnaires and had practised on each other)
	Byram, M. and Esarte-Sarries, V. (1991) *Investigating cultural studies in foreign language teaching*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
	
	Evaluation / comments:
	
	Great idea for the ESO learners. Classroom can then be used to evaluate and discuss findings. Interviews advised to be carried out with friends rather than with people on the streets / more appropriate

Idea of language learners as ethnographer (year-abroad university students) *Initial phase:* Students had an ethnography module for one semester before going abroad. They learned basic concepts of ethnography and ethnographic methods to help them to question their own environment and behaviours and were asked to reflect on taken-for-granted assumptions. *Year abroad:* Students then carried out their ethnographic study while abroad for a year. *Last phase:* Students had to analyse their data and then write it all up in the target language.	Byram, M. and Feng, A. (2004) Culture and language learning: teaching, research and scholarship. *Language Teaching* 37: 149-168. *Evaluation / comments:* Could be done on a monthly basis with ESOL learners. Would also be good writing practise in English.

A six step way of comparing two cultures (example: bullfighting in Spanish culture)
 	
  1. Form (what bullfighting actually is)
 	
  2. Meaning (what bullfighting means in Spanish culture /sport, entertainment, act of bravery)
 	
  3. Distribution (yearly cycle, weekly cycle, time of the day when they take place)
 	
  4. Form, meaning and distribution to an alien observer (what a foreigner will actually 'see' when watching a bullfight)
 	
  5. Misinformation ('cruel' means different things in American and Spanish culture)
 	
  6. Linguistic evidence (English and Spanish language have different words and attachments for things and people)
	Lado, R. (1986) How to compare two cultures. In Valdes, J.M. (ed.), *Culture bound.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 52-63.
	
	Evaluation / comments:
	
	Very good and systematic approach for developing cultural awareness skills. Could be used for developing such skills between ESOL student's cultures and British culture (for example 'Guy Folks'). Might have to leave out the last point as it requires language skills that not all teachers bring with them.

Appendix 3

Cultural topic

Appendix 3

Cultural topics

Cultural topics which can be used to stimulate discussions in the classroom. Can be used (as suggested by the researcher) as follows:

a) to compare and contrast the different cultures presented in the classroom (students work among themselves)
b) to compare and contrast topics to how they are handled / done in the UK (teacher works with students to explore British culture)

Topics can be used as a 5-minute cultural activity at the beginning of the lesson or as more of a topic for a lesson. Selected content based on Brooks (1986:124-128)

Topic	Example of content
Greetings, friendly exchange, farewells	How do friends meet, converse briefly, take their leave? What are the perennial topics of small talk? How are strangers introduced?
Discipline	What are the norms of discipline in the home, in school, in the family?
Festivals	What days of the calendar year are officially designated as national festivals? What are the central themes of these occasions and what is the manner of their celebration?
Holidays	What is the usual rhythm of work days and days off? What do people do on their days off?
Observance of Sunday	How does Sunday differ from weekdays with regard to what an individual does or does not do, may or may not do?
Games	What are the most popular games that are played outdoors, indoors by the young, by adults?
Music	What opportunities are offered the individual for training and practice in vocal and instrumental music?
Pets	What animals are habitually received into the home as pets? What is their role in the household?

Comradeship	How are friendships and personal attachments likely to be formed and what provisions are made for fostering comradeship through clubs, societies, and other group organizations?
Tobacco and smoking	Who smokes, what, and under what circumstances? What are the prevailing attitudes towards smoking? Where are tobacco products obtained?
Gadgets	What mechanical devices are commonly found in personal use, in the home, in stores in travel?
Sports	What organized and professional sports are the most popular and the most generally presented for the public?
Contrasts in town and country life	What are some of the notable differences in dwellings, clothing, manners, shopping facilities, public utilities, when life in town is compared with life in the country side?
Vacation and resort areas	What areas have special climate, scenery, or other natural features that make them attractive for vacation?

Appendix 4

Cultural topics with more EIL focus

Appendix 4

Adapted version of suggested topics for cultural learning. Based on Byram and Morgan (1994:53-55)

The researcher suggests using these topics for:

a) learning about English cultures (Inner and Outer Circle countries)
b) stimulating discussions among the students to compare and contrast their own cultures with each other

Both approaches are likely to increase student's intercultural awareness.

Topics	Examples of content for teaching English in the ESL context in the UK

Social identity and social groups	Regional identity
	  ➢ including language and dialects in Britain including World Englishes)
	
	Ethnic and cultural minorities
	  ➢ linguistic minority groups in Britain and in the Outer Circle, asylum seekers and refuges in Britain

Social interaction	Behaviour at the doctor, talking to teachers, neighbours in the UK ➢ culturally 'appropriate' behaviour in the UK when talking to natives might for example include (over)use of thank you, please, could you, would it be okay if and accept a strong feeling for one's privacy (not asking too many personal questions too soon) Gender relationships (in the UK and Outer Circle) Taboos

Belief and behaviour	Teaching procedures to make learners aware of the taken-for-granted nature of certain actions and their meanings
	  ➢ going to school, law and order, fashion and consumer values
	
	Teaching procedures to introduce students to routine / 'recipe' knowledge
	  ➢ how to use public transport, appropriate behaviour in a restaurant

Socio-political institutions	➤ British government, different political systems of the Inner and Outer Circle ➤ EU (European Union, vision, countries..) ➤ Health care (NHS versus other country's health care provisions) ➤ Law and order and state security (use of observation cameras in cities, Internet access..) ➤ Trade unions
Socialisation and the life-cycle	➤ School and educational system in the UK ➤ Apprenticeships and vocational training opportunities in the UK ➤ Ceremonies (how weddings are celebrated and conducted in different countries, any birthdays which have a special status in different countries…)
National history	➤ Britiain's colonial past and the development of World Englishes ➤ The Commonwealth ➤ Second World War ➤ Development of the English language ➤ Overview of the British Royal family ➤ Guy Folks
National geography	➤ Distribution of population in the UK ➤ Overview of Outer Circle countries where English is often spoken as a second or official language

National cultural heritage	- Contemporary artists widely known in the UK - Classical authors and the 'stories' of their most widely known works (Shakespeare, Jane Austin..) - Classical musicians and painters
Stereotypes and national identity	- Explanation of stereotypes and the stereotypical process - Information on British stereotypes - Symbols of national stereotypes and their meanings - Indication of phenomena in a common heritage

Appendix 4

Overview of ESOL topics in four publications

Appendix 5

'ESOL Activities - Practical language activities for living in the UK and Ireland' **(Entry 3)** by Smith (2008)

Topics	Content		Topics	Content
All about the UK	• facts, geography		The legal system	• who can vote and when, drinking age, driving age, court system, how to report an incident
Living in the UK	• renting, buying, do's and don'ts			
Parliament and the government	• life and responsibilities of an MP (member of parliament)		History and conflict	• history of the UK, the Queen / royal family
Diversity in the UK	• nationalities living in the UK, migration to the UK, class profiles of UK society		Education and work	• British education system, how to apply for a job, writing covering letters and personal statements
British society	• family life, men and women in society, celebrations		Science and communication	• electrical equipment, discoveries and inventions
The local community	• finding help in the community, learning about community services (helping with finding a job, medical facilities, counselling services..)		Environment	• recycling, extinction, nature and the future
Health and housing	• landlords and tenants, emergency services, making an appointment		Values and beliefs	• human rights, religious celebrations, learning about people from different countries who live in the UK
Festivals, the arts and entertainment	• celebrations in the UK, planning a social evening and inviting people		Global community	• London Olympics 2012, UN/EU and the Commonwealth, global problems
The legal system	• who can vote and when, drinking age, driving age, court system, how to report an incident		Citizenship	• citizenship in the UK, facts about citizenship

ESOL Activities - Practical language activities for living in the UK and Ireland' **(Entry 2)** by Boyd (2008)

Topics	Content	Topics	Content
The health centre	• using a health centre, changing / making an appointment, filling in a health questionnaire	Your child's school	• finding your way around a school, school day, communicating with teachers
Missing a class	• asking to miss a class, reading rules about missing a class, formulating an email about missing a class	Postal services	• over the counter conversations, learning about postal services, paying bills at the post office
TV / television	• how to hold a conversation about buying a TV, reading information from a TV shop, talking about TV programmes	Repairs in your home	• calling about a repair, information about repairs, talking about it
At the dentist	• making an appointment at the dentist, understanding information from a leaflet, missing an appointment	Applying for a job	• enquiring about a job on the phone, reading job advertisements, completing a job application form
Living with neighbours	• talking to neighbours, understanding rules for living in flats, asking neighbours for help	Changing where you live	• Talking about problems with a flat, changing accommodation, communicating to a landlord that there are problems
College facilities	• using the library, learning about college facilities, college life	Bills	• Getting help from the Citizen Advice Bureau, how to pay a gas or electricity bill, letter of complaint
Travelling	• having a conversation in a bus office, reading a timetable, reporting lost property	Interview for a job	• phoning about an interview, what to do in an interview, talking about an interview
Home life	• buying furniture, communication with a landlord, learning	Mobile phones	• understanding automated phone responses, phone contract information, communicating with a mobile phone company

ESOL Activities - Practical language activities for living in the UK and Ireland' **(Entry 1)** by Harrison (2008)

Topics	Content	Topics	Content
At college	• introducing yourself, understanding a college timetable	Directions	• asking and following directions
Talking about yourself	• where you're from, where you live, writing your address	Jobs	• different jobs, understanding job advertisements, writing a job application
In class	• learning classroom language, understanding class rules, writing a letter to a college	Food	• offering food and drink, reading a menu, writing a recipe
Times and schedules	• telling the time, understanding information about a college trip	Clothes and weather	• talking about the weather, British weather, describing clothes
Family life	• talking about your family, family tree	Health	• at the doctor's, understanding medicine labels, writing a note of absence
Shopping	• buying foods and saying prices, finding your way around a shopping centre, writing a shopping list	At the post office	• transactions in a post office, how to complete a special delivery form, writing a thank you note
Home	• welcoming someone to your home and showing them around, renting a flat, describing rooms	Social language	• practising everyday social language, customs and manners, writing cards for different occasions
Sports, hobbies and interests	• talking about your hobbies, learning about sports rules, joining a sports centre		
Transport	• buying a ticket, understanding travel information, talking about how you prefer to travel		

Overview of topics in Cambridge's 'Exploring British Culture' (Multi-level activities about life in the UK) by Smith (2012)

Topics	Content	Topics	Content
The United Kingdom today	• geography, flags, factual knowledge about the UK and its population	Health and welfare	• National Health Service (NHS), charities, British welfare system
A look at the United Kingdom	• information about capital cities, a profile of London, regions and counties of the UK	Leisure time	• how the British relax, what British people do in their free time, festivals
People in the UK	• who lives in the UK, British men and women, minority groups in Britain	The media and communication	• news in the UK, how news is reported in the UK, the BBC (British Broadcasting Channel)
How the UK is governed	• British government, everyday politics, how the government works	Education and learning	• education system, British qualification system, university / college route, 21st century skills
Society, family and class	• royal family, British families, British class system	Creative arts and culture	• local arts and crafts, British artistic achievements
Food	• typical English menus, understanding British food, 21st century food in Britain	Housing and the local community	• where people live, house styles, inside British houses, British housing issues
Money and work	• British money, cost of living, standard of living, UK economy, work pattern in the UK, tax system	British legal system	• people who work for the law, law in the UK, legal concerns
Celebrations, beliefs and values	• British celebrations, religious and non-religious festivals, attitudes and values	Wild Britain	• countryside and the seasons, towns, importance of countryside
British history	• history chart, insights into Irish, Welsh, Scottish and English history, people who changed British history	21st century Britain	• Britain in the wider context with the EU, UN, Commonwealth, developments

Appendix 6

Schumann's acculturation model

Appendix 6

Schumann's (1978b) Acculturation Model

Factor Social distance	Description
1. Social dominance	The L2 group can be politically, culturally, technically, or economically superior (dominant), inferior (subordinate), or equal
2. Integration pattern	The L2 group may assimilate (i.e. give up its own lifestyle and values in favour of TL group), seek to preserve its lifestyle and values, or acculturate (i.e. adopt lifestyle and values of TL group while maintaining its own for intra-group use)
3. Enclosure	The L2 group may share the same social facilities (low enclosure) or may have different social facilities (high enclosure)
4. Cohesiveness	The L2 group is characterized by intra-group contacts (cohesive) or inter-group contacts (non-cohesive)
5. Size	The L2 group may constitute a numerically large or small group
6. Cultural congruence	The culture of the L2 group may be similar or different to that of the TL group
7. Attitude	The L2 group and TL group may hold positive or negative attitudes towards each other
8. Intended length of stay	The L2 group may intend or not intend to stay for a long time or a short time
Psychological distance	
1. Language shock	The extent to which L2 learners fear they will look comic in speaking the L2
2. Culture shock	The extent to which the L2 learners feel anxious and disorientated upon entering a new culture
3. Motivation	The extent to which L2 learners are integratively (most Important) or instrumentally motivated to learn the L2
4. Ego permeability	The extent to which L2 learners perceive their L1 to have fixed and rigid or permeable and flexible boundaries and therefore the extent to which they are inhibited

(Source: SLA handout /also used in SLA essay academic year 2014-15)

Appendix 7

Focus group interview schedule

and

Connection between interview questions and literature review

Appendix 7

Interview schedule

Section 1

What aspects of British culture do the students consider relevant for helping them integrate socially?

In this section I want to ask you about what aspects of British culture you consider important learning about in the classroom. I would like to find out what would help you to know about British culture to make social integration easy for you.

a) As preparation for today, I've given you an overview of topics which appear in some recently published books for English learners.

Question 1: How do you find these topics?

Prompt: In what way do you think they can support social integration?

Question 2: Which other topics can you think of that would be useful to learn about?

Prompt: Think about your daily life. What would be useful to know about British culture in your everyday life?

b) Let's move on to how you use English in your daily life and cultural diversity of the UK.

Question 3: With whom do you mainly speak English?

Prompt: More with English or international people?

Probe: Why is that?

Question 4: How interested are you to learn about people from other cultures and countries ('international people') who live here in the UK?

Question 5: In what way do you think it would be useful to know something about their cultures and countries when talking to them in English?

Section 2

How would the students like to learn about culture?

Let's move on to the second part of the focus group interview. I would now like to explore culture teaching here at the centre for a bit.

    c) Let's hear your views how you would like to learn about culture.

Question 6:   How useful would you find it to learn facts about British culture?

Prompt: For example such as typical foods, statistical facts, cultural events?

Question 7:   How useful would you find it to compare and contrast between

- British culture and your own culture?
- your own culture and the culture of other students in the class?

    d) As preparation for today, I've given you a language and culture learning model to look at that someone (not me!) has developed. Let's hear your thoughts about it.

Question 8:   What do you think about the language and culture learning model?

Prompt: How useful do you find this model?

Section 3

Are there aspects of British culture and society that make it difficult for the students to integrate socially?

In this last part of the focus group interview I would like to hear your views regarding if there are aspects of British culture and society that make it difficult for you to integrate socially.

    e) Let's have a look at your life here in the UK.

Question 9:   How comfortable do you feel living here in the UK?

Prompt: What are some of the challenges?

Question 10:   How much contact do you have with English people on a social level?

Question 11:   In what way do you think does British society help you or hinder you to

integrate socially?

Connection between interview questions and literature review

| Section 1

Research question: What aspects of British culture do the students consider relevant for helping them integrate socially?

   a) As preparation for today, I've given you an overview of topics which appear in some recently published books for English learners.

Question 1: How do you find these topics?
Prompt: In what way do you think they can support social integration?
Question 2: Which other topics can you think of that would be useful to learn about?
Prompt: Think about your daily life. What would be useful to know about British culture in your everyday life?

   b) Let's move on to how you use English in your daily life and cultural diversity of the UK.
Question 3: With whom do you mainly speak English?
Prompt: More with English or international people?
Probe: Why is that?
Question 4: How interested are you to learn about people from other cultures and countries ('international people') who live here in the UK?
Question 5: In what way do you think it would be useful to know something about their cultures and countries when talking to them in English? | The researcher aims to investigate how useful the students find these topics in connection with their social integration. Are there any additional topics they would like to go explore in class? The researcher also aims to investigate how closely connected the students see culture learning as part of their social integration and learning English.

Sources:
Boyd (2008); Harrison (2008); Smith (2008); Smith (2012); Jiang (2000); Nault (2006); Byram and Esarte-Sarries (1991); Valdes (1990); Byram and Morgan (1994); Buttjes (1991);

The researcher aims to investigate whether students use English as an international language (EIL) (and therefore more in an inter-cultural rather than native context) in order to help the students to become proficient English users on a linguistic and cultural level in such a diverse context as the UK. The question is whether the students are actually interested in learning about the people and cultures of non inner-circle countries? Do they consider this knowledge as helpful in any way when talking in English and in connection to integrating socially?

Sources:
McKay (2002); Crystal (2004); Matsuda (2012); Matsuda (2011); Sharifian (2009); McKay (2002); Melchers and Shaw (2003); Crystal (1999); Prodromou (1988); Nault (2006); |

Section 2

Research question: How would the students like to learn about culture?
Let's move on to the second part of the focus group interview. I would now like to explore culture teaching here at the centre for a bit.

   c) Let's hear your views how you would like to learn about culture.

Question 6:	How useful would you find it to learn facts about British culture?
Prompt:	For example such as typical foods, statistical facts, cultural events?
Question 7:	How useful would you find it to compare and contrast between

       -   British culture and your own culture?
       -   your own culture and the culture of other students in the class?

   d) As preparation for today, I've given you a language and culture learning model to look at that someone (not me!) has developed. Let's hear your thoughts about it.

Question 8:	What do you think about the language and culture learning model?
Prompt:	How useful do you find this model?

New ways of teaching culture in the ELT context have to be developed, ideally leading to the development of inter-cultural skills by the students. The researcher aims to find out student's preferences in connection to *how* this teaching can be delivered and *what* content it should have.

Sources:
Atkinson (1999); Nault (2006); Prodromou (1988); Byram and Feng (2004); Kramsch (1991) in Hinkel (1999); Hu and Gao (1997) in Byram and Feng (2004); Byram and Morgan (1994); Guest (2002); Tomalin and Stempleski (1993); Byram (1989)

Section 3 **Research question: Are there aspects of British culture and society that make it difficult for the students to integrate socially?** In this last part of the focus group interview I would like to hear your views regarding if there are aspects of British culture and society that make it difficult for you to integrate socially. e) Let's have a look at your life here in the UK. **Question 9:** How comfortable do you feel living here in the UK? Prompt: What are some of the challenges? **Question 10:** How much contact do you have with English people on a social level? **Question 11:** In what way do you think does British society help you or hinder you to integrate socially?	The researcher aims to investigate issues of acculturation and identity which play an important role in social integration and language development (for example student's belonging to the host culture, whether student's background, lifestyle, appearance etc are a hindrance to social integration, imbalance of power between the students and host community, limited opportunities to practice English with target community and to socialise with English people, L2 identity construction). *Sources:* Kramsch (1993b) in Hinkel (1999); Schumann (1978); Padilla and Perez (2003); Norton (1998); Norton (2000); Brown (1986)

Appendix 8

Info pack for focus group interview

Appendix 8

Worthing, Thursday 1st of October 2015

Dear

First of all thank you so much for taking part in my project. I'm very thankful for your time!

You were asked to participate in the project because you are / were a student at the language centre and because you have good English skills.The project that I'm currently working on is for my Master's Degree in 'English Language Teaching'. I'm interested in investigating immigrant's beliefs about the aspects of culture learning that are important for social integration in the UK. In order to explore my topic, I would like to do two group interviews which will need to be recorded. As you know, the first one will be on Friday 9th October 10:15 - 11:45. Here is an outline of what will be happening on the day:

10:15	Welcome, introductions, paperwork
10:30 – 11:00	Group interview
11:10 – 11:40	Explaining task 2 for the second group interview
11:45	Finish

Please find attached your preparation pack for Friday 9th. Can you please have a look at it over the next few days and get familiar with the materials. This will help you a lot during the interview and it will give you an opportunity to think about the answers in advance. Included in the pack are the:

Interview schedule (2 pages)

- These are the questions I'll be asking the group
- Please read the questions carefully and start thinking about how you would like to answer the questions during the interview

Overview of topics in recently published English books (4 pages)

- These four pages connect to the interview questions in section 1a)
- Please have a look at the sheets and circle the topics which you find most interesting in connection with social integration.
- Please bring the sheets to the interview with you!

Cultural model (1 page)

- The model connects to interview questions in section 2c) + d)

Thank you again for taking part in this project! I trust that you will learn a lot from the experience.

If you have any questions, then please don't hesitate to get in touch (email:…. / mobile:…).

I look forward to seeing you on the 9th October!

Many thanks,

Petra

Interview schedule

Section 1

In this section I want to ask you about what aspects of British culture you consider important learning about in the classroom. I would like to find out what would help you to know about British culture to make social integration easy for you.

    f) As preparation for today, I've given you an overview of topics which appear in some recently published books for English learners.

Question 1: How do you find these topics?

Prompt: In what way do you think they can support social integration?

Question 2: Which other topics can you think of that would be useful to learn about?

Prompt: Think about your daily life. What would be useful to know about British culture in your everyday life?

    g) Let's move on to how you use English in your daily life and cultural diversity of the UK.

Question 3: With whom do you mainly speak English?

Prompt: More with English or international people?

Probe: Why is that?

Question 4: How interested are you to learn about people from other cultures and countries ('international people') who live here in the UK?

Question 5: In what way do you think it would be useful to know something about their cultures and countries when talking to them in English?

Section 2

Let's move on to the second part of the group interview. I would now like to explore culture teaching here at the centre for a bit.

    h) Let's hear your views how you would like to learn about culture.

Question 6:   How useful would you find it to learn facts about British culture?

Prompt: For example such as typical foods, statistical facts, cultural events?

Question 7:   How useful would you find it to compare and contrast between

- British culture and your own culture?
- your own culture and the culture of other students in the class?

    i) As preparation for today, I've given you a language and culture learning model to look at that someone (not me!) has developed. Let's hear your thoughts about it.

Question 8:   What do you think about the language and culture learning model?

Prompt: How useful do you find this model?

Section 3

In this last part of the group interview I would like to hear your views regarding if there are aspects of British culture and society that make it difficult for you to integrate socially.

    j) Let's have a look at your life here in the UK.

Question 9:   How comfortable do you feel living here in the UK?

Prompt: What are some of the challenges?

Question 10:   How much contact do you have with English people on a social level?

Question 11:   In what way do you think does British society help you or hinder you to integrate socially?

'ESOL Activities - Practical language activities for living in the UK and Ireland' **(Entry 3)** by Smith (2008)

Topics	Content		Topics	Content
All about the UK	• facts, geography		History and conflict	• history of the UK, the Queen / royal family
Living in the UK	• renting, buying, do's and don'ts		Education and work	• British education system, how to apply for a job, writing covering letters and personal statements
Parliament and the government	• live and responsibilities of an MP (member of parliament)			
Diversity in the UK	• nationalities living in the UK, migration to the UK, class profiles of UK society		Science and communication	• electrical equipment, discoveries and inventions
British society	• family life, men and women in society, celebrations		Environment	• recycling, extinction, nature and the future
The local community	• finding help in the community, learning about community services (helping with finding a job, medical facilities, counselling services..)		Values and beliefs	• human rights, religious celebrations, learning about people from different countries who live in the UK
Health and housing	• landlords and tenants, emergency services, making an appointment		Global community	• London Olympics 2012, UN/EU and the Commonwealth, global problems
Festivals, the arts and entertainment	• celebrations in the UK, planning a social evening and inviting people		Citizenship	• citizenship in the UK, facts about citizenship
The legal system	• who can vote and when, drinking age, driving age, court system, how to report an incident			

ESOL Activities - Practical language activities for living in the UK and Ireland' **(Entry 2)** by Boyd (2008)

Topics	Content	Topics	Content
The health centre	• using a health centre, changing / making an appointment, filling in a health questionnaire	Your child's school	• finding your way around a school, school day, communicating with teachers
Missing a class	• asking to miss a class, reading rules about missing a class, formulating an email about missing class	Postal services	• over the counter conversations, learning about postal services, paying bills at the post office
TV / television	• how to hold a conversation about buying a TV, reading information from a TV shop, talking about TV programmes	Repairs in your home	• calling about a repair, information about repairs, talking about it
At the dentist	• making an appointment at the dentist, understanding information from a leaflet, missing an appointment	Applying for a job	• enquiring about a job on the phone, reading job advertisements, completing a job application form
Living with neighbours	• talking to neighbours, understanding rules for living in flats, asking neighbours for help	Changing where you live	• Talking about problems with a flat, changing accommodation, communicating to a landlord that there are problems
College facilities	• using the library, learning about college facilities, college life	Bills	• Getting help from the Citizen Advice Bureau, how to pay a gas or electricity bill, letter of complaint
Travelling	• having a conversation in a bus office, reading a timetable, reporting lost property	Interview for a job	• phoning about an interview, what to do in an interview, talking about an interview
Home life	• buying furniture, communication with a landlord, learning	Mobile phones	• understanding automated phone responses, phone contract information, communicating with a mobile phone company

ESOL Activities - Practical language activities for living in the UK and Ireland' **(Entry 1)** by Harrison (2008)

Topics	Content	Topics	Content
At college	• introducing yourself, understanding a college timetable	Directions	• asking and following directions
Talking about yourself	• where you're from, where you live, writing your address	Jobs	• different jobs, understanding job advertisements, writing a job application
In class	• learning classroom language, understanding class rules, writing a letter to a college	Food	• offering food and drink, reading a menu, writing a recipe
Times and schedules	• telling the time, understanding information about a college trip	Clothes and weather	• talking about the weather, British weather, describing clothes
Family life	• talking about your family, family tree,	Health	• at the doctor's, understanding medicine labels, writing a note of absence
Shopping	• buying foods and saying prices, finding your way around a shopping centre, writing a shopping list	At the post office	• transactions in a post office, how to complete a special delivery form, writing a thank you note
Home	• welcoming someone to your home and showing them around, renting a flat, describing rooms	Social language	• practising everyday social language, customs and manners, writing cards for different occasions
Sports, hobbies and interests	• talking about your hobbies, learning about sports rules, joining a sports centre		
Transport	• buying a ticket, understanding travel information, talking about how you prefer to travel		

Overview of topics in Cambridge's 'Exploring British Culture' (Multi-level activities about life in the UK) by Smith (2012)

Topics	Content	Topics	Content
The United Kingdom today	• geography, flags, factual knowledge about the UK and its population	Health and welfare	• National Health Service (NHS), charities, British welfare system
A look at the United Kingdom	• information about capital cities, a profile of London, regions and counties of the UK	Leisure time	• how the British relax, what British people do in their free time, festivals
People in the UK	• who lives in the UK, British men and women, minority groups in Britain	The media and communication	• news in the UK, how news are reported in the UK, the BBC (British Broadcasting Channel)
How the UK is governed	• British government, everyday politics, how the government works	Education and learning	• education system, British qualification system, university / college route, 21st century skills
Society, family and class	• royal family, British families, British class system	Creative arts and culture	• local arts and crafts, British artistic achievements
Food	• typical English menus, understanding British food, 21st century food in Britain	Housing and the local community	• where people live, house styles, inside British houses, British housing issues
Money and work	• British money, cost of living, standard of living, UK economy, work pattern in the UK, tax system	British legal system	• people who work for the law, law in the UK, legal concerns
Celebrations, beliefs and values	• British celebrations, religious and non-religious festivals, attitudes and values	Wild Britain	• countryside and the seasons, towns, importance of countryside
British history	• history chart, insights into Irish, Welsh, Scottish and English history, people who changed British history	21st century Britain	• Britain in the wider context with the EU, UN, Commonwealth, developments

Byram's (1989) model of foreign language education

The model aims to provide an idea of how a foreign language and its culture can be learned and taught in the classroom. The goal of this model is for language students to become inter-cultural language learners, which means that they would know both: the language and culture of the foreign country including an awareness of their own culture:

The model has four parts:

Language learning

➢ Teaching and learning all four skills / reading, writing, listening, speaking

Language awareness

➢ Students should learn what type of language to use in different situations (for example formal or informal, the difference between speaking to a doctor or a friend)

Cultural awareness

➢ Students should learn cultural knowledge about the country of the language they are studying

Cultural experience

➢ Students should spend some time in the foreign country, experiencing its culture, consciously observe the foreign environment / its people and compare it with their own cultural knowledge and behaviour
➢ It is a way for the students to learn about the foreign culture on a very practical level and to develop inter-cultural skills
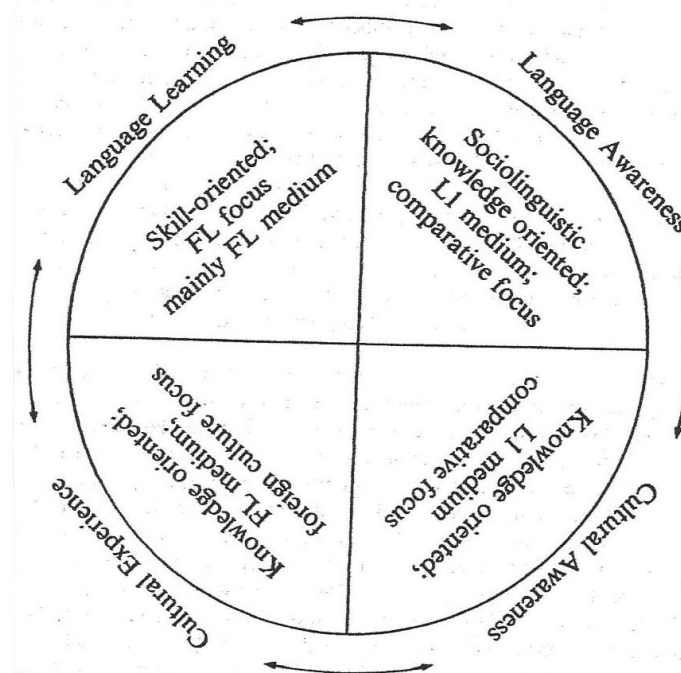
Appendix 9

Moderator guide for focus group

Appendix 9

Moderator's guide focus group

1. **Introduction and introductory activities**

   - Thanks for agreeing to participate
   - Tea, coffee and biscuits – please help yourself
   - Introductions – participants to introduce themselves
   - Aim of the research is to find out what aspects of culture learning the students here at the centre find useful to help them integrate socially
   - The findings will be used by me to improve my own teaching practice and to help the other teachers here at the centre to teach culture
   - Your views and opinions are therefore very valuable and important for this project

2. **Paperwork**
   - Ask students to sign consent form and demographic information sheet

3. **Statement of the basic rules and rules for the interview**

   - I expect an open and polite discussion. Please feel free to share your views and opinions openly and respect the opinions of the other participants
   - Everything you share during the interview will be kept confidential. Your identity will not be revealed at any point in my project
   - There is no 'right or wrong' answers to any of my questions. I'm simply interested in your views so please share with the group what you think even if you have a different opinion from the others
   - As this is a group interview / discussion, I would like all four of you to share your opinions with each other and to discuss my questions as a group
   - Please speak clearly and try not to interrupt each other
   - The discussion will last around 25 minutes and be recorded

4. **Short question-and-answer discussions**

   - Use prepared interview schedule, allow flexibility

5. **At the end**

   - 'Sweeper' question: Is there anything else you want to say about this topic, that I haven't asked you?
   - Round off: Is there anything else that you want to ask me?
   - Finish: Thank you very much for your time, that has been most interesting!

Appendix 10

Info pack for ethnographic task

Appendix 10

Dear

First of all thank you again for participating in this project! In this second part of the project I would like you to undertake some ethnography.

What is ethnography?
'Ethnography can be broadly described as the study of a group's social and cultural practices from an insiders' perspective' (Robert, Byram, Barro, 2001).
'In the most simple terms, ethnography is a method of describing a culture or situation within a culture from the…native's point of view' (Nemetz Robinson, 1985).

What does ethnography have to do with language and culture learning?
There appears to be a connection between foreign language learning and socialisation (the process through which a person learns the skills to live in his / her culture). Just as a child grows up in a culture and learns how to speak the language, how to behave and interact in his/her culture through watching and interacting with other people, equally it can be possible for foreign language learners to do the same. There is a chance that ethnography could help language students to integrate socially into a new culture.

Part A (observations) / please do them between 9th – 15th Oct
I would like you to observe English people in your daily environment for about 7 days and write down some notes. The areas I would like you to focus on are:
1. Greetings, friendly exchange, farewells, privacy (verbal and social interaction during small talk, do's and don'ts)
2. Cultural or religious celebrations (including their significance for English people and how they are celebrated)
3. Living with neighbours (do's and don'ts)
4. Topic of your choice – what area of British life are you interested in and would like to find out about?

Part B (interviews) / please do them between 10th – 15th Oct
I would like you to interview 1-2 English people about the topics from Part A and in turn share with them how these things are done in your culture.

Part C (reflective writing task) / please do <u>after</u> 16th Oct / submit by Fri 23 Oct
Please reflect on your ethnographic experience (2 pages of A4) and try and answer all of the questions below:
1. **a)** How useful do you find the ethnographic approach for culture and language learning? What are the benefits and issues?
   b) In what way do you think can this approach facilitate social integration?
   c) How much and what did you learn about English culture and your own culture?
2. **a)** What are your thoughts about connecting an ethnographic task with a culture lesson? What did you learn from it? What are the benefits and issues?

If you have any questions, then please don't hesitate to get in touch (email: …./ mobile:….).
Many thanks,

Task A – Observations (please make some notes / bullet points)

What did you observe in connection with
   1. Greetings, friendly exchange, farewells, privacy (verbal and social interaction during small talk, do's and don'ts)
   2. Cultural or religious celebrations (including their significance for English people and how they are celebrated)
   3. Living with neighbours (do's and don'ts)
What did you notice about English culture?
	In what way is it similar / different from your own culture?

Task A – Observations (please make some notes / bullet points)

What did you observe in connection with
   1. Greetings, friendly exchange, farewells, privacy (verbal and social interaction during small talk, do's and don'ts)
   2. Cultural or religious celebrations (including their significance for English people and how they are celebrated)
   3. Living with neighbours (do's and don'ts)
What did you notice about English culture?
	In what way is it similar / different from your own culture?

Task B – Interview (please make some notes / bullet points)

Focus	Answer	In what way is it similar / different to your own culture?
Greetings, friendly exchange, farewells, privacy (verbal and social interactions during small talk, do's and don'ts)		
Cultural or religious celebrations (including their significance for English people and how they are celebrated)		

Task B – Interview (please make some notes / bullet points)

Focus	Answer	In what way is it similar / different to your own culture?
Living with neighbours (do's and don'ts)		
Topic of your choice (What area of British life are you interested in and would like to find out about?)		

Some ideas / recommendations of how to do ethnographic observations and interviews (adapted and based on Byram, M. and Morgan, C. 1994 / Appendix IV / p.203-209)

Observations:

- Choose somewhere where it is easy to observe people (restaurant, library, shop, school gate, children's activity classes, playground).

- Choose somewhere where you can go several times preferably somewhere that you often visit.

- Try and work out the relationships between people you observe.

- If possible try and become part of the situation you are in so that you can begin to understand the context / the problems of that particular place.

- In your descriptions / notes include your own reactions and problems. What do you find strange? Why do you think that is? How does it compare to your culture?

Interviews:

- The best way of listening is to ensure that the interview is not routine and predictable. Indicate to your interviewee that you're very interested in exploring your topics and that you value their input.

- Make sure the interview situation is as comfortable as possible.

- Adopt a friendly and easy manner.

- Don't be afraid of pauses. Allow your interviewee to think about the answers and to reflect.

- Listen carefully to what the interviewee says and try and pick up what is important to them personally and culturally, so that this can be pursued. Try not to impose your own preconceptions.

- Repeating what someone has said or asking someone to explain something further can be good ways of finding out more.

- Try not to talk too much yourself; murmurs of agreement can be a good way of belonging to the conversation without interrupting. However, do allow time at the end of the interview to also share about your own culture and how things are done there! This makes the interview mutually beneficial – to you and the interviewee.

- Start interviews with factual, non-personal questions to put interviewee at ease, to establish context and to make the interviewee feel comfortable.

- Make your questions as open as you can so that you dominate the interview as little as possible

Appendix 11

Taught cultural awareness lesson

Teacher's name: Petra Osborne

Date of lesson: Friday 16 October 2015

Type of course: General English lesson

Time: 10:15 – 11:45

Location: All Nations Language Centre, Worthing

Group description:

Level	Intermediate
Number of students	3
Age range	25 – 51 years
Nationalities	Russian, Spanish, Chinese
L1 of students	Russian, Spanish, Mandarin
Additional information	All three students are females and have a university degree (engineering, finance & investment and Spanish)

Skill focus of the lesson: Oral fluency practise through cultural awareness activities

Topic focus of the lesson: Inter-cultural skills

Aims of the lesson:

1. To build student's confidence in speaking English
2. To explore English culture and to encourage inter-cultural understanding among the students
3. To facilitate culturally appropriate behaviour in UK culture

Outcomes of the lesson

1. Will have practised speaking English through doing the activities
2. Will have compared and contrasted English culture with their own culture and those of the other students
3. Will have explored culturally appropriate behaviour for social interactions in the UK

Personal aims

To gain experience in teaching 'culture' in ELT and to explore the benefits and issues of applying an ethnographic approach to ELT.

Stage	Time	Activity / Aids	Interaction	Procedure	Purpose	Personal notes
1	10:15	Hello, welcome, aim and overview of lesson Aids: white board	T>C	T welcomes students & thanks them for participating in this project, explains aim of the project again and how lesson fits into this, then shares how the lesson is structured	Thanking students Establish link between aim of the project and lesson today	Be as natural and calm as possible, teach lesson like a normal lesson and not part of a research project
	10:20	Cross-cultural introductions activity Aids: name stickers	S>C	Every student to say their name, where from, length of stay in the UK and something about themselves in their mother tongue (L1), then provide translation in English	Warm-up activity Developing inter-cultural understanding Developing rapport within a multinational class	Be relaxed, create a warm and friendly atmosphere, maybe ask some follow up questions
2	10:25	Exploration of findings - ethnographic observations & interviews Aids: white board, student notes	T>C	T gives instructions how activity will work (open class discussion among students, going through observation points 1-4) T asks SS to share findings of the task including comparing and contrasting their cultures with each other	Instructions	Indicate that I will only direct lesson and exploration but that it is up to the students to do the talking
			SS>SS	Students share what they have learned from the task (knowledge related *and* understanding of English culture) Students also compare and contrast between their own three cultures	Explorations of findings Developing inter-cultural understanding	Make this light-hearted, give each student plenty of speaking time
	11:10	Clarification of reflective writing task (research task)	T>C	T wraps up activity and clarifies any outstanding questions regarding the task	Instructions Clarification / support	Be as clear as possible, refer to questions 1+2 in doc
3	11:15	Social behaviour activity Aids: work sheet	T>C SS>SS	T gives instructions and explains task (open class discussion among students) Students discuss and explore task	Instructions	Be as clear as possible, only direct, let students talk
4	11:40 11:45	Wrap up lesson Finish	T>C T>C	Summarise lesson, praise students T says thank you to students for their time	Motivate students Express gratitude	Be positive, uplifting, Be encouraging

Cross-cultural introduction activity

Source: Adapted from Tomalin and Stempleski (1993:109-110)

Aim:

To practise introductions, to help to develop rapport within a multinational class, to identify members of the class, to learn something about the different cultures represented in the class

Task:

1. Students introduce themselves to the whole class in their mother tongue, exactly as they would in their own country. When they have done this, they provide a direct translation in English of what they said in their own language

2. In order to create a warm atmosphere and to help break the ice a bit, the students can also share with the class a few other things about themselves in their mother tongue besides just their name and nationality (for example their favourite hobby, interests, one important thing about themselves etc.). When they have done this, they provide a direct translation in English of what they said in their own language

Social behaviour activity

Source: Tomalin and Stempleski (1993:100-101)

Aim:

To heighten awareness of the differences in appropriate social behaviour between the students' own culture and that of the UK or the US

Task:

1. Please work together as a small group and discuss the situations described on the task sheet and decide what would happen in similar situations in your own culture

Focus areas:

a) In which situations is behaviour in the UK or the US different from behaviour in your own country?
b) In which situations is behaviour similar?
c) What, if anything, did you learn about behaviour in the UK or the US from this activity
d) What, if anything, did you learn about behaviour in your own country?

UK/US	My country
1 When people are invited to a party, they often take a bottle of wine or even bottles of beer.	
2 When invited to a dinner party, people usually arrive within fifteen minutes of the appointed time.	
3 At an informal party, people don't wait to be introduced. They introduce themselves.	
4 When people are being introduced, they try to make direct eye-contact with the other person.	
5 After a formal introduction, people often use titles until they are invited to use first names.	
6 People shake hands when they meet other people for the first time, but not every time they see them after that.	
7 Men and women friends may kiss each other on the cheek if they see each other after a long time, or even each time they meet.	
8 People often try to start a conversation with someone they don't know by making a comment about the weather.	

Appendix 12

Transcript of focus group

Transcription of focus group

I = interviewer / P1, P2, P3, P4 = participants

<u>Section 1</u>

<u>Question 1</u>

I: Well, first of all thank you again for coming to the interview today. I really appreciate it. What I'm going to do is I will take you through the interview schedule and ask you the questions and I would like you to discuss the questions. So, let's have a look at section one. In this section I want to ask you about which aspects of British culture you consider important learning about in the classroom. So, I would like to find out what would help you to know about British culture that would help you make social integration easy for you. So, as preparation for today I've given you a list of topics which appear in some recently published books for English learners. And my first question really is how do you find these topics?

P2:   Interesting. Because as a foreigners life here like I join the new countries I would love to know about their culture but it's nice if I know they would love to know what I'm thinking what my opinion, it's nice, it's both ways. Yeah. It's good to know about each other. It's good.

I: So you're saying that you like the topics and it's good to learn about British culture and you would like British people to also learn about your culture?

P2:   No, the English people know about how we would love to we want to know about them. They would love to know about our opinion, what's difficult to join their country and it's nice.

I: Mmm, okay..yeah..

P2:   I think this topics is really, really useful.

I: Okay. Any other opinions?

P1:   I think in these topics are very useful because people from times came from the countries with totally different culture and they need in short time, in short period to know to learn as much as possible about the new culture to accommodate themselves, to feel themselves comfortable in their day to day live. Because in a lot of topics they are concerned the day to day duties. How to look for a job, how to find a house. It is very useful for new people coming to England because sometimes the culture is totally different and it is usually a lot of troubles and people can't find the proper information anywhere and in this topics we can…yeah…we can…we can…draw two things together…learn English and learn how to life in England.

P3:   I think they are really important because if you learn about these topics you can understand English people, their behaviour, or em…to be closer to them, so they will help you a lot I think.

P1: I don't feel we…we…can get closer to English people because English people they are very, very…ah…in themselves. They don't know, they don't mind up the live to the foreigners. I don't feel…I have a friend in England but they are not English. I have a very nice lady friend she is Irish [laughs]. I have very nice family friends they are Welsh, Scottish but not English.

P2: I agree…my husband's family…

P4: I disagree that opinion. So, I think the English people are quite friendly. Not all of them…so…could close their heart. I have a many friend that come from David Lloyd and the table tennis club. So many friends are the English. So I find them quite easy going and many open their mind. So, em…

I: Do you play with them or go to classes or do you also meet up with them privately?

P4: Yes, yes, both.

I: Both? Oh..!

P4: I joined a club. Woodland table tennis club and play the Worthing league. So every Tuesday evening I have the match. So play all over the Worthing for example, or Lancing, Steyning or Storrington or Shoreham somewhere. So we have private…we have a team. Team have four people but I have been playing for 8 years. So every year is a different people for our table tennis club. Meet everywhere. I think the English are very friendly, they are open, open-minded.

I: That's interesting…interesting experiences…

All participants: Yeah, yeah…

P3: I think to have a friendship with an English person is very difficult but when you get that friendship it's forever. You know…it's very difficult to get to their heart [other participants make utterance of agreement]. But when you get it it's forever.

P2: I can understand your mean. Because…because the friend you've got [addressing P4] it's from hobbies. Like I've been work here…I have idea like you. When I just only looked after my boy, took him to the playgroup I met friends with English people, I chat with them, they are really nice, I'm really happy but never been very close friend. Then when I go to work I learned another lessons…that never been friends after work. Only friend of work.

I: At work…mhh…but not outside?

P2: Yeah..never been…never been [other participants giggle and make mumbles of agreement]. The friend I have…the English friend here just like in sport centre in swimming pool, in family centre to play with the children because they have their children, we have our children, we can arrange holidays, we go out together, take the children to go to the park or anywhere together. Really nice, really, really good but not…

P1:   But not real friendship…mhh..

P2:   Yeah, no really friends. It's only because we share this.

P1:   They will not help you in difficult situations. They will be happy to be your friend if everything is going normally. And if somebody is in troubles you will not knock the neighbour's door and ask for help because it is not an English tradition.

P2:   Exactly! Because where I live we have neighbour who is Brazilian and we always knock on the doors and ask for help and my husband always stopped me.

P1:   Yes, it's nuts, it's not right, it's not right [laughs].

P2:   Stop bothering other people [referring to what her English husband tells her]

I: Mhh, it's interesting…

P2:   Yeah…it's interesting. I'm the one always like this lady…she is like..her husband is always away, shall I take a loaf because she has two children, the same age as our son…bla, bla, bla. My husband always stopped me. No, please! She will call you if she really need help. But she has family as well. Her family will help her. Don't ask! Which is, in China I would ask everyone for help. I don't need to ask everyone. 'Ah, are you alright? Okay, I will do it for you. I will do that for you' [role playing how people would approach her in China] I didn't ask anything that can you help with do do this or that. Because they know you're unwell and will do this and that.

P1:   And I think English people don't interact…verbally. They write you a note and put it on your door if they need something from you. If you are too noisy, or too loud or screaming too loud. They write you a note and put it under the door. You can't say 'oh sorry Joel, you are too loud take your music off please'. No, you should write a note and put it on the door because it is not an English tradition to knock the door and interact verbally with someone [laughs].

Question 2:

I: Okay, interesting. Fascinating. Okay, let's move on to the second question. Which other topics can you think of that would be useful to learn about? Where there any topics that you would like to learn about that weren't in the list? Anything?

P1:   I think sport. Because sometimes…especially in Worthing homes…you know, just around the corner. They offer a lot of free sport groups to join. Mother and children, or special kind, special sort of sport. But nobody knows about it. And I'm here doing Worthing homes and doing my English studies. They offer a lot of clubs and sport groups to join for free. But it is necessary to be more advertised. So, we need in this topics not only the sports but it is very useful how to find information about free practise. Volunteering jobs, free sport groups…everything. Because as I told to [name removed] it's very easy if you would like to practise your English, or if you would like to do something good for community, to be a member of community…a good person for community, you can do just do your volunteering job. And every time people agree and they appreciate your contribution to community life and you will practise your English, you will get your CV in a good experience. But they have no

116

information at all how to find it, how to start your volunteering, how to be a good member of community.

I: That's a good idea. Any other ideas?

P4:   Yes, I agree her idea. So, I experienced the volunteer. I worked in Guild Care and so is some older people…some in the centre and some work in the Guild Care shop. So yes, can help.

I: Okay, anything else?

P2:   Yeah, mmh..I..I feel a little bit disappointed when I talk to my friend who live in Melbourne for 15 years. They…because they are immigrants country, they have the centre. They call it immigrant centre.

I: What is that?

P2:   It's for foreigners, for people who come to join their country. You have every question…you need to join so, so. Where like you just said 'where can I join the sports free?' If I can't afford for study, 'Where can I learn English free?' 'I'm looking for a job, I cannot violate..what do you think I can do here?' Or 'I can only work as a labour job…what do I do with the tax of everything?' Because they will have…even…the translator for the language because they know they don't want them to break the law. So they help…there is a lot of information there. It's similar to Citizen Advice Bureau here. But Citizen Advice Bureau…

P1:   Is more for English people…in troubles…

P2:   Yeah, more for English people. Also more for people who cannot afford for a lawyer…instead need to know more informations.

Question 3 (about 12:10 mins)

I: Okay, good. Now..let's move on to how you use English in your daily life and cultural diversity of the UK. Mmhh..with whom do you mainly speak English? I know two of you have obviously English husbands but what about outside of that? With whom do you mainly speak English?

P4:   I speak to David Lloyd at friends. They all speak English. And my table tennis club and my quest clubs..so yes…and my neighbour.

P1:   Do you think in English?

P4:   Yes…mmhh, yes…

P3:   I talk every day with international people. All the time…all the time. Even if I live with an English family…but I don't…we don't talk….we don't talk. I'm all day with the kids and when they come home it's like okay, I'm tired..I…the only thing I want to do is to watch the telly and don't disturb me.

P1:   You act like an au-pair? [means 'work' here]

P3:   Yeah, I do. I think it's because they don't empathy. They don't know what means to come here, being far away from your family and need to learn a new language.

I: Mmhh, they don't understand the situation…

P3:   No…they think…ah, just one more foreigner…

P1:   It's common situation, a very common one.

I: What about you [name removed]? With whom do you mainly speak English with?

P1:   I mainly speak with my colleagues in school because I do some job in school. And I speak with my tutor because I do some studies and I speak with my landlady, with my driving instructor [laughs]. But every time I mostly communicate with English people, using English language. So I haven't many friends from the other countries…sometimes I speak…using English with mothers of international children's school. So mother can be from Lithuania or Romania and I'm Russian and we use the English to interact. Because we cannot speak each other's language at all [laughs]. So…mainly it's British people.

I: What about you [name removed]?

P2:   Where I work they are only English…so I have to speak with English people. But they would talk to each other more than they would talk to me. But still…I mainly speak with English people except my husband and my husband's family.

P1:   They are English?

P2:   They are English. And my international friends…I think I have more international friends than English friends, so I speak English with them.

Question 4:

I: Okay. And how interested are you to learn about people from other cultures and countries, like international people, who live here in Worthing or here in the UK?

P3:   I think learning about people in general even if they have your same culture is really…what is the word?...important. Because if they are from a different culture is really good because you will know the country …you will know the country of each other. And as well you will know more visions about the world. You know…that maybe that vision will make you change your vision, or make…like extend, increase your vision as well. Or for example, will you make appreciate about you have. For example, I have a Turkey friends who tell me every day about the problem that she has with the family and the boyfriend. Because they…her family doesn't want her boyfriend. And for example, in my culture if I chose a boyfriend it's my life. So my parents know that. So, I appreciate…thanks God for what I have [all participants make agreeing noises and giggle]. Or you will be more aware about your culture because you can compare and talk 'this is like this in your culture…because in my culture it's like this'.

I: Any other views?

P4: I have a many friend come from another country but I didn't learn too much. So… sometime I have a friend come from Thai…Thailand. So..mmhh, we're quite close.

P4: Sometime she came to my house and we cook together and talk to each other.

P1: Can you…to taste me your cooking? [laughs].

P4: Okay [laughs].

I: I'll come with my husband too [everybody laughs]

P4: Because I don't work…so I have plenty of time. I can…one day yes. So we talk about…and she told me 'in Thai something, bla, bla, bla something'. And she asked me how was in China. Oh, sometimes the coach [unclear] is different [laughs].

P1: Agree. Because for me to know in general about all the cultures is useless. Because I have to know a lot of things about my own life. I need to finish my studies, I need to do the homework with my child. So, I'm very busy. I don't need to learn about the different cultures just because to learn about. But I would like to know more about especially about my friends culture. So, if I have international friends, I would like to learn more. But I don't interest in general of all the cultures. So not interested me how people live in Brazil…how they live their life…it's not interesting for me. But if I have a friend from Brazil I will ask how it's going. How you cook, how you interact with your children. That's it. It's especially with my friends, not in general.

Question 5

I: Okay, let's look at that a little bin in connection with speaking English. So, in what way…it's question 5…In what way do you think it would be useful to know something about their cultures and countries when talking to them in English? What do you think?

P1: From my studies…[unclear] I know that in other cultures our body language, English body language can be very rude. For example, in a Chinese culture…I know it's very unpolite to look straight to the eyes…to keep the direct eye contact. But in English culture it's very acceptable. When teacher ask children to have an eye contact to explain something…but in Chinese culture it's very unpolite for the child to have straight eye contact with adult, isn't it ? [looking at P4].

P4: Yes, that's true…Yes, that's true.

P1: That's it…That's it. I know it from my studies. I know it from my studies. I should know it because I interact with children from other culture. But if…it is useful to know it because you will keep the rules. You will don't break the rules. You will don't not confuse people to behave or to speak in an unappropriate way…to do some unappropriate…that's…that's what I mean. So I need to know the traditional…the culture to be polite. To not confuse people by my unacceptable behaviour. Just because I don't know what to do properly. I should learn about all the cultures so what to do [all participants make noises of agreement].

Question 6

I: Okay, good. Let's move on to section 2. Let's move on to the second part of the focus group interview. I would now like to explore culture teaching here at the centre for a bit. So…how useful would you find it to learn facts about British culture?

P2:   Mmhh…how useful? I think it helps a lot…first make me feel confident when I stays English, or I talk to them, or I make friends with them if I know about their culture first. Because I spent first two years here…I wasn't sure but shall I do…because I know I would be rude of this or that and for many things and I don't know the reason. So if I know their culture I feel more confident. Language of course important if you can speak English well but if you don't know their culture…it's easy to make mistake. It's the same problem…when me and my husband we lived in China…we always argue about Chinese culture. But because I lived in Vietnam where it's just nice to…we have similar cultures…I could understand but for him it's just something too strange. Oh…he just couldn't understand, or couldn't believe, or couldn't accept it.

I: Mmhh…interesting.

P3:   Yeah, I think knowing the culture will…mmhh…help you to deal with people and as well not to think only about the stereotype. Because for example in Spain about the food. What is the most…ah… famous food in England? Fish and chips. [laughter by all participants and agreeing noises]. Yes…healthy food but what about roast dinner, for example? I didn't know about the roast dinner, for example and roast dinner is chicken with vegetables for example. So they are not that unhealthy…like everyone…you know, for example.

P1:   If you don't put the gravy on…[laughter by all participants]. If you put the gravy thick on it will be very unhealthy.

P2:   I did make the healthy gravy for my husband's family.

P3:   Oh, see? [all participants giggle and laugh]

P2:   I made it my way…all the way just without…

P1:   Sorry, ladies….but it is the…I'm afraid to be rude but I can…can I tell you that oriental women they are very good in the kitchen. Because me…I'm Russian but I don't like to cook at all [all participants laugh and giggle]. But I know…a couple from the previous group…so one lady and you and you. And always I heard about…we cook a lot, we cook different things, we cook that. Do you remember the lady from previous group? She grow in English garden special herbs for cooking. Bring from China some seeds, grow special Chinese herbs fresh for cooking! Amazing! Amazing! [all participants laugh and giggle]. So, your husbands…they are very lucky men.

P4:   Ah…yes…yes..

Question 7

I: Okay, how useful would you find it to compare and contrast between British culture and your own culture?

P2:   Oh, I always compare…I always compare. Because there is something they are always doing.

I: Why do you do it?

P2:   Because I live with an English man. So…ah…with the way…well, actually I don't want to upset my grand…ah..sorry..

P1:   Parents-in law?

P2:   Yeah, parents-in law. So I have to know about their culture. For some things, I still can't accept because I grew up with the other culture. So, I have to tried hard to learn and accept it…still on the way to learning it. Trying to accept because I grew up in another culture for many years. So…

P1:   Do we…do we want to learn something about your culture?

P2:   [Laughs a bit].

P1:   English people, I mean.

P2:   Ah..they do, they do. My husband's family…they…I'm quite lucky that my husband's family…they really accept…ah, the foreign cultures. The foreigner foods. Except my father in law. But everyone else loves international foods, international cultures. They would love to know about international culture. Then…ah… it's interested for all of us that we can have time out.

P1:   Exchange…

P2:   They would love to know about [unclear]. It's nice.

I: What about the others? How useful would you find it to compare and contrast between British culture and your own culture?

P1:   For me, I can't find any unusual contrasts because we're all [unclear] people. We think the same way, we do the same things. It's not such an unusual contrast. So I can't find any visual contrast between Russian and British culture. Just as we are nearly the same because we're all in Europe…so. For me, I don't compare it every time. Just maybe the Russian they are more sensory, more open to friends. British they are more close. But it's not…

P4:   I think…big difference away from my country. So, for example the food. In China…we every day…we eat food in the morning…breakfast… in the...downstairs restaurant. But here, how can find the convenient food? [unclear] If I don't cook [laughs], I'm well hungry.

P1: Girls, girls, girls [laughs]…girls talking about cooking! It's not about English studies.

P3: The concept as well…about the family that they have for example is really different from Spain. At the beginning I felt like lonely because for example we don't have dinner or lunch together. If you're hungry, you eat…I will eat [unclear]. It's like 'oh let's do something together, like a family'.

P4: We try the same…sorry for interrupting. We have dinner together…every…around the table and talk about your holiday and about each other…quite close our family [unclear if referring to her Chinese family or here in England].

I: Okay…and how useful would you find it to compare and contrast between your own culture and the culture of other students in the class? I guess it's a little bit similar to what we have just been doing. Do you find it interesting, or useful or I don't know…

P1: Just interesting. Just interesting…because for me just interesting. Just…yeah, curious. I would like to know much about the cultures but it is not useful for me. It's just interesting. Because I will not discuss your culture or your culture [looking at two participants] with my husband for example. I will not keep it in my memory forever. Because…it's…sorry girls…but it's not…it's not useful for me.

P4: I agree…

P1: I don't will…want to sit there one evening and remember 'how is it…how do people interact in China or Spain? It's useless for me!

P4: Me too…

P1: I know…I'm curious…Yeah, I like to know…

P4: More busy…don't have enough time to think about…

I: I guess the difference is, if you were friends with people from China or Spain

P4: Yeah…close

I: Then it would be different…like you said before…then you would have an interest…

P1: Yes, of course. But now we're talking about the class…the class. We're just mates not friends.

I: Okay, yeah…as preparation for today, I've given you a language and culture learning model to look at that someone (not me) developed. Let's hear your thoughts about it. What do you think about the language and culture learning model?

P3:   I think this model is the right way…the right way to…to learn a language.

I: Why?

P3:   But in the real…because you learn about the language and about the culture…together. Not only the language, like for example in Spain. We only studied grammar…grammar…grammar…grammar…grammar. Nothing about the culture, about for example here in England if they say 'would you like a cup of tea?' for example…if you say 'no' that's it. They don't insist. No 'are you sure? Or maybe a coke? Okay…no, no that's it. But in Spain it's like 'Are you sure? No? Okay, maybe later'.

P4:   Same…same as the Chinese. Yes…yeah…I agree that.

P3:   The first time that they…

P4:   Conflicting…

P3:   The first that they asked me 'would you like something?' I said no [unclear].

P2:   It's the same in China…I agree with you because when we went to Spain…and then my mother in laws friends let all her house for all us to stay in. 'Don't go for breakfast, don't go to the hotel I have free house. I go to my children's house.' And I said 'oh, it reminds me of my country and mum'…because I have been here many years…four or five year at that time..'oh, I miss my country'…it is our culture that if you come to my country, you will see…Actually, my parents in law they got that experience from my family and my friends in Vietnam. And I said 'it's just the same in China you know!'. And my husband said 'No, you do not say so.' And I said 'why not?' 'If we go…if we live in Spain or if we go England, would your mum or dad leave their home for us to live? And they would go to their…someone else home to live? Never.' It is the English culture.

I: What other thoughts do you have about the model?

P1:   I really don't understand what this mean…the model. Is it just a way of learning and teaching…what is this model? Because it's not clear…not understandable for me…this is model…just a circle with a lot of words inside…or it is a way to learn and teach? Or what is this?

I: Mmhh…yeah…

P1: It's not clear and understandable…If it is a way to learn and teach..it's may works…it's may works. But I prefer to separate the two things…language and culture. Because if you're mixed together two things you will get a quick result in a minute but you will not have deep knowledges in the one..not in the English, not in the culture. So…it is better to do it in the same way but to not mixed up. Because if you mix up it's interesting just to chat…bla, bla, bla. But if you want to know the grammar deep, the culture deep you should separate it. You don't need to mixed up because it's a quick mixed for quick learning. And…like my experience show me that I've changed my group just because I want to know more about grammar. But quick learning about culture and English…

I: So…just on that. When we teach culture in English language here in the centre…so, you would prefer to have a normal lesson…you know with the four skills…reading, writing, listening, speaking and then a separate lesson or an aspect of British culture?

P1: Yeah…in English of course…

I: Yeah, in English…

P1: To practise my English my knowledges [all participants speaking loudly at the same time, don't agree with P1 and ask her why she wants to separate language and culture, seem confused but then everyone giggles]

P4: I disagree…I have an idea…for example the languages school…I [unclear] high pay to [unclear] grammar…[unclear] because I can practise…you…some English. So, can have deep memory. That's very helped me. I think also…because in China…finished my study career…learned a lot of English. But when compare useless. This is didn't told you English. That is my example.

I: So you studied English as part of your Master's degree…

P4: Yes, yes…in China…

I: But you say what you learned is useless?

P4: Yes, in China every university is English is subject very important…number one. So every degree, Master included…English. So, I have learned lovely English in China. Coming here…oh dear…useless. Yes!

I: Why was it useless?

P4: Don't understand…when I first came here I don't understand everyone talk about…everything. They use phrase or something, or slang or everything or grammar. Ask my husband…so can you talk me English use your grammar…And he said 'now I use grammar' [laughs].

I: Okay…and so…any other thoughts about the model?

P2:   [Unclear] experience. I did learn proper Englishs class…during English class in China. So I had experience of comparing totally different. I spent all my childhood from year one to year 12 to learn Russian. Always in [unclear]. Always just learn it like proper Englishs class…proper Russian class. When I left school…two years…I forgot totally…everything. With English the same…I learned it…I couldn't get it…grammar, grammar, grammar. I went to China…I met my husband…then we [unclear]…'okay I have to go and learn English'. Anyway, I found a [unclear] English class in China which is very expensive. But…and I thought 'a lot of money…heartbreaking'. Bu it totally different. It's more useful than the normal English class.

I: And why?

P2:   Because you would learn grammar…in the grammar they would tell you in English…'this grammar they say it like this'. [Unclear] Or they would pronounce it in this way…but the grammar still the same with American.

I: So, the culture was integrated in the language learning?

P2:   Yes, it is American company but they use English teacher who is from England and Canada, Australia. They taught English with different…they explained with the culture. If you speak this English in Australia it will be like this…in England it would like that…It is really useful. So when I came here I understood…I understood. [Unclear]

P1:   Disney…Disney English school? No?

I: What is the name of the English school?

P2:   In China…it called [unclear] Walled Street. You know Wall Street in America?

I: Wall Street? Ah, yeah…

P1:   Because it existed [unclear] Disney English school in China.

P2:   They always put their….they have listening in class…which is, they have different topic. Today they talk about English culture, tomorrow they might talk about Chinese culture, other day they might talk about geography, or photography…or different topics. But it's useful because…because of the thing you are interested. You will remember more. [all participants make noises of agreement] So, if you live in China…you never been to America or England…if you know about their culture you feel 'oh, interesting'…'oh, I didn't know that'…then you will remember. So when I meet them, I shall say it like this. Money…'how is the weather today?' instead. I didn't know that. But I came here and I know they would talk about weather because I learned it.

I: Okay…good…interesting.

P2:   It's nice…

Question 9

I: Okay, let's move on to section three. In this last part of the focus group interview I would like to hear your views regarding if there are aspects of British culture and society that make it difficult for you to integrate socially. Let's have a look at your life here in the UK. How comfortable do you feel living here in the UK?

P3:   I'm feeling comfortable because I have international friends. Because if they weren't here I would feel so lonely. Because they are..like I said…very independent…like machines, you know?

I: Who?

P3:   English people.

I: Oh…mmhh…

P3:   English people…like machines. Their job, their live, their problems…and they don't want to know everything about you. I think, for example. Because it's the way they make you feel when I living with them, for example.

P1:   Do you mean a physical comfort or emotional comfort? [addressing the researcher]

I: Mmhh…more emotional comfort.

P1:   Emotional…mmhh. Emotionally I don't feel myself very comfy [laughs weakly, vulnerably]

I: Why is that?

P1:   Because when we moved here…nearly nine years ago…I was baby-girl…we had a lot [laughs happily]…we had a well-established head life in my own country. I was a professional, got another flats, friends and everything. And here we started everything from zero [laughs weakly]. Find a job, find a flat, find a friend. And still…still…still now..'til now I don't feel myself very sure about if I integrate well…if I'm British. I have a British passport but I don't feel myself British. I still feel myself very, very Russian and I will die feeling myself Russian I think [laughs happily]. And I don't feel that sometimes, some day I will be totally happy to stay here because I miss my previous life. And I feel maybe some day I will go back…maybe…who knows? Because I have everything here to feel myself good…so I have my very well established life but I don't feel this country will accept me totally. Because every time..you… I will stay foreigners here.

I: Why do you think they will not accept you?

P1:   Because people…sometimes…people are too friendly to me [suspicious voice]. They are…they are too polite…

P3:   Too fake?

P1:   Yes, yes…it is a sign of they don't accept me like the person of their own country. They are too polite…they are too polite…like you're a guest. They are very polite to you because you're my guest…you're a guest in my country [mocking voice]. I don't feel myself…

P4:   Not true?

P1:   Yeah…yeah…I feel myself like I'm in someone's house and I should behave like a good person to demonstrate my good…my good sides. But I don't…I would like to feel myself natural. I don't want to behave very well every time to demonstrate that Russian are polite, Russian are very well, educated. Sometimes I wanna be silly but I don't…I don't let myself to be silly. Because…if I will be silly everyone will tell to my son to be silly. Because if I will be silly everyone will behind my back say 'oh, she is Russian. Don't…don't put any attention to a Russian being not so good.' So I don't feel myself good here. Only in this position. But I don't, I don't, don't take care about it because I live my own life. I don't feel…I don't want to make a good impression but sometimes it pressed to me.

P2:   I can understand…

I: What do you think?

P2:   I had that experience! I had that feeling. I started work…I came home…I cried a few times. I said 'they are really nice. I cannot open my mouth to say they are racist but I feel it. I want to go home'. I cried hard. I said 'I want to go home'. He said 'calm down, calm down…not everyone like that'. But…more or less, I feel it…at work. [Unclear] I feel I'm not…I'm not welcome to this country. They…they…nice to me, they are polite to me…but I guess they don't want to show that they're racist. But you're a foreigner.

P1:   Foreigner…yeah…you will stay forever…foreigner…[laughs weakly].

P2:   And just like…'go back to your country'…but they'll never say it out loud. And lucky though…because I have my husband. So when I come home…I feel my home here. My family is here. I…I feel very free when I was in China. I was a foreigner there but I can say whatever I think. I can ask people whatever I want, I can do whatever I want. It was just like back home. I never feel I moved to another country. So when I move here it was a shock. That's why I spent the first two years stay home. Just…you know…really shock. Then when I started work…it even shocker because I realised I'm not that welcome like my husband family and my husband treat me. No, not that welcome. But lucky I have my husband, have my family…so the end of the day I come home and be like 'here is my home, here is my family, I'm still here'. So, I don't feel like it's not my country because my family is here. I belong to where my people that I love the most are here. But when I come out I don't feel here my home, here is my country.

I: Mmhh, mmhh…What do you think? [looking at P4)

P4: I had an experience…like…same [unclear] before. But I feel I'm okay now. When I came here…oh dear…everything different. And so…the house…and the living…everything different. But now…I can acceptable.

Question 11

I: Mmhh, okay. In what way do you think does British society help you or hinder you to integrate socially? We already talked about it a little bit, but… what way do you think does British society help you or hinder you to integrate socially? [unclear]

P4: I think the church…the school helped me a lot.

I: What helped you a lot?

P4: This school.

I: Oh, the language centre?

P4: Yes…when this language centre school first set up I joined [unclear]. Since then [unclear]…I have learned a lot from this school… [unclear].

P3: This school…as well…the meeting on Saturdays, it's helped me a lot.

I: The conversation class?

P3: Yeah, the conversation class. Yes…because…

P2: It's very helpful…it's very helpful. I've tried it. Especially if you're a foreigner and you don't live with English. It's really helpful because you know more [unclear]…but for me it's a really interesting thing because when you try your family you should know their rule. Like if I married the first husband I should know his family. Not because I want to make them to do like the same [unclear] but I need me to be happy and they to be happy. So if you try another country…okay they're cold, I have to accept it. But how to deal with it? To make myself happy…not because only make them happy. Because think back…if your other 'why do I have to accept you if you can't accept who I'm already?' I am who I am before you've joined me. Why do I have to change because of you? So…because I moved to China five years and I moved here…my husband said something before…in China is different to Vietnam. Because why? Because you joined me. If you come to my home...you should learn..okay, you're guest. I will treat you well. But it's because you're my guest. But if you're a family members you should deal to each other. How to make each others happy. So, I think it's about both ways. We should learn…I know I don't like it…I cry…I feel 'why are they so cold?' I just hate it. But then I think back. Why do they have to change because of me? Why? The government accept the foreigners who come in…no, they accept it. So, if you join me…yes…you can change to learn English…yeah, we'll come. I tried things to make myself happy…but I know sometimes difficult.

I: Okay..good…great. Is there anything else you want to say about this topic that I haven't asked you already?

P2: I think you asked quite well! [all participants laugh and giggle]

I: Is there anything else that you want to ask me? [silence]. No? Well, that's it then really. Thank you very, very much. It was really interesting and I really enjoyed the interview. Fascinating insights really. Thank you.

Appendix 13

Submissions of reflective writing task

Participant 1

1

a)

I find the ethnographic approach for culture and language learning very interesting.

For me it was a new experience to analyse British life from this point of view.

During this research I found some amazing facts and something that really surprise me. I suppose that it is very useful to explore foreign culture (British in my case) in such informal, relaxing, but strongly structured way.

The ethnographic approach gave me the opportunity to refresh my English during the Interview and to reflect a lot about differences between Russian and British people during my Observation.

This style of learning is good for the students who are already strong in English and need only to improve their skills. It is because all observations and interviews are in English and it is not possible to carry on this work if the communication level isn't high enough.

This research can give the possibilities to get close to real British life and to find something new and exiting even the students are strong speakers. They can use their communication skills to explore the different situations and use new knowledge to improve their language and cultural level.

b)

Social integration is not only question of communication abilities. If I can speak fluently but I'm not sure what about I can speak with local people, it can be difficult to establish good social integration.

Ethnographic approach can give students some ideas about British lifestyle, habits, traditions and interests. Using this knowledge students possible will be more prepared for active communication and integration in new culture and language.

c)

During my Interview and Observation I found some interesting and also intriguing facts about British peoples.

English culture

I chose 2 places for this task: my son's school (here I do some "helping in class" work) and our horse yard (we share a pony for our son).

- English people are very friendly and extremely polite if they don't know you.

- If you are not a close friend they try to avoid all physical contacts (like kisses, shaking hands, etc.)

- If you are from the same cultural/professional group (e.g. horse people, colleague, etc.), English people start to be more relaxed and open to you from the first steps.

- It is not an English tradition to promote your successes and abilities: people try to be modest. They will judge you regarding your real achievements.

- English people can talk about someone and like to exchange personal information about absent person. But they try don't be too annoying and do not break obviously your privacy.

- People prefer do not give you advices, if you don't ask for help. If you do, most of them are really helpful and can spend a lot of time explaining something to you or helping you in some duties. But English people will never do your job for you; it is one of horrible things here- to have a reputation of lazy and useless person!

- I suppose that here, in England, live is too busy and too fast to spend a lot of time in celebrations.

- English people spend a lot of time for Christmas shopping, much less then for Christmas service in church.

- Mostly celebrations are very commercial or oriented to the children and their entertainments.

- Formal card exchanging is good tradition, but very expensive gifts are unacceptable (only for family/close keens it is all right).

- Living with neighbours can be easy and enjoyable if you are good character person.

- Pay respect to yours neighbours and they will give it to you back.

- In case of emergencies you can break all privacy rules and offer/accept help without any "ceremonies".

- English people are very reserved and they try do not arise any complains at all.

If situation is unacceptable, best way is formal and official complain, not personal and direct to problem-causing person.

Russian people are more open to strangers. We prefer to get as much information about each other as possible. We can ask our friends about salary, family expenses, cost of last holiday's trip, etc.

It is not Russian tradition to set up "formal friendship", we call it business relationship and we try don't mix up true friendship and formal connections.

Sometime in Russia people are not respectful to other nationalities and persons from different social groups.

In Russia we celebrate a lot of religious and stat festivals. We like to make in wider and noisy, to involve everyone to be merry with us.

Relationships with neighbours depend of how close are you.

But instead of British people, Russians can go straight and knock to the neighbor's door in case of excessive noise, for example.

2

Our culture lesson based on previous ethnographic task was really interesting!

Exchange facts and share opinions, talk about differences between our nations and cultures was a real pleasure for me.

I'm not a fan of "pure knowledge", so I don't need excessive and useless information for my own. But in this case our group worked hard to collect interesting and realistic facts about British lifestyle. Now I know more and I can apply me new knowledge to improve my social, cultural and professional life here, in the UK.

Also we shared interesting facts about our own cultures and it was an unique opportunity to know something amazing about different cultures from the first hands!

Participant 3

1.a) How useful do you find the ethnographic approach for culture and language learning? What are the benefits and issues?

Everything related to culture of different countries is very interesting for me, but in this case, it´s even more because I´m living here in UK.

I have lived a lot of moments where I have acted according to my culture, according what I consider right or wrong, polite or rude, and here… it didn´t work at all. That made people created a fake impression about me, because I didn´t mean to behave badly.

Therefore, knowing how to behave, the way of interact with people from other countries is really important because it will make you feel like you belong to that country.

The only problem might be a "loss of identity", because in my opinion, culture is identity; if you have a specific culture, you will have a different point of view about the world. However, if you have to change so many things about that identity, you may feel like "I don´t know who I am", "why am I acting like this?" So the right thing would be to get a "cross-cultural vision", with this, you will know both culture, both codes for being able to use them according to each moment.

1.b) In what way do you think can this approach facilitate social integration?

Obviously, for me, this approach is essential for social integration. If you don´t have in mind the ethnography, you will have a lot of stereotype, you will say "these English people are so weird", "these Spanish people are too friendly"… without knowing why they behave like that.

Sometimes, you can be as rude that the relation with this person will be break. Whereas a linguistic mistake is considered like a simple mistake, a cultural mistake is considered like something disrespectful because we expected every single person to behave and to act according our culture´s patrons. That´s why, if you only study grammar, when you ask for a coffee, you will say: "I want a coffee" instead of, "Can I have a coffee?"→ What in Spain is acceptable, in Uk is completely the opposite.

If you are going to live in a country, you will have to behave following the rules that they considered correct, not thinking "These people are so weird" because they are different, and this difference is enrichment.

1.c) How much and what did you learn about English culture and your own culture?

I have learnt a lot. My culture and English culture is very different, but I´m so happy to be able to understand them now without judge them.

When I came here the first time, I always tried to give two kisses when I met someone and everyone walked back; I thought "How rude" without understanding that they give two kisses between much closed friends or family. When you see someone in the street, you don´t say "bye bye" even if you are not going to stop and make a conversation with them; you say always "please" and "thank you"; when you are asked "how are you?" or "are you all right", you need to be precious, don´t take so long because you will press them; don´t try to talk about feelings as they are so reserved; they will not complain as easily as a Spanish person; they will talk a lot about the weather because, as Hannah (a English native) said: "it´s a safe and superficial subject"; if they say "I need to go" they will go, they really don´t care if you are still sitting down (In Spain we say "I should go" one hundred times); you will have a discretion and polite relation with your neighbor "you have your life and your business" nothing else; celebrations like Christmas or weddings are completely different; and lastly, the physic contact (you won´t have any, if you touch, they will feel so uncomfortable) and keeping the distance are two very important things.

2) What are your thoughts about connecting an ethnography task with a culture lesson? What did you learn from it? What are the benefits and issues?

As I said, when you want to learn a language, if you only study grammar, you will never understand it completely, because linguistic aspects are only a part of the language. Interacting with people is a really difficult task that only will be success if you know the culture.

In this case, ethnography can help you a lot. Talking with Hannah was so useful for me because I did a really good speaking practice; we had a conversation very interesting and funny at the same time. She explained me many things that I didn´t understand as I´m foreigner, she gave me her point of view and she asked me about my culture as well.

That´s why the ethnography is not only useful to learn about a specific culture, but to talk about your own culture and make other people know it.

Getting through an English person´s heart is extremely difficult, but with this approach you can start a relation because the native speaker will notice that you are interested in their world, you are asking them questions, and you

try to be emphatic… This can end up being a cultures´ exchange and understanding.

Personally, I enjoyed a lot helping to this project; now I know more about England, how they live and why they act like they do. I learnt about Russian and Chinese culture and I realized that they are very similar to Spanish people.

And finally, I would like to say that in one class, learning is so much easier and useful if you talk about something you are interested in, you will pay more attention, you will be more curious… This will make you control that language much quicker, because after all, language is communication and this communication is not possible if you don´t follow the culture (behavior, rude and right things, vision about the world, point of view…) of that society.