

## Impact case study (REF3b)

<b>Institution:</b> Canterbury Christ Church University
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> English Language and Literature (29)
<b>Title of case study:</b> Increasing Awareness of a Non-Essentialist Approach to Intercultural Communication
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b></p> <p>Holliday's research is at the core of paradigm change in intercultural communication. For this reason it has provided a conceptual underpinning for the design and writing of the new syllabus for English language teacher education proposed by the Chinese National Institute of Education Sciences. Holliday was invited to use his research to write the part of this syllabus which describes teacher knowledge and methodology necessary for recognising the cultural contribution of school students in learning English.</p> <p>This research has also increased the intercultural awareness of English language educators in Asia and Central America through a range of seminars, workshops and internet material, and has produced a textbook which has carried this awareness to university students in the humanities and social sciences in a range of countries.</p>
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b></p> <p>The research, within the Applied Linguistics research strand, has three stages.</p> <p><b>Stage 1 (1992-9)</b> concerns the relationship between culture and English language education. Holliday's influential monograph, <i>Appropriate methodology &amp; social context</i>, Cambridge 1994, based on an ethnography of Egyptian university classrooms, examines what makes teaching practices culturally appropriate in non-Western locations. The research then proceeds to examine how cultural appropriateness emerges from 'small' (e.g. professional or classroom) cultural processes. This is reported in Holliday's (1999) seminal article (cited by 284 on Google Scholar), now reprinted in Zhu (ed), <i>The language and intercultural communication reader</i>, Routledge 2011.</p> <p><b>Stage 2 (2000-6)</b> continues the theme of culture and English language education by responding to the discussion of linguistic imperialism. It is reported in Holliday's (2005) monograph (cited by 348, Google Scholar) and reveals and critiques (a) an extensive native-speakerist ideology which characterises non-Western students and colleagues as culturally deficient and (b) how modernist professional discourses deny the ideology and normalise its picture of culture in everyday practice. The data comprises interviews with 36 English language educators from 14 countries which form a thick description with ethnographic observation of professional events.</p> <p><b>Stage 3 (2007-2010)</b> shifts to intercultural communication studies to explore further the conflict between a dominant ideology of culture and unrecognised cultural realities. It responds to critiques of traditions that focus on national culture, thus contributing to paradigm change which claims a non-essentialist approach. The research is reported in Holliday's (2011) monograph (cited by 82, Google Scholar), and reveals a significant domain of shared cultural processes which provide a common potential for (i) dialogue with national structures, (ii) reading and engaging with culture wherever it is found, and (iii) capitalising on existing cultural experience when encountering unfamiliar cultural domains. However, (iv) these processes also generate discourses of culture which are influenced by global politics and ideology. The data comprises interviews with 32 people from 15 countries, deemed to have experienced cultural interfaces, which form a thick description with observations of cultural life represented in reconstructed ethnographic narratives.</p> <p>Based on these findings, building on the 'small culture' model presented in the 1999 article in Stage 1, and drawing on the social action theory of Max Weber, the research provides a detailed description of everyday cultural action which supports the claim made by Stuart Hall and critical cosmopolitan sociology that non-Western cultural realities are hidden and demonised by long-standing Western traditions of cultural description which claim scientific respect for the foreign but in fact serve globalised markets. The positivist denial of ideology here resonates with that found in English teaching in Stage 2. The 2011 monograph is cited as core to paradigm shift by MacDonald and O'Regan (2011), <i>A global agenda for intercultural communication research and practice</i>, in Jackson (ed), <i>Routledge handbook of language and intercultural communication</i>, Routledge.</p>

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The outcome is a 'grammar of culture', which provides a framework for the analysis of intercultural action and for application to professional practice in international English language education. This is further developed in the 2013 monograph, *Understanding intercultural communication: negotiating a grammar of culture*, Routledge. This has proved fruitful in generating materials and thinking that relate to a range of issues which are central to the impact case study – the relationship between students' existing cultural experience and the foreign content of textbooks, and with so-called 'native speaker' English and methodologies, which relates directly to the expression of indigenous cultural realities as a key to authenticity in non-Western educational settings.

Holliday (2012), interrogating researcher participation in an interview study of intercultural contribution in the workplace (*Qualitative Inquiry* 18/6, 504-15) relates the findings from Holliday (2011) to a new study of how carrying resources from one cultural reality to another can influence cultural creativity in the new location. While not about language learning, this contributes to the broader principle of cultural travel which is then applied to language students.

Holliday and Aboshiha (2009), co-authored with another member of the Applied Linguistics strand (cited by 19, Google Scholar), demonstrate the relationship between the intercultural communication in Stage 3, still in process at the time, and the native-speakerism theme in Stage 2, with reference to interview data from British teachers.

The collaboration with the Chinese National Association of Foreign Language Education (NAFLE), led to co-authoring a book chapter with its President (Gong and Holliday, 2013), Cultures of change, in Hyland and Wong (eds), *Innovation and change in English language education*, Routledge, 44-57, which reports the views of Chinese secondary and primary school students of English about what makes the cultural content of textbooks authentic to their daily lives.

**Key researchers**

Adrian Holliday: research carried out at Canterbury Christ Church University 1992 to present. Senior Lecturer 1992-7, Principal Lecturer 1997-9, Reader in Applied Linguistics 1999-2004, Professor of Applied Linguistics 2004-present

**3. References to the research**

- [1] Holliday, A. R. (1999). Small cultures. *Applied Linguistics* 20/2: 237-64 (submitted RAE 2001)
- [2] Holliday, A. R. (2005). *The struggle to teach English as an international language*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. (Submitted RAE 2008)
- [3] Holliday, A. R. (2011). *Intercultural communication & ideology*. London: Sage. (Submitted REF2)
- [4] Holliday, A. R., & Aboshiha, P. A. (2009). The denial of ideology in perceptions of 'nonnative speaker' teachers. *TESOL Quarterly* 43/4: 669-89. (Submitted REF2)

**4. Details of the impact****Impact on Chinese curriculum developers and their syllabus**

Holliday's research contributed to the conceptualisation and writing of a Chinese syllabus for teacher education. The President of NAFLE was attracted by Holliday's research and invited him to contribute to the writing of a new national syllabus for English language teacher education for the Chinese National Institute of Education Sciences. He reports: 'We invited him to do this because of his research.' Furthermore: 'The members of the writing team are most Chinese scholars from outstanding universities in teacher training...Prof Holliday is the only one we invited from abroad.' This invitation resulted in Holliday writing one of seven chapters of the national syllabus for training English teachers as part the Institute's proposal for curriculum change to the Chinese Ministry of Education. Holliday's chapter, entitled 'Cultural knowledge and intercultural communication skills', sets out the parameters for how teachers should make the students' existing cultural experience a key resource in the learning of English. It counters the common view that they should leave 'Chinese culture' behind in favour of "native speaker" culture' when learning English, thus becoming alienated from lesson content. It thus impacts on perceptions and treatment of primary and secondary school language learners in non-Western locations with regard to (1) cultural values and social assumptions associated with them, (2) their cultural lives and capital, (3) the form and

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content of their education, and (4) how they are understood and empowered by opposing the ideology which has labelled them as culturally deficient.

The invitation was part of NAFLE's broader agenda to combat the common stereotyping of Chinese secondary and primary school students in English language classes within a native-speakerist educational hegemony. The President of NAFLE states: 'Holliday's presentation of a new paradigm in intercultural communication has helped us to move forward in our attempts to solve the problem of how to introduce new directions in countering native-speakerism in the teaching of culture and English.' As part of this process, Holliday was invited to carry out a number of seminars and deliver papers at professional conferences. The President of NAFLE states: 'Visits to China have enabled him to influence the thinking of curriculum innovators at the Foreign Language Education Research Centre and the Research Centre for Curriculum and Pedagogy through seminars, workshops and conference presentations.'

An offshoot of this relationship with NAFLE was Holliday introducing them to the Iranian Centre for International Scientific Studies and Collaboration who share NAFLE's agenda to make the English curriculum culturally authentic to school students. An email from NAFLE states: 'Building relationship with them is helpful for our current research ... They do share similar interests with us.'

**Changing awareness in English language teaching professionals**

Holliday's research was also used to increase the awareness of English language educators with regard to the contribution of language students' existing cultural experience in a range of Asian and Central American locations.

In a 3-day workshop for four Uzbek curriculum designers from the Uzbek State World Languages University and Andijan State University, hosted and funded by the University of East Anglia for the British Council Inspire project, in 2012, it was reported that 'working with the materials for your recent book ... was enlightening for us as we developed our thinking to design new language and intercultural tasks to pilot with our students.' Participants 'derived immense benefit from engaging in discussions of your theoretical model about the nature of culture because of the way in which it connected theoretical aspects of intercultural communication with the practical needs of the curriculum.'

A two-day workshop for English language teachers, on the cultural contribution of students, hosted and funded by the University of Guanajuato Languages Department, Mexico, 2013, was attended by 24 state school teachers who were also undergoing BA in-service training at the university. The Head of the Department reported: 'In the seminar Professor Holliday applied his recent research ... to the current and important issues in their professional lives as well as being relevant to their programme of study.' The first two hours of the event was filmed and featured on the British Council TeachingEnglish Guest Writers website

(<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/user/544821/track>), archived at <http://adrianholliday.com/video/>. The video features the grammar of culture which is developed in Holliday (2011, 2013) and demonstrates in detail how it informs the process whereby students carry existing cultural experience and knowledge into unfamiliar cultural domains, and what teachers need to do to help this happen. The audience participation on the video demonstrates the accessibility of the theory to their practice. Since the web material was launched in June 2013, there were 1,138 visits in the first month, and the expected audience comprises English teaching professionals worldwide.

A 2-day workshop took place in Amman, Jordan, on 'Making the most of the experience and knowledge that language learners bring to the classroom' for teachers and teacher educators in the region, hosted and funded by the British Council in Amman, 2012. There were 22 participants representing the Jordanian ministry of education, UNRWA and 10 universities in Lebanon, Palestine, Jordan and Syria. One teacher commented: 'I can say that this workshop is one of the most important sessions I have attended through my academic life'. This was followed in 2012 by seminars on 'Language and Culture' to Palestinian language teachers, funded by the British Council, at Hebron University (93 students), an-Najah University and al-Quds Open University in Ramallah. Regarding Ramallah, the British Council organiser reports: 'We connected by videoconference to students and university staff in Gaza, reaching 80 from several institutions, and

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there was some enthusiastic dialogue following your presentation with those in Gaza, and in Ramallah.'

Other instances of impact are conference presentations and a two-day workshop for English language educators in Nepal in 2011. Also a keynote speech and Oxford University Press Debate at the TEC13 conference in India in 2013 are now on YouTube, ([http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cbYrwiZal\\_w&list=PLUwf3cy5FZzhesjMlhcuynQTQtApBeZL&index=8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cbYrwiZal_w&list=PLUwf3cy5FZzhesjMlhcuynQTQtApBeZL&index=8) and <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bUADbAPI1wk>), and were streamed live by the British Council to 17,992 English language educators in 36 countries. The content of all these events referred to was based on Holliday's research.

### **Educating in intercultural awareness in diverse academic and professional groups**

A further impact of the research, growing out of the groundwork of Holliday (1999), is bringing new awareness of the non-essentialist paradigm in intercultural communication to students in a range of geographical locations and disciplines. Two editions of the textbook, *Intercultural communication: an advanced resource book for students*, Routledge 2004, 2010 (cited by 244, Google Scholar), co-authored by Holliday, Kullman and Hyde within the Applied Linguistics research strand, has been used on masters and undergraduate programmes in the UK (31 universities), North America (6 universities), Europe (6 universities) and Malaysia (1 university), in media, design, cultural studies, applied linguistics, law, modern languages, philosophy, psychology, research methods, translation, management and TESOL (sales 1,069 UK, 414 US, 729 Europe, 648 Asia, 1471 Australasia).

The quality of the impact can be seen in the Master's course in Design Management in the Faculty of Design at Northumbria University. The programme leader comments: 'The module was designed to provide students with an insight into working in globally distributed intercultural design teams such as the ones that are created in the new multinational companies that have developed as a result of globalisation. ... We used the text for a period of 5 years [with] ... 425 of our students who engaged with the text and reflected it into their design work. These students have now returned to their home countries and are employed in the design industry across the globe, having been influenced in their thinking by your book. Comments from students include: ... "The book has penetrated my previous mind set and caused me to reflect upon my own thought processes". ... "It deconstructed and changed my perspective, increasing my respect toward the "foreign others" ... "Point mentioned in the book: the issue of prejudice, culture, otherisation and so on, I think in the future for my career, particularly in working for foreign companies would bring me great usefulness."

### **5. Sources to corroborate the impact**

- [1] A written statement from the President of the Chinese National Association of Foreign Language Education (NAFLE) stating the importance of Holliday's research in the writing of the teacher training syllabus (October 2013) **(contact ID 1)**
- [2] Email correspondence from the British Council Palestine regarding response to workshops and seminars (April 2013) (copy of email from BC event organiser available on request from CCCU)
- [3] An email statement from the Uzbek project leader at UEA regarding the seminar purposes and reach (September 2013) **(contact ID 2)**
- [4] A written statement from the Head of Language School, University of Guanajuato regarding the composition and role of the seminar (October 2013) **(contact ID 3)**
- [5] An email statement from the British Council about the number of visits to the Teaching English Guest Writers website (September 2013) **(contact ID 4)**
- [6] Data page from the British Council India regarding the reach of the TEC13 conference. (Copy available on request from CCCU)
- [7] Report from Routledge on the sales of *Intercultural communication: an advanced resource book for students*, with accompanying table (July 2013) (Copy of report available on request from CCCU)
- [8] An email from the programme director of the Media programme at Northumbria University reporting the impact of *Intercultural communication: an advanced resource book for students* (November 2013) **(contact ID 5)**