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ENACT Research Report

Communities, Languages, and Activities App (ENACT)

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1. Introduction

The aim of this report is to acquaint you with the aims and functions of the ENACT app and with the research findings of the ENACT Europa project. We explain how people all around the world have been using the app both to learn about other languages and cultures and to tell other people about their own language and culture. We also suggest which groups may be able to benefit from the app in specific ways, including your own organization.

2. Aims and Functions of the ENACT App

Many people are motivated to learn foreign languages by their interest in foreign cultures and ways of life, and we have developed a free app to integrate these motivations into the way we actually learn languages, so that we can learn languages **through** cultural activities.

The *ENACT* app we developed aims to make language learning motivating by tapping into people's interest in both other cultures and technology – you can learn aspects of a language online while learning how to physically carry out an interesting hands-on cultural activity such as origami, a traditional dance or making a Chinese lantern. We have a **bank of cultural activities** in a range of languages which are ready to use for language teachers and learners. You can also upload your own favourite cultural activity in your own language so that others can try it out!

This section explains how and why the *ENACT* app was designed and built, what it can do, and how you can use it for learning and teaching languages and cultural practices for any community and language. For teachers, we show how you can adapt it to your own professional practice. [Video tutorials](#) on the accompanying website give users a hands-on introduction to using the app and making the most of all of its features.

2.1 How does the app work?

How can you use the latest digital technology to create an environment in which people can learn foreign languages while performing a meaningful real-world task which enables them to experience and be immersed in the culture of the foreign language? ENACT is a free [web app](#) from Newcastle University, UK. It has 3 components: the interactive player (LEARN), the authoring tool (CREATE) and the online community (CONNECT).

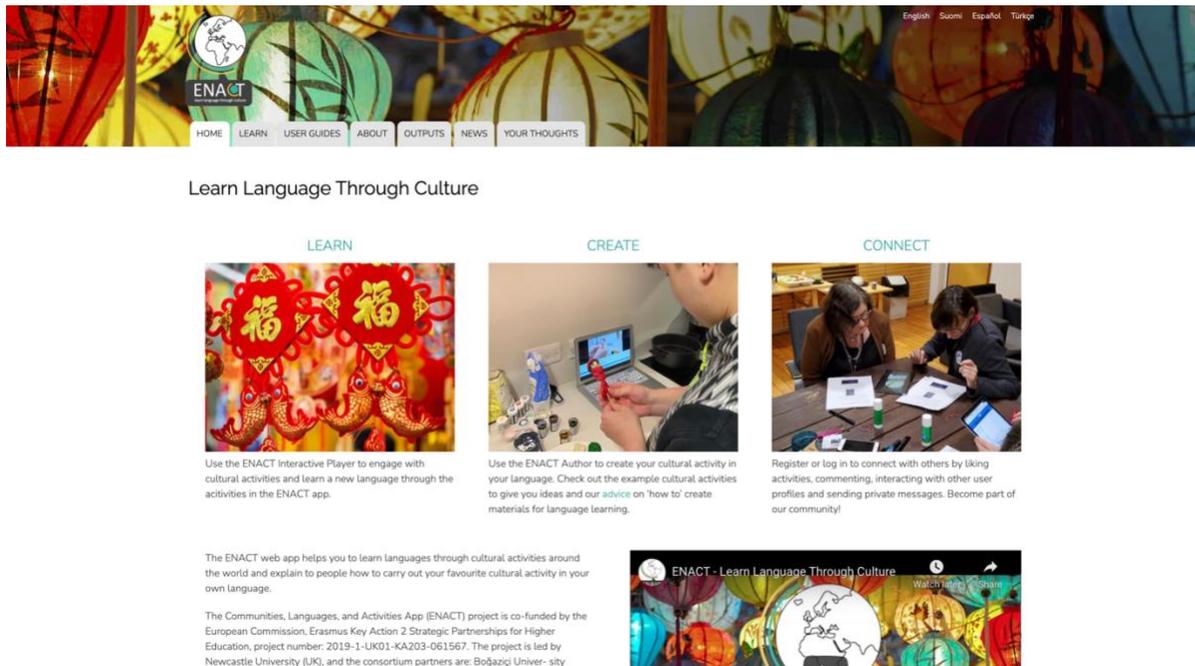


Figure 1. The 3 components of the ENACT app

With the **ENACT interactive player**, you can learn a new language through engaging with cultural activities— our app shows you how. Learn Italian while you're making a Venetian carnival mask or Turkish while you're making a shadow puppet! Your computer, smartphone or tablet will guide you through the stages of doing the activity through **structured interactive content** using photos, text, audio and video to help you. In this way you can learn something about a country's language and culture before you visit it, understand more about the languages and cultures of the world and produce something beautiful! Learning by physically engaging in an activity brings the language and culture to life and helps cross-cultural understanding. The learning experience is more memorable as it involves touch and all your



senses. Some activities have interactive 360° videos and images which offer you an immersive experience.

It is simple to start learning with ENACT. You'll watch a video introducing you to the activity and culture. As you watch the video, look out for pop-up questions or additional information. Then learn the most important words using interactive images: click on the image to see how the word is written and how pronounced. A video will show you in detail how you can carry out the activity yourself in your own home as you follow the step-by-step instructions. Some videos have captions and subtitles or pop-up explanations to help you understand the process better. Then you can review and tell others what you have learnt, share an image of the video of the cultural activity you've produced and send messages to others in our online community through the provided post-activity tools.

You can also tell others about your own languages and cultures! With [ENACT author](#), the ENACT materials you produce will enable users to learn aspects of your language and culture by carrying out the cultural task which you show them. Maybe you can teach people some English by showing them how to carve a pumpkin for Hallowe'en? So people all round the world can watch your materials and learn from you about your culture, language and activity. This can be a good way of making your culture and language known to people who might not be familiar with them, but also to younger members of your own community, who may not be learning the traditions you did as a child. Help people all over the world learn about the language and culture that you want to share and learn something new yourself. If you are worried that you do not know how to prepare useful learning materials, the web app guides you through a task-based learning structure to prepare your cultural activity, emphasise key vocabulary to learn, and provide appropriate means of assessment. There are also [user-guides](#) on the ENACT website with [advice on activity creation steps](#) and [recommendations for creating materials](#).

With the [online community](#) you can connect with others by liking activities, commenting, providing feedback and suggestions, sharing the images and videos of others' cultural activities you produce, interacting with other user profiles and sending private messages.

We launched the app in February 2021, and currently have cultural activities for Arabic, Azerbaijani, Catalan, Chinese (Mandarin), Dendi, English, Finnish, French, German, Hungarian, Italian, Japanese, Kazakh, Korean, Persian, Punjabi, Russian, Spanish, Tigrigna, Turkish, Vietnamese, Welsh languages. The

fascinating activities include making *Karagöz* (Turkish shadow puppet), Chinese lanterns, *To He* Vietnamese edible toys and *Dia de Muertos* makeup from Mexico. Altogether, 119 cultural activities from 26 countries in 22 languages have been created. 7,363 people from 161 countries have used the app so far (October 2022). This demonstrates that the app has proved easy to use and motivating for learners around the world.

2.2 What's the rationale for language learning while doing a cultural activity?

“Language and culture are the frameworks through which humans experience, communicate, and understand reality” (Vygotsky, 1968, 39). Language and culture have always been closely associated in the field of language learning and teaching. Nowadays, it is almost impossible to think of learning a language without engaging with the culture/s associated with it. A problem for foreign language teachers around the world has always been how to bring the foreign culture and language to life for learners, as well as the issue of how to motivate people to learn languages. There is also the universal problem of classroom language teaching, namely that students are rehearsing using the language in classrooms, rather than actually using the language to carry out real-world actions. A significant challenge for nations worldwide is how to improve the foreign language proficiency of its workforce and students, but also how to raise cross-cultural awareness in a globalized world.

Of course, the ideal has been for learners to travel to the target country and to learn the cultural practices together with the language in situ. But as we have discovered in times of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is not always possible to travel abroad. Moreover, the expense of travel can in normal times be beyond many learners. An alternative way of learning about foreign cultural practices is to watch videos, which can be very enlightening, although the learner is still in the position of being a passive recipient of cultural knowledge. We wanted to find out if it is possible to have learners learn a new language while actively and physically engaging in learning themselves in how to carry out some of proposed cultural activities with the help of interactive media. We have found that it is perfectly possible to do this using the latest digital technology, whilst integrating the principles of Task-Based Language Learning and Teaching (TBLT), which we explain below.

Many technological approaches to language learning involve learning in a virtual, online world, but we wanted to use language to carry out a real-world, practical, engaging task with a tangible end product. We have found in our research that you can learn aspects of a foreign language and culture as well as digital skills while carrying out cultural activities. Many learners are motivated to learn languages through their interest in foreign countries and their cultures, and this project taps into this motivation. We also found that you learn foreign words better when you are physically touching items and using them to produce something (Seedhouse 2017). When you are doing a cultural activity, you involve more of your senses, which helps the learning experience and brings the culture to life. The sense of touch is important when making origami and learning Japanese, and the senses of smell and taste are important when making Turkish coffee! By activating all senses at the same time in a meaningful multimodal experience, learners are able to maximise the number of synaptic connections and the likelihood of retaining the new word. We aimed to design digital technology to help learners engage more intensely and memorably with learning during real-world activities, rather than always taking them away from the here and now into virtual worlds.

2.3 What's the approach to learning?

ENACT is an adaptation of Task-Based Language Learning and Teaching (TBLT), a well-known and well-researched approach to language learning in which learners learn a language while completing a task. Learners work in pairs so they can help each other and also practice speaking to each other in the foreign language. TBLT has so far predominantly been based on tasks to be undertaken within the classroom which simulate real-world tasks. ENACT can be used in the classroom, but it can be used at the home or in other locations. For some activities like dancing or playground games, you need some space, for activities like embroidery or Chinese calligraphy you need some basic equipment – it all depends on the cultural activity. So what is the TBLT structure of ENACT tasks? The main task of performing a cultural activity was designed according to Rod Ellis's (2003) features of language learning tasks in the following ways. We designed it to encourage learners to focus on meaning rather than purely language – that is, they use the language to complete a cultural activity, rather than focusing primarily on the language itself. Secondly, learners must employ all four language skills in a holistic manner to

achieve the task. Thirdly, the task is goal-oriented, involving the production of a cultural activity. Fourthly, tasks are carried out in pairs, which should generate some interaction in the target language (although it is possible to carry out the activities individually, we recommend pair work). Finally, learners can measure their own success in producing the product, i.e. the cultural activity, e.g. a card or a dance.

We adapted the 3-stage cycle of TBLT framework from Ellis (2003), which designs three task phases: pre-task, during-task and post-task. The pre-task prepares the stage for the main task by presenting new language, mobilizing existing language knowledge, framing the task and motivating learners. The during-task phase delivers the main task set, i.e. instructions users follow to produce the cultural activity. The post-task phase is designed to promote reflection on and analysis of during-task performance, identification of what has been learnt and as a period of evaluation of the task outcomes or end product.

In ENACT the **pre-task** provides a dual focus on language and culture. First of all users watch a video which provides information about the cultural activity. Secondly they learn key vocabulary necessary for the activity by clicking on photographs which then provide an audio file and the written form of the item. In the **during-task** they carry out the cultural activity by watching a video with step-by-step instructions for them to follow. In the **post-task** they firstly do a vocabulary review so they can identify and evaluate their learning and then reflect and write written notes on the system to evaluate their experience and what they have learnt on both cultural and linguistic levels. They can also share images and videos of their own adaptations of others' cultural activities. This enables learners to showcase how they make other cultural activities their own through first-hand experience. Users go beyond learning 'about' other cultures and actively participate in others' cultural activities making them something they do and not just know about.

3. Research into the use of the ENACT App

We conducted an extensive programme of research on the development and use of the App over a period of 3 years. The objectives of this programme were to:

1. measure the direct impact of the project outcomes on the participants,
2. understand the process as well as the results of learning by participants,
3. reinforce the link between practice and research,
4. present findings at dissemination events and other appropriate conferences and seminars,
5. write academic and professional publications.

The **research strands** we used were:

- Design, Use and Evaluation of Digital Tools
- Analysing Core Participants' Digital Competences
- Analysing participants' learning of culture, languaculture and intercultural perspectives
- Analysing participants' vocabulary learning
- Analysing social interaction and learning

All of these strands feed into the production of our major research output, namely a book, for which we have already signed a contract with Bloomsbury to complete in 2024. In the book series 'Advances in Digital Language Learning and Teaching', **the book title is 'Cultural Tasks for Digital Language Learning'**. All project partners are writing chapters as well as two PhD students. This book explains how the cultural practices of a community can be used as the vehicle for learning its language, showing how the app has been developed to deliver language learning while users are carrying out real-life cultural activities. The chapters offer in-depth descriptions of how the app was implemented in 5 different countries with 9 different languages and cultures, and clear research evidence of the learning of cultural practices and languages through varied data sources including photographs of app use and cultural artefacts produced by users.

The project partners used a wide range of research methodologies and collected a large quantity of data in order to research these strands, including both quantitative and qualitative methods. Partners use interviews, Conversation Analysis of interaction, pre-test/post-test of vocabulary learning, self-reflection data, and pre-post questionnaires. Details of the data collection instruments can be found in our report titled *Developing certification, recognition, and evaluation systems for the ENACT project* (<https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.16829.33761>).

The research reveals in detail how cultural tasks are enacted and brought to life in many different settings; documents how L2 learning during cultural tasks occurs; offers in-depth descriptions of how the apps were implemented in 4 different countries with many different languages and cultures; provides clear research evidence of the learning of cultural practices and languages through varied data sources including photographs of app use and cultural artefacts produced by users.

Research outputs on the ENACT project **evidenced the following:**

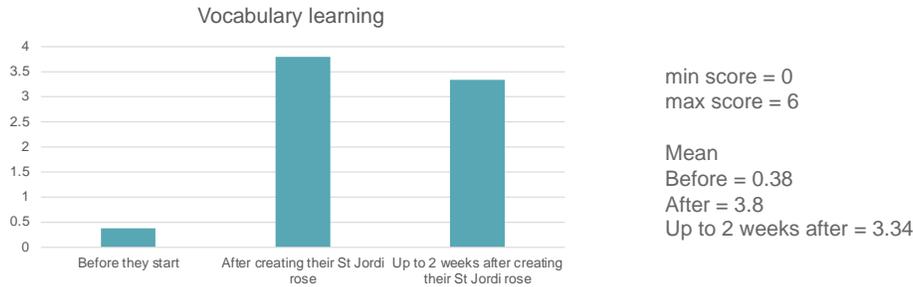
- Affordances of the web app for enabling non-experts in producing cultural activities of educational value
- Improvement in participants' digital skills
- Improvement in participants' language skills
- Improvement in participants' intercultural awareness

In addition to the book, we are producing articles for each of the research strands. Some **highlights from our findings** so far from the research are reported below.

Vocabulary learning of the foreign language increases significantly. Figure 2 below shows results for a group of 28 learners in the UK learning Catalan vocabulary. The mean score after the activity is 10 times higher than before the activity. Large-scale studies of vocabulary learning will be published soon.



Learn vocabulary (N=28)



Paired samples t-test results indicated that for the ENACT group, there was also a statistically significant difference between the pre- ($M = 0.38$, $SD = .69$) and post-test scores ($M = 3.80$, $SD = 1.67$), $t(27) = -11.50$, $p = .001$ as well as the pre- ($M = 3.45$, $SD = 1.11$) and delayed post-test scores ($M = 3.45$, $SD = 1.11$), $t(27) = 4.00$, $p = .001$.



Figure 2. Vocabulary learning research

Producing activities provides opportunities for language learning

The analysis of video data shows that when the app is used in pairs or small groups, on-going conversations are rich in sequences in which the users focus on language issues (e.g. meaning negotiations, word searches). These moments serve as opportunities for language learning in the interaction."

Case studies provide an excellent means of portraying the learning processes of participants

We now have on our [website](#) a series of 17 case studies and success stories of learners who took part in the ENACT project in the UK, Finland, Spain, and Turkey. These enable us to combine qualitative and quantitative research findings together with a narrative presentation. See below for one example.

The app empowers non-pedagogy and technology experts to create engaging online activities of a cultural and linguistic educational value

In an article under review in IJCALLT Journal, we explain the design principles of the app and show how this is validated by an evaluation of its use. The recommendations highlight the importance of choosing a structured pedagogical approach to inform design, utilizing interactive content to increase engagement, and enforcing constraints with some flexibility.

The ENACT web app affords multiple perspectives towards cultures and interculturality

Our social semiotic research explores the affordances of the ENACT web app for cultural representations. The web app affords users to showcase their cultural activities both from a ‘culture as facts and information’ (knowing a culture means learning facts about it) and a ‘culture as semiotic practices’ (culture is something one does) perspectives.

The ENACT web app can be successfully integrated into virtual exchange in Higher Education

We have developed an innovative task-based digital pedagogy for learning in online (virtual) exchange between communities. Our research documents three successful virtual exchange implementations using three different models; proposes a task design sequence for virtual exchange through digital artefacts; and reports on higher education students’ development of their intercultural sensitivity.

Using the app alters users’ awareness of other languages and cultures

Our research provides evidence of strong impact on app users in terms of awareness of other languages and cultures, as can be seen in Figure 3 and in the case study below.

● Results

Languaculture (awareness of other languages and cultures)



Figure 3. Awareness of other languages and cultures

4. Who can benefit from using the ENACT web app?

4.1 Teachers and language professionals

ENACT can be used for foreign language lessons, but also for cross-curricular work involving digital skills, geography, culture, personal and social development. Students can use the app to learn at home as well as at school, so it is ideal for homework or 'learning in the wild'.

The app is a good way of preparing students for a foreign trip as it helps engage them with the cuisines, culture and language in advance.

Students can write their own cultural activities in their own language, informing people about their cultures, and this makes for an ideal project involving a wide range of skills. There is an annual ENACT Web App prize for the best cultural language learning activity and children can enter this.

It is also an excellent way of getting learners to communicate with learners in other countries. Video links have been available for some time, but ENACT means that learners in different countries can do enjoyable cultural activities from each other's country and helping each other with them.

Here are some user quotes:

- "The app was really interactive and it definitely allowed me to learn those specific words that were chosen. Having the words highlighted in the videos also helped me be able to listen to them. I liked the idea of having some questions at the end as well".
- "What a fun activity this is - children will love it!".
- "The application is a great tool for learners to learn a language and experience a part of the culture. The opportunity to experience another culture far away from their country is uncommon. Sometimes, it is still not guaranteed to experience a part of a culture by travelling to that country. With the current situation of the pandemic, travelling and vacation are deemed as non-essential. Therefore, this application is capable of allowing individuals to experience a



minute part of one's culture through this difficult time. The experience of making To He was amazing as I got to experience a part of Vietnamese culture.”

Interculturality is concerned with how people interact with one another and negotiate cultural and linguistic differences made relevant (or perceived as such) through interaction. The negotiation of interculturality can happen between people from different countries as well as between people who belong to different groups (e.g. linguistic, religious) within the same country. It is important to consider that not all individuals associate ‘languages’ and ‘cultures’ in the same way and that there is no univocal correspondence between languages, culture and countries. Thus, the ENACT app enables people to represent their own cultural activities in their own languages.

Integrating cultural tasks into the curriculum for language learning and/or intercultural learning as an occasional, complementary activity offers opportunities on many levels to teachers around the world. It can be helpful in bringing the cultures and languages of different countries and groups of people to life and in preparing students for an overseas trip as it helps engage them with the culture and language in advance. It can also be used in classrooms where overseas travel opportunities are limited to introduce authentic content. The authoring software can be used by teachers to input their own cultural activities so that their students can learn specific language points.

A great project for students is for them to work as a team to input their own favourite cultural activities in their own language, using the ENACT author. Project work could also involve students producing their own activities from their own culture to present to a worldwide audience using their own language. To reach a wider audience, the students can easily add captions or subtitles in other languages such as English as a Lingua Franca.

Digital skills can be developed by using the ENACT authoring software, which was designed to develop a wide range of digital skills using the EU's DIGCOMP 2.1 framework. We have a digital skills certification system for the project on

https://enacteuropa.com/sites/default/files/Enact_digital_skills_certification_system.pdf

This enables teachers to evaluate learners' digital skills and provide certification.



4.2 University teachers

University teachers can use the ENACT web app to mobilise students' intercultural understanding and knowledge of cultures around the world and increase their awareness of interculturality. The ENACT web app can be used for teaching activities as part of a wide range of programmes and courses with a focus on languages, cultures, and intercultural communication. Whilst students can individually explore and create cultural activities on the web app and participate in the ENACT community, you can also use the ENACT app as part of a virtual exchange to facilitate international collaboration between your students and students from another institution in another country. To learn more about how we are implementing the web app for virtual exchange, read our [blog post](#) and contact us at enacteuropa@newcastle.ac.uk

4.3 Migrant Communities

We designed the app in collaboration with a number of migrant communities in the EU, including refugees and asylum seekers. The app is particularly suitable for helping to integrate these groups into EU societies, and for home country members to learn more about the communities in their local area. Migrants can try out the host country's cultural activities to learn about the language and vice versa. Secondly, migrants can produce their own cultural activities in their own language using the authoring tool. People can also work online on building cultural activities with experts from the home country. These are then freely available for use by both community members, thus enabling mutual cultural understanding and 2-way integration. In contrast to the deficit view, the ENACT app provides a space for migrant communities to showcase their cultural heritage, gives them a voice, and empowers them.

One of our project workshop participants said:

“It has a direct link with me as an immigrant, telling about yourself, introducing yourself to the others. Before the activity, I was thinking how do I adapt to the community and integrate to the local community. Now after these sessions, I don't have only to learn the local community's culture and language but I can also introduce my language and culture to the local community.”



Reciprocity is built into the app: ENACT does enable migrants to learn the local language and local culture, but any number of new cultural activities can be added in any language, any country and any culture around the world, using the author software. ENACT is therefore a useful vehicle for promoting cultural diversity, exchange and understanding around the world within an inclusive approach.

A problem for some migrant communities is that the young generation do not always learn the language and culture of the older generation, whilst the elders are often lacking in digital skills. The ENACT Web App enables the learning and inter-generational exchange of languages and cultural activities by means of digital technology. Young people with digital skills can work with older, non-digital family members to upload traditional cultural activities in the heritage language onto the system in terms of audio/video recordings and texts, thus enabling intergenerational skills and knowledge exchanges. The authoring tool is ideal for skills exchanges, so the older generation learns the digital skills and the younger generation learns the heritage language and activities connected with it, where appropriate. The infrastructure has been set up so that any number of new cultural activities can be added in any language, country and culture in the EU and beyond, using the authoring tool.

UNESCO's definition of cultural heritage "includes traditions or living expressions inherited from our ancestors and passed on to our descendants, such as oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe or the knowledge and skills to produce traditional crafts." We hope to promote all of these with the ENACT Web App. Information on the ways in which users of the ENACT app have actually benefitted in practice is collected on the website <https://enacteuropa.com/?q=impact>

5. User Voices

What do users say about the app?

"First of all to learn a language, I have to be interested in its culture and its country" (interview).

“I can search popular stuff about a culture or a language from the Internet, but they're mostly not like very sincere, ... they are more professional, but in ENACT all the activities are prepared by individuals, and I believe what is prepared by individuals can be can reflect the culture, like better” (interview).

Olga in Finland referred to the app as “a kind of direct democracy” because it allows everyone to produce their cultural artefacts and, therefore, choose how they want their culture to be perceived.

5.1 A brief case study: Hagos

Here is a brief case study of an individual user which illustrates how the app has had an impact on users' lives. Hagos came to Newcastle as an asylum seeker from Eritrea. He initially took part in the ENACT project facilitator training in March 2020. He then facilitated a co-production workshop before returning once more as a workshop participant.

Hagos speaks Tigrigna and English, and his knowledge of the English language spurred him on to help other asylum seekers by volunteering as a language assistant and interpreter for those with more limited English. He explained: “From the date I came to [the] UK, I saw the challenge my friend asylum seekers face to adapt the environment and to learn language, and so I decided to help as much as I can and applied to action foundation [to] volunteer [as an] assistant teacher for language class. They gave me the chance and I realize that there is no little help and every little thing matters, so I decide to continue my assistance whenever I get a chance”.

Facilitator training

As part of the facilitator training, Hagos worked with participants from the partner universities in a series of online workshops and discussions, as well as completing individual activities about his perceptions of culture and language. When asked about his definition of culture, Hagos said: “Culture is [a] way of expressing belief and way of life of societies. and so saying that culture come up from beliefs, lifestyles and other factors of the society that entertain that particular culture and while those factors evolve, their corresponding culture also changes.”

Throughout the whole process, Hagos regularly related back to his own experiences growing up in a community in Eritrea. At times, his cultural experiences differed from those in his new country, and he was keen to explain this in his feedback and to the other participants: “For example in my community where I [was] raised, [a] woman used to walk some steps behind her husband or any other married man as a way of expressing respect for a married man. And this culture changes to new culture of using the back seat of a car if a married man is in the car to take the front seat after long distance walking replaced by driving.”

As part of the facilitator training, Hagos worked with a partner from a different university to produce an activity. He was keen to work on a cultural activity as he felt that “cultural objects and artefact are objects prepared by individuals or communities to express their culture and their emotions to it. It includes artistic works to convey their ideas and beliefs.” All participants completed the survey *Where I Draw the Line*, examining their perceptions on how culture and language are connected, at the beginning and the end of the training process. Although Hagos’s responses on his perceptions of his own language learning skills and cultural beliefs barely changed between the two surveys, his responses on his familiarity and similarity with his partner improved, showing an increased awareness of his partner’s culture and language, and an increased willingness to meet others from that culture.

Facilitating a co-production workshop

Hagos offered to facilitate one of the first co-production workshops that we held. The participants were an English speaker from the UK, who created an activity about the traditional North East story of the [Lambton Worm](#), and a native French speaker who had lived and worked in the UK for many years, whose activity involved making a [French Mardi Gras mask](#). He enjoyed engaging in discussions about the differences between cultures and life in the North East of England, and was an efficient and supportive facilitator. Having completed his facilitator training, he was also well versed on how to use the app technology and video editing software and was able to support the participants as they created their activities, helping to record audio and video footage and edit it for inclusion.

Participating in a co-production workshop

Although Hagos had trained as a facilitator and facilitated the workshop with two participants, he decided to then join our co-production workshops as a participant, working with a partner from the UK. As he already had a good level of English, which he said he had partly learnt “using TV shows”. His responses on the Here is Where I Draw the Line survey were therefore slightly different than when working with a partner from Finland in the facilitator training, and he registered increased agreement in the questions regarding a familiarity with his partner’s culture, an understanding of his partner’s language, and similarities between their two cultures. He commented in his survey that “Culture is a way of living and adaptation to the life you have. Cultural activities are activities that can be done to elaborate your way of life and your beliefs and norms.” This phrase about adapting to the life you have speaks volumes about Hagos’s ability and his proactive outlook in adapting to his life in the UK.



Image 1: Hagos’s flower showing the languages he speaks, understands and has heard/seen.

Hagos completed a flower where he added the names of the languages that he spoke and understood (centre petals), or had heard or seen but did not understand (outer petals). As English was the lingua franca in use in the ENACT project, Hagos had demonstrated his confidence in speaking in English in both his facilitator training workshops and when facilitating the co-production

workshop with two participants who spoke English either as a first language or as a strong second language.



Image 2: Hagos’s St Jordi rose. He added this photo as a comment on the web app activity with the caption “it was really fun”.

As part of the co-production workshop, Hagos looked at several activities on the web app with his partner, including the UK Christingle activity. Like the other participants, he completed the [St Jordi activity](#), learning some Catalan and producing a rose (below).

As he had already facilitated this activity with another pair, this was in fact the second time he had seen the six Catalan vocabulary items. His pre-test scores reflected this, as the table shows, with his able to partially produce three of the vocabulary items. His post-test illustrated a good retention of the lexical items, and there was only slight loss of retention in the delayed post-test.

Pre-test						Post-test						Delayed post-test					
0.5	0.25	0.5	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0.75	0.75	1	0	1	0

Figure 1: Hagos’s vocabulary test scores, which range from a score of 1 indicating an ability to say the lexical item in an understandable manner, through to 0 which indicates no ability to say the lexical item.

Hagos connected the vocabulary items to the cultural activity through the YouTube video about the St Jordi celebrations on the web app. His main memories from the video included seeing people “buy some books” and that “the knight gave the princess the rose and married her” but “we didn't see much to describe the people.” He also recalled the markets, commenting that “street markets are available in other countries”. The scores help us to demonstrate that producing the rose and engaging with the app with another person as a workshop participant may potentially improve retention of vocabulary.

In his feedback on the workshop, Hagos felt that the main goal of engaging in the St Jordi activity was to increase his motivation about the language learning and cultural process. He commented that the vocabulary section before the activity had been very useful and he had learned all the words, which his vocabulary scores supported. Thinking about the interactivity, he preferred the non-interactive option of watching a how-to presentation, but that the vocabulary test at the end of the process helped him to reflect on his learning.

Like many of the non-UK participants, Hagos drew on his personal experience and chose a [local Eritrean custom](#) from where he grew up. His activity celebrated St John's Day or Kudos Yohanns. This is Eritrean New Year, celebrated on 11th September, when people ask God to bless the New Year by lighting a fire at sunset and saying prayers as the fire burns. Hagos gathered sticks which he then tied together with several pieces of cord. It was important to create the right shape for the stock bundle, and he snapped off unnecessary twigs.



Image 3: Hagos's activity in his co-production workshop

The bundle was then lit and Hagos sang “ሆሂ ሆሂ!” (“Hoye Hoye”), the traditional chant to ward off bad luck. This chant is sung by Orthodox Christians belonging to the Tigrinya ethno-linguistic group in the highlands of Eritrea, where Hagos is from.

Hagos was keen to explain the meaning behind the activity to his partner but preferred not to add English subtitles to his video, instead providing a commentary in Tigrinya and relying on the visuals to guide the learner.

This may have been because Tigrinya is predominantly a spoken rather than a written language, highlighting to us the importance of the ENACT web app in preserving spoken languages and related cultural activities as an Open Educational Resource.

Digital competences

Participants completed the digital competences survey at the beginning and end the ENACT participation, and as a result, Hagos completed this four times, first in his facilitator training, and later in his co-production workshop. Though there was slight variation in his responses, overall his results showed that both experiences had improved his digital knowledge and skills, and he demonstrated these improved skills when creating his activity on the web app.

Impact

Hagos enjoyed his participation in the ENACT project and was a great success as a facilitator and a participant. We were grateful for his enthusiasm and willingness to involve himself in the process. He recently moved to London and is now studying for an MSc in Business Analytics.

6. Conclusions

In today's world, migration is relevant to most organisations in most countries. Many organisations have a very diverse workforce and believe that it is important to promote cross-cultural understanding amongst employees, as well as the integration of migrants. Beyond the workforce, most organisations market their services and products in other countries and so need to develop understanding of other cultures. ENACT offers different communities, cultures and language groups the opportunity to present their own culture and language to others. As Juan from the Dominican Republic told us, "Being part of this project, as an immigrant it's very special for me, I want people to know about my culture." So ENACT provides a great platform for the workforce of an organisation to improve cultural understanding of each other and anyone can upload their own materials to it.

The long-term aim of the ENACT web app is to build up a bank of cultural language learning tasks available for free worldwide, covering as many languages, cultures and countries as possible,



promoting intercultural understanding and communication. The ENACT Web App and website provide a free infrastructure which can be used by all language and culture enthusiasts from around the world. We therefore encourage everyone to add their own cultural activity in their own language using the author software so that people all over the world can learn from them — and to encourage this, there is an annual [ENACT Web App prize](#) for the best cultural language learning activity. Reciprocity is built into the app: any number of new activities can be added in any language, any country and any culture around the world, using the authoring software – no culture has priority. ENACT is therefore a suitable vehicle for promoting inclusive cultural exchange and understanding around the world. Moreover, the design of the ENACT app is based on solid research and its effectiveness for learning is equally verified by a range of detailed research in 4 countries using a large amount of suitable data.

Finally, doing cultural activities for language learning is great fun, a real-world, gritty learning experience involving all your senses in the course of producing something with your hands and bodies. This cannot be appreciated by simply reading instructions or reviewing the app online, so why not find a workspace, choose an activity in a new language, and see what you learn!

Why not join our online community of people interested in learning and teaching about cultures and languages? Simply go to <https://enacteuropa.com/> to try out a cultural activity, and create an account to send messages, leave comments, and create your own activity!

Contact us at: enacteuropa@newcastle.ac.uk

Follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [Youtube](#) hashtag: **#EnactEuropa**

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