

Integrating Local Knowledge into Language Learning: A Study on the Your Language My Culture (YLMC) Project

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Abstract

Language and culture share a nebulous relationship with multiple considerations like which culture and how it should be represented, taking into account the diverse contexts in which English is taught. This paper investigates the integration of local knowledge into English language learning by examining the cultural content of the Your Language My Culture supplementary reading module and teachers and students' acceptance of the module. Using a conceptual framework that incorporated types of culture, cultural senses and representation of cultural information, data were collected using a questionnaire, reflective blogs and evaluation checklists from 57 teachers from various schools in the state of Terengganu in Malaysia. Content and thematic analysis were carried out and the findings show that while local, target and international culture were represented, the emphasis was towards local culture. Most of the cultural information was represented in the form of visual illustrations and less in dialogue and video recordings with the aesthetic sense dominating in terms of cultural sense. It is recommended that types of representations like dialogues, recordings, written tasks, visuals, texts and realia be included to help students attain pragmatic skills to use the language. A richer inclusion of the cultural senses in a balanced way can help students reach a holistic understanding of culture and recognize different perspectives embedded in the language.

Keywords: cultural representations, cultural senses, language learning, local knowledge, types of culture

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Introduction

The relationship between language and culture has been the subject of much debate (Brown, 2001; Chastain, 1988; & Kramersch, 1998). Chastain (1988) states that language and culture are inseparably bound while Brown (1994) talks about culture and language as “being intricately interwoven” (p.165). Kramersch (1998) claims that language and culture are bound together because language expresses, embodies and symbolizes cultural reality. Liddicoat et. al (2003) claim that language and culture interrelate with each other in that culture connects to all levels of language use and structures, as there is no level of language which is free of culture. In a word, culture and language are inseparable. As Jiang (2000) claims language is the mirror of culture in the sense that people can see a culture through its language. It is interesting to note that while the relationship between language and culture is acknowledged by many researchers what is unclear is the nature of the relationship.

Fuller and Wardhaugh (2014) posit that culture is socially acquired in that it is the “know-how” a person must have to get through the task of daily living. Mitchell and Myles (2004) also argue that “language and culture are not separate, but are acquired together, with each providing support for the development of the other” (p. 235). In the context of language teaching and learning the importance of integrating culture is explicitly stated by Bennett, Bennett and Allen (2003) who propose that learning a language without learning the culture can result in a ‘fluent fool’. What they are saying is that mastering only the linguistic structure may help a person learn the language but may limit the special insights into the political, social, religious and economic systems in which the language functions.

Culture and Language Learning

The one thing that is apparent is that language learning and teaching should never be conducted in isolation from culture and the issue henceforth is to determine which culture is to be used – target, local or international culture. When people learned a language because they wanted to migrate, settle down, do further studies or seek employment it is common to teach the language with the target culture to acculturate learners into the cultures of the country (Bennett, Bennett & Allen, 2000; Byram & Fleming, 1998). This view supposes that “you cannot teach a target language without teaching the target culture in a process called “cultural assimilation” of the “authentic” (Yahya et. al, 2017, p.44).

There is another view that focuses on a pedagogy of the appropriate which concerns the teaching of language using local culture as there is better familiarity for learners (Canagarajah, 1999; Kachru, 1998; & McKay, 2003). Incorporating local culture in language teaching is essential to help learners communicate and function effectively in the community that they live in. When learners are aware that the new language can be used to describe their local culture, they will see the value of the language to promote their own culture (Kirkpatrick, 2011; McKay, 2003; Rodliyah & Dian, 2006) . This suggests that for learners to communicate effectively with their own people the understanding of their own culture is as important as the understanding of the target culture.

The material used in learning English should not only focus on the linguistic aspects of the language but also on how the language can be used by learners in any communicative event or surrounding they are engaged in (Anawar, 2017; Nault, 2006). Kim and Paek (2015) analyzed

culture related content in five English textbooks in Korea and found that the textbooks had more content on the little *c* at the expense of the Big *C*. Hence inter cultural interaction was seriously lacking in these books depriving students the opportunity to gain an understanding of different cultures. Silvia (2014) analyzed six English textbooks used in Indonesia and found that target culture dominated the content and this is in line with the objective of EFL teaching in Indonesia. Silvia also found that culture is introduced mostly through its aesthetic sense and presented as surface culture in the form of visual illustrations and pseudo realia with little emphasis on daily dialogues. She proposes a more balanced representation of local, target and international target culture to enable students to communicate better and to understand how other cultures are similar to or differ from theirs.

Shin, Eslami and Chen (2011) studied the content of seven English language teaching textbooks and found that while cultural aspects were diverse the inner circle cultural content dominated in most of the books. They also found that surface culture was prevalent and did not help engage learners in deep levels of reflection. Ahmad and Shah (2014) claim that language material should be developed with a practical focus on the learners' culture and context rather than using a set of Western standards. They analyzed the impact of English textbooks on Saudi EFL learners' cultural attitudes and proficiency and found that the books failed to foster intercultural understanding. They suggest that including local culture will help students broaden their horizons and outlook towards non Islamic communities and help develop better intercultural relationships.

In Malaysia, Zakaria and Mohd Hashim (2010) employed a checklist to investigate the portrayal of local cultural aspects of Malaysia as a multicultural country in English language textbooks. They found that there was insufficient portrayal of cultural aspects in the textbooks used in all secondary schools and these cultural aspects were not incorporated in depth but presented at a superficial level and hence did not provide learners with the cultural experience. Moreover the aspects were presented mostly in the Literature segments of the textbook. They posit local textbook writers have not even fully utilized and portrayed the local cultures of the country in the materials in the textbook. Abdullan and Chandran (2009) examined the cultural elements in Form Four English textbooks used in Malaysian English as a second language (ESL) classrooms and found clear evidence of local culture in the books. They claim the "cultural orientation ...is based on the source cultures in which there is a direct and explicit inclusion of local culture ... explaining local festivals and dances" (p.16).

Acknowledging the importance and the benefit of including local culture into English language teaching and learning materials, the state of Terengganu in Malaysia has also integrated local culture in its language textbooks. The Your Language My Culture (YLMC) supplementary reading module was developed to increase the English language proficiency of Terengganu' secondary school students through the use of Terengganu culture in specific and Malaysia in general as the content. This programme aims to promote students participation in class and provide them with opportunities to practice speaking in English. The philosophy here is that by incorporating what is familiar to them students will have the background knowledge and will therefore be able to speak about it.

This paper focuses on the integration of local culture in material developed to teaching the English language but rather than focusing on textbooks it focuses on a supplementary module. The supplementary module was developed for secondary students in the Malaysian East Coast state of Terengganu and was to be used by teachers at least once a week. The paper reports on a study that investigated to what extent the module facilitated the integration of local content and the acceptance of the module by stakeholders – teachers and students. To do this a conceptual framework was developed by incorporating types of culture, cultural senses and representations of culture as discussed below.

Conceptual Framework

Cortazzi and Jin (1999) highlight three categories of culture that can be used in language textbooks and these are:

- Target culture materials which focus on one or two target cultures like that of the United Kingdom or the United States
- Local culture materials which present learners' own culture and are produced by a country.
- International target culture materials that focus on a wide variety of cultures from English speaking countries.

Cortazzi and Jin (1999) further posit that for a textbook to be useful learners, teachers and textbook writers should share the same cultural values or at least be familiar with the cultural norms of one another. This will ensure learners are not only exposed to the big *C* of culture like famous places, traditional costumes and food but also the deeper sense of culture which talks about the values and beliefs of the people.

Adaskou and Brittern and Fahsi (1990) suggest culture be categorized into four senses namely aesthetic, sociology, semantic and pragmatic (Figure 1). They describe the aesthetic sense as the big *C* or the physical idea of culture with the sociological sense as the small *c* which encompasses the organization of relationships among people while semantic senses are the beliefs and values held and pragmatic senses are the shared knowledge, social and paralinguistic skills necessary of communication. According to Adaskou et. al (1990) while the aesthetic and sociological senses represent surface and deep culture they are important to inform learners on the features of a culture. However semantic and pragmatic senses are even crucial to be included in language material as they can ensure communicative competence of students.

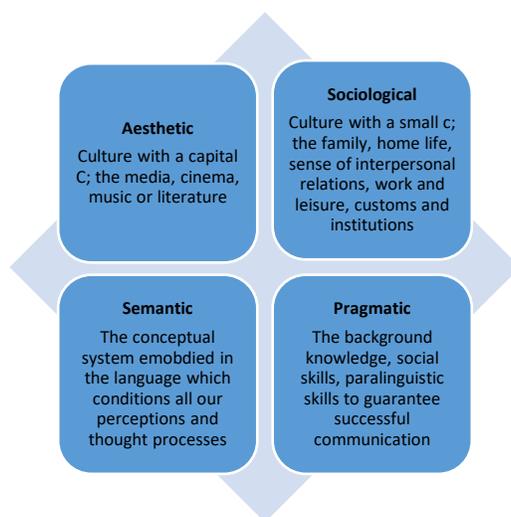


Figure 1 Senses of Culture (Adaskou et. al, 1990)

In suggesting how cultural information should be represented in a language textbook Adaskou et al (1990) suggest the use of 8 different forms which are shown in Table 1

Table 1 Types of cultural representation (Adapted from Adaskou et al, 1990)

Types of cultural representation	Description
Informative text	Text that informs or describes
Texts presenting attitudes and opinions	Text that relays society’s opinion, belief or attitude towards certain issues
Dialogues on everyday conversation	Simple every day conversation in the form of speech or writing
Contextualized speaking and writing activities	Speaking & Writing tasks that require responses based on theme, conditions or context
Lexis, idioms and collocations	Words or phrases that involve foreign concepts or have meaning of its own
Realia or pseudo-realial	Real life object or image (pseudo realial) to understand culture
Visual illustration	Visual presentation accompanying stories, dialogue or procedure to ease understanding
Recordings	Video/Sound recording of a conversation, announcement, accent, or radio programme

The conceptual framework of the study was based on the types of culture (Cortazzi & Jin, 1999), the senses of culture and the types of cultural representation (Adaskou et al, 1990). These make up the cultural content which were used to measure stakeholders acceptance of the module.

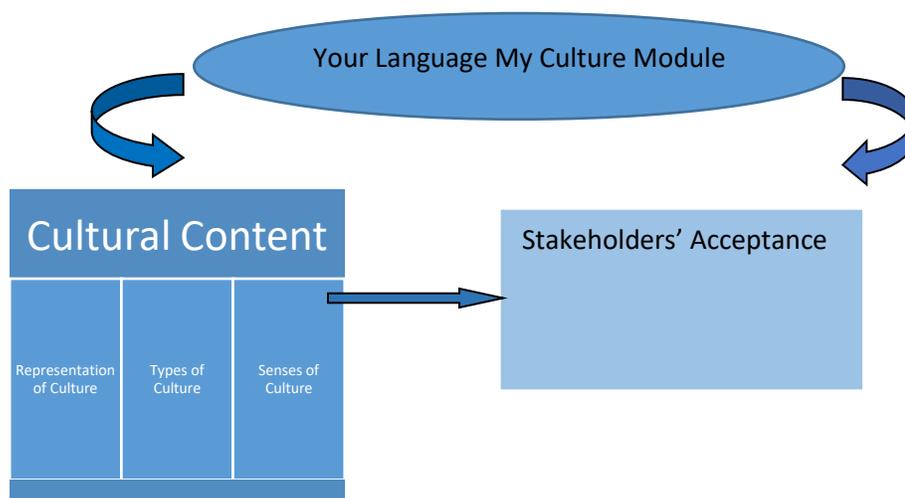


Figure 2 Conceptual framework of study

The Study

Context of the Study

This study is conducted in selected secondary schools across the East coast state of Terengganu in Malaysia where the Your Language My Culture (YLMC) programme is implemented. Through this programme trainers were trained to use the local culture of the state and the country to enhance the mastery of English language among students. For this study data were collected from three types of schools in the state which are religious schools, national schools and vernacular schools. Using convenience sampling 57 male and female teachers aged between 20 to 59 years with varying teaching experiences from 34 schools in 7 districts of the state participated in the study.

YLMC Reading Module

The supplementary module was designed by a team of writers from the YLMC programme who comprised experts in the fields of English language and linguistics, literature who had many years of teaching experience at various levels. Their experience and knowledge in the field helped in the development of the module which showcased the wealth of tradition and culture in the state of Terengganu. The module is developed specifically to be used during English lessons by Form 1 teachers and students based on four different tracks namely heritage, language, literature and across discipline. For each track 4 lessons were planned making it a total of 12 lessons in the Form 1 module. Each lesson in the module begins with a topic exploration to guide the students into the topic being introduced, followed by 2 to 6 activities on the four skills namely listening, speaking, reading and writing and ends with a section named Closure which requires the students to reflect discuss and share their thoughts on the topic learned. Table 2 illustrates the contents of the module.

Table 2 Contents of the YLMC Module according to the four tracks

Lesson	Topic	Track
1	The Terengganu Sultanate	Heritage

2	The English Malaysians Speak	Language
3	Princess Ulek Mayang	Literature
4	A World Class Sportsman from Terengganu	Across Discipline
5	Traditional Malay Houses	Heritage
6	Bahasa Melayu and its Varieties	Language
7	Man and His City	Literature
8	Merdeka and Patriotism	Across Discipline
9	Traditional Terengganu Food	Heritage
10	Asking Questions and Making Polite Requests	Language
11	Retelling Pak Pandir, Village Fool	Literature
12	Floods in Terengganu – Good or Bad	Across Discipline

Instruments

Three different instruments were used to collect data for the study. Two evaluation checklists based on Adaskou et. al (1990) and Cortazzi and Jin (1999) were developed to evaluate the cultural content of the module. The first checklist contained a classification of types of cultural representation available in each lesson and categorized each into types of culture (local, target or international). The second checklist employed aspects of senses from Adaskou et. al (1990) and categorized them into local, target and international culture. The second instrument was the teachers' reflections collected via blog entries. A YLMC blog was set up and teachers were asked to reflect on the lessons they had carried out, their likes and dislikes about the lessons, their insights on why they thought the lessons were successful or unsuccessful and how they would improve the lessons if given the opportunity. The final instrument was an online questionnaire comprising 17 items in the form of nominal and open ended questions that focused on demographic details and acceptance of the module.

Content analysis was carried out on the data from the evaluation of the module while thematic analysis was done on the reflective blog entries and the questionnaire. Data reduction (Miles & Huberman, 1994) was carried out to extract recurring themes via coding for the first analysis and grouping information according to themes for the latter.

Findings

The findings will focus on how the cultural information is represented in the module, the types of culture and cultural senses involved in the representation before expounding the teachers and students' acceptance of the module.

Representation of cultural information

A total of 123 forms of cultural information represented in 8 different forms were found in the Form 2 YLMC Module and these were categorized into informative texts, presenting attitudes, dialogues about everyday life, contextualized writing or speaking tasks, idioms, collocations or phrases, realia or pseudo realia, visual illustrations and recording. It was found that culture is also represented in the form of literary texts such as folktales, poem and lyrics. Figure 3 shows the representation of cultural information in the YLMC module.

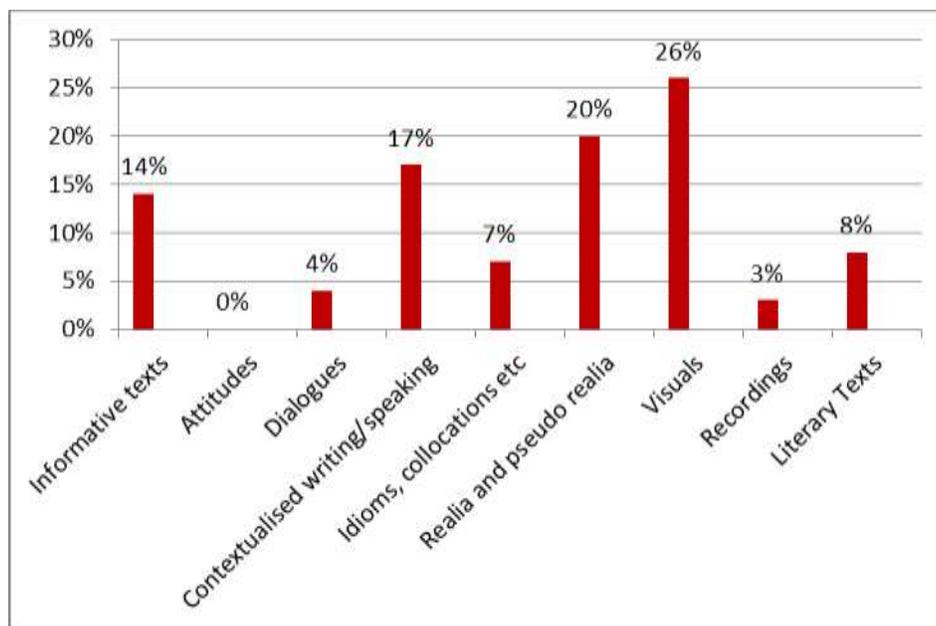


Figure 3 Representation of cultural information in the YLMC module

The most common form of cultural information is visual illustrations (26%) and two distinct forms were evident in the module. Computer generated illustrations like maps, charts and posters and authentic images like images of famous people, scenery, historical events and procedures. This type of information is used to accompany a topic to give learners a better understanding about topic being discussed. Following this is cultural representation in the form of pseudo realia (20%) throughout the module. These realia include items related to royal regalia, local food and squid jigging equipment. Although the realia are from the learners' culture their appearance is accompanied by short informative texts and vocabulary in English included to help learners. Figure 4 shows the images of the royal regalia accompanied by short texts on size, material and function with English names.

 <p>Keris Pendek Di Raja – the short Royal Keris</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The <i>keris</i> is worn by the Sultan at the waist. • It is 42 cm long and made of steel. • Its head and sheath (casing) are coated with gold. • The upper end of the sheath shows the Sultan's Royal Standard.
 <p>Saut Sandang –Royal Chains</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are 2 types of royal chains to be worn over the chest. • One type is made up of 50 gold beads. (not shown in the picture of the Sultan) • The other type is made up of 12 gold pieces, each in the shape of a flower.

Figure 4 Cultural information in the form of pseudo realia and informative text

Contextualized writing and speaking tasks (17%) are the third most frequent form of cultural information in the form of fill in the blanks and letter writing or role play and oral discussion respectively. Next are informative texts (14%) with occurrences of varying length. Short texts usually accompanies pseudo realia as shown in Figure 3 while length ones appear in the form of recipes, announcements and articles. Literary texts occur 8% of the time throughout the 12 lessons and comprise lyrics, poems, short stories, nursery rhymes and folk tales. Idioms, collocations or phrases with language transfer appear 7% throughout the book.

The least common form of cultural representation are dialogues which appear account for only 4% of daily conversations and 3% of recordings. The representation of cultural information in the form of dialogues focus on how to carry out speech acts

Local culture was also identified in the module in the form of 4 video clips. The first two were used to highlight different ways of pronouncing words in English while the other two are the declaration of independence in 1957 and a traditional Terengganu dance the Ulek Mayang.

Categorization of culture in the representation

Cortazzi and Jin's (1999) types of culture was used to analyze the representation of culture in the module. Local culture was found to be the most common (68%) followed by international culture (20%) and target culture being the least mentioned culture (12%)

Local culture is presented by using names like His Royal Highness (HRH) Al-Wathiqu Billah Sultan Mizan Zainal Abidin, Azizulhasni Awang, Lee, Raj, Pak Pandir; names of places such as Kemaman, Redang Island; pictures and names of local food such as keropok lekor, satar, nasi dagang, stuffed squid; and pictures and names of Terengganu's Sultanate family and Royal Regalia. Local culture is also presented through the use of Malaysian English in the dialogues between friends, informative texts on historical events in Malaysia such as the flood in Terengganu, as well as literary texts on Pak Pandir and Princess Ulek Mayang.

International culture is represented through names like Kazunari Watanabe; world map; names and pictures of countries such as Poland, Japan, Switzerland, Turkey; and activities and events such as keirin, (a Japanese term of an eight-laps track with a pacer for the first five) and Japan Track Cup II. International culture is also presented through the mention of Italian food like Italian stuffed squid, complete with the recipe and image of the food and the ingredients such as parmesan cheese, oregano and thyme. Target culture which had the smallest representation was usually in the form of literary texts such as the nursery rhymes- *Humpty Dumpty* and *Row Row Your Boat*, and the mention of names such as King Arthur, Merlin and Lancelot in the comic illustration of King Arthur.

While the authors have presented local culture on its own to reinforce students understanding of it, international and target culture is often presented with local cultural information. For instance in the explanation of a *village shaman*, a character from the Princess Ulek Mayang folktale is compared with *Merlin* from King Arthur and learners are asked to discuss the similarities between the two. Similarly students listen to two videos – one of a conversation between English Speakers and another between Malaysian English speakers. They are then asked to pay attention to differences between pronunciation and vocabulary used by both speakers. This is done deliberately to help raise students' intercultural awareness and recognize that local culture can be associated with international and target culture.

Cultural senses in the representation

The types of cultural representation were then categorized into the four cultural senses – aesthetic, sociological, semantic and pragmatic. Figure 5 illustrates the distribution of cultural senses in the module

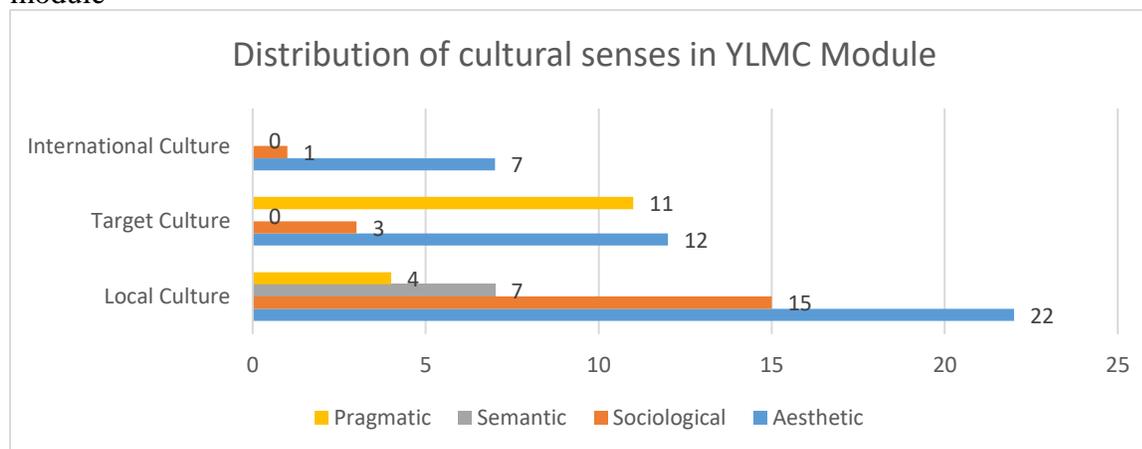


Figure 5 Distribution of cultural senses in YLMC module

It can be seen that the three cultures are always presented through the aesthetic sense with local culture having the most number of occurrences (22 times) followed by target culture (12 times) and international culture (7 times). The aesthetic sense is presented through the mention of famous personalities such as Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra al-Haj and Azizulhasni Awang; names of places such as Kuala Terengganu, Tasik Kenyir and Redang Island; and literary texts such as Pak Pandir and Princess Ulek Mayang. In target culture and international culture on the other hand, the aesthetic sense is presented mostly through literary texts like the folktales of King Arthur, nursery rhymes like *Row Row Your Boat* and *Humpty Dumpty*; and through the mention of international sportsman Kazunari Watanabe from Japan and international sports events such as Asian Cycling Championship and UCI Track Cycling World Championship, respectively.

The semantic sense was the least presented in the module with only 7 occurrences and only in local culture. This sense is presented through the explanation of the symbols for Islam, the concept of Merdeka to Malaysians and the concept of the Sultan as the leader of Islam. The pragmatic sense appears in target culture (11 occurrences) in the form of speech acts of asking permission, making a complaint and greetings. It is evident that while all the senses are present in the module they are not presented equally.

Teachers and Students' Acceptance of the Module

Four aspects were used to evaluate acceptance of the module and these were choice of topics, aesthetic value of the layout, level of difficulty, and types of activities.

With regards to the choice of topics, teachers and students were very positive about these and claimed they were very engaging. This was mainly because of familiarity and interest in the topic and the relevance of the topic currently. Among the topics that were identified as being popular were Lesson 7: Traditional Terengganu Food, Lesson 4: A World Class Sportsman from Terengganu and Lesson 3: Princess Ulek Mayang. The main reason is because these revolve around cultural information that is known and familiar to the teachers and students. Teachers in their reflective blog entries said students did show more interest in topics like the Terengganu Sultanate and the local food of the state.

They really love their Sultan so they really-really enjoy learning about him and his ceremonial dress, royal regalia such as the royal crown, royal headdress, royal emblem, royal waist suckle, royal long keris, etc (T 16)

My students love food. They can name every food that is listed in the picture (T 9)

I asked them on which lesson that they would like to do first and they choose the one on food. (T 4)

It was interesting to note that while the students were familiar with the names they did not really have thorough knowledge of the topics. Hence they were reported to be active in asking and answering questions and being more open to offering opinions and suggestions.

They are very excited to know Terengganu Sultan's background. They kept asking me questions which some questions I can't really answer well. (T31)

Most students didn't know the real story behind ulek mayang. They always think that it is a ghost story so they are very surprised when I told them the story. (T11)
They asked me on how much does the royal regalias cost and starts talking on how rich must the Sultan be. (T9)

The lessons ended up with students suggesting Terengganu's traditional kuih for me to try during my next visit to pasar malam as I am originally from Perak. (T5)

Teachers who were interested and familiar with the topics were found to be more enthusiastic in planning and delivering the lessons. They put in extra effort to search for additional material and are able to provide the students with more information.

I like this topic as it involves the folklore.... Apart from telling students Ulek Malayng story, I told them about "the river styx" because at the end of King Arthur's story, the king rode a boat with Merlin. We even did the ritual where we place coins on the eyelids of the dead (T2)

I like these two lessons as the topic is close to me and my students so I can share my experience with them....I also found a lot of additional materials online(T40)

Conversely, teachers who were unfamiliar and disinterested in the topic tend to be passive and dismissive about the lesson. They would either not do the topic or simply run through it for the sake of doing it.

The lesson that I did not like is lesson 8 because it is too factual and my students they don't feel that enthusiastic about their country. I felt like I was teaching them history but in English. I did not change a thing for this lesson (T27)

I have no idea on how to teach the students about this topic... I've showed them the pictures of 'choosing a site to build a house' but they did not know what the pictures were all about. Even me myself did not know what kind of ritual is 'choosing a site to build a house'. I just skipped the lesson and choose another lesson for my students. (T36)

When the topic was relevant there was better interest and excitement as students could relate to it better. For instance student were keen to do the lesson on A World Class Sportsman – Azizulhasni Awang. This cycling champion had just brought home the bronze medal after the Olympics when the lesson was conducted and the state was still rejoicing over the champion. This is proof that when material is current and up to date students will be better able to relate to it and show keen interest. To highlight this point, teachers talked about how student were uninterested when introduced to historical or ancient rituals as they could not see the relevance of it.

They are puzzled as they have never seen the rituals (T23)
My students are not interested to learn this topic as they don't see the relevance and people doing the rituals anymore (T21)

In some cases even teachers claim they have difficulty explaining rituals like choosing a site to build a house (Lesson 5) as they are unfamiliar with this. Students also commented they found this strange as no one in their families knew about this ritual.

With regard to the aesthetic value of the layout, more than 80% of the teachers claimed their students were contented with the module and how it is structured. They commented the colours and visuals were a welcome break from the textbook which was very content laden and wordy. They did however want to see more visuals and perhaps the inclusion of cartoons or joke of the day and fun activities like brain teasers in the book.

While most teachers believe that their students can cope with the difficulty level of the lessons they were concerned for low proficiency students. In the questionnaire teachers commented,

It seems like the book is designed with the proficient speakers in mind. Do vary the level of proficiency so that all users can benefit from it.

Use simple language and vocabulary or terms which are easier to understand. The content should be suitable to Form 1 students. Most of Form 1 students still have limited knowledge about English

They also wanted to see shorter texts and simpler vocabulary to help motivate the less proficient students to read the texts.

With regard to the activities in the module teachers claimed the students enjoyed watching the videos, drawing, singing, role playing, organizing stories, writing letters and participating in discussions.

I took my students to the computer lab and they are very excited when I told them that we are going to watch a video that day (T39)

My students, I could see that they really enjoy singing. They sing the Terengganu's song to their heart content (T8)

For the banner, I ask the students to role play the situation. They all want to play the character of Azizulhasni. We pretend as if we are fans greeting him at the airport. Some students also act as photographer. It was fun. (T46)

Teachers commented on how the module was successful in encouraging students of varying proficiency levels to participate in class after they had modified some of the activities. This was very inspiring as teachers were invited to use the activities in the module as it was presented or adapt them accordingly. It was clear that teachers did carry out other activities to make learning more meaningful and enjoyable by organizing a cooking competition, having a fashion show, role play and storytelling sessions.

Discussion and Conclusion

Apart from providing information on the module's cultural content and teachers and students acceptance of the module the findings also shed some light on the suitability of the content and the value of local cultural content in getting students interested and enthusiastic in learning English.

The cultural content of the module is heavily presented in the form of visual illustrations, realia and pseudo realia and the abundance of visuals are suitable for today's learners who are more visually oriented. The limited cultural exposure through dialogues and recordings reflects an imbalance in the representation and this is similar to Silvia's (2014) findings. However Adaskou et al (1990) posit the imbalance of the representation is not necessarily wrong as some cultural information is more suitable for certain types of representation and vice versa. Nevertheless, it is important to provide students with all types of representations including dialogues and recordings to help them attain the pragmatic skills they need.

The analysis of the types of culture in the module revealed that while the focus is on local culture the two other types – international and target cultures are not neglected. It is important for students to develop intercultural awareness and be able to compare cultures (Kim and Paek, 2015). Like Cortazzi and Jin (1990) state culture should be a part of textbook writing as it can help deliver the objective better. Students need to have local cultural knowledge to draw from in performing oral and written communication while recognizing Western perspectives embedded in the language to develop a local reading perspective.

The findings point to the dominance of aesthetic cultural sense in the module and this is in line with the findings of Shin et al (2011), and Silvia (2014). A more holistic understanding of local culture can be achieved if the module presents a richer inclusion of each of the senses in a proportionate balance (Abdullan & Chandran, 2009). Materials developers need to pay more attention to the types of cultural sense they include in their materials.

No definite claims can be made for the enhancement of students' mastery of the English language; the module can be seen as a great effort in encouraging students to increase their participation in the English language class, making the journey to mastery one step closer. The inclusion of local culture is found to be able to attract the interest of students to remain engaged in the lesson. As teachers commented students are more involved and interactive in class and are asking questions and providing opinions and suggestions because the material is familiar to them. (Anawar, 2017; Rodliyah & Dian, 2006). Teachers also commented on better students-teacher relationship in class as students were engaged in more meaningful conversations with the teacher. Being able to share knowledge and experiences on cultural items and topics did increase students and teachers motivation and interest in the lessons.

The findings while leading to some revealing insights need to be further enhanced. Data on acceptance was collected from the teachers' perspective and not directly from the students themselves. It is believed that data from students will provide more interesting insights on students' acceptance and needs and this should be considered for another study. The sample population was only a small section of the total population of the state of Terengganu and having more data may lead to more profound findings and trends.

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