

<b>Institution:</b> Aston University		
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 26 Modern Languages and Linguistics		
<b>Title of case study:</b> Modernising English language teacher training in three post-Soviet states		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken:</b> January 2014 – December 2020		
<b>Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:</b>		
<b>Name(s):</b> Dr Sue Garton	<b>Role(s) (e.g. job title):</b> Reader in Applied Linguistics	<b>Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:</b> 2000-present
<b>Period when the claimed impact occurred:</b> 2015-2020		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014?</b> No		

## 1. Summary of the impact

The impacts from our international research collaborations are that in **Russia, Ukraine and Uzbekistan**:

- A. **Educational and pedagogical practices in secondary school and higher education have advanced** beyond the submitting unit with the transformation of training for English language teaching through new Master's modules comprising newly-generated content delivered via blended-learning practices;
- B. **New research-based English language teacher training has proliferated** via new and existing courses for in-service secondary and higher education teachers;
- C. **Four new Master's programmes have been introduced** for English language teaching;
- D. **Employability of graduate teachers and professional development of English teacher trainers have improved**; having gained knowledge of new methods and practices in contextually appropriate language teaching.

## 2. Underpinning research

The research base for the claimed impact comes from work on the Developing Teaching of European Languages (DeTEL) project that derived from Dr Garton's earlier research into the global contexts of English language teaching and teacher training; most particularly the development of language pedagogy that is appropriate for the educational context in which it is used.

The 36-month DeTEL project (December 2013 – November 2016) focussed on developing language teacher training in Russia, Ukraine and Uzbekistan through three universities from European Union (EU) countries (Aston University as project lead, and one each from Germany and France) and seven universities from EU Partner Countries (PCs): three from Russia, and two each from Ukraine and Uzbekistan (Fig. 1).

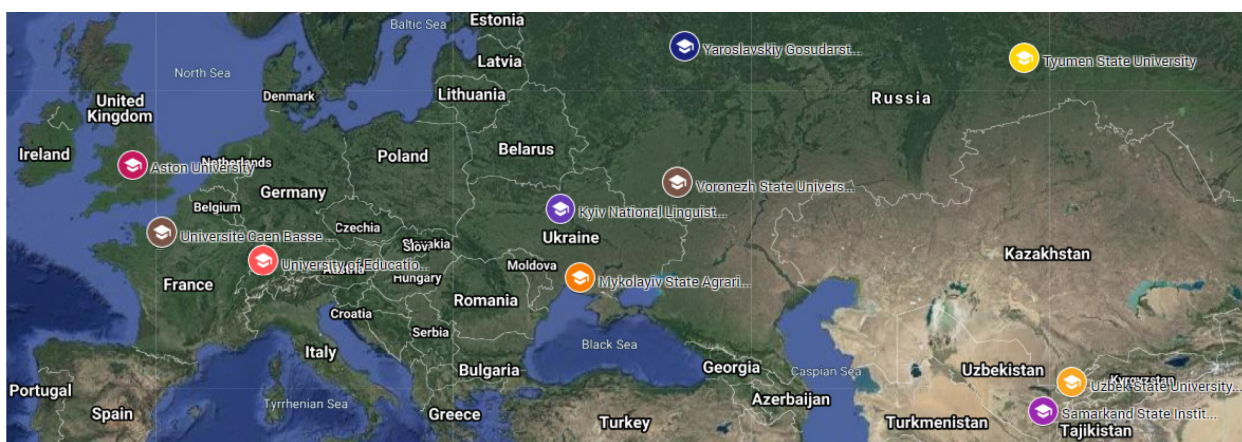


Figure 1. Geographic distribution of DeTEL research project participants (credit: GoogleMaps)

Aston University's contribution was to first identify the strengths, weaknesses and areas for development of English language teacher training in the seven PC universities. So their teacher

trainers, current trainees, and recently graduated trainees were surveyed. This was done in conjunction with analysis of their teaching curricula, within current theories of language teaching and context-appropriate pedagogy (R1).

Principal findings were that teacher trainees in the PC universities:

- highlighted their need for more emphasis on:
  - methods of teaching, and
  - practical approaches to teaching e.g. teaching children, managing classes, and using technology.
- were unsure how to apply learning from theoretical courses because content did not always link clearly to practice;
- saw native-like proficiency as the goal, but had few opportunities to develop language skills;
- did not see the school-based practicum as particularly problematic – contrary to previous findings in the field (R1).

The implications of these findings were that design of effective English language teacher training programmes should include:

- methodology and specialist courses that explicitly link theory with practice;
- more opportunities to use the target language to develop language proficiency;
- a move away from the often-unattainable goal of native-like proficiency by promoting use of English as a *lingua franca* and acceptance of non-native-speaker varieties of English;
- opportunities for reflective practice woven through all aspects of teacher training; e.g. through use of creative assessments;
- content of language teacher training programmes catering for classroom realities and educational cultures of each local context.

The originality of the research stems from how it addressed the evaluation of context appropriate language pedagogy in post-Soviet states.

The research findings informed the choice, design and content of five new Master-level modules for English language teacher training:

1. Age Appropriate Pedagogy
2. Course Design and Evaluation
3. Foreign Language Teaching Methodology
4. Technology and Language Teaching/Learning
5. English Language Improvement

These modules were then introduced into new and existing programmes, in some cases via blended learning, which facilitated access to language input and practical ideas.

Context appropriate and practical approaches to language teacher training were developed and implemented, thus:

- all materials were prepared by teams of teacher trainers from each of the three PCs to ensure materials were appropriate to the local context;
- all modules employed the experiential teaching approach of *loop input* so recipients experienced practical techniques for later use in their own teaching;
- opportunities for practical applications were built into all the new modules; e.g. preparation of lesson plans, with underlying theoretical rationales.

The outcome struck a balance between transmission and constructivist approaches, as being most suitable to their eventual context of use.

### 3. References to the research

- R1** Garton, S. (2020). "This is why students feel lost when they go into teaching practice": English language teachers' views on their initial teacher education. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research*. 19(10), pp.371-387.  
<https://doi.org/10.26803/ijlter.19.10.21>

**Research awards**

December 2013 – November 2016: Tempus IV Project 544161-TEMPUS-1-2013-1-UK-TEMPUS-JPCR. Project Coordinator: Sue Garton, Aston University, **1,190,618.70 Euros**: <https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects/eplu-project-details/#project/544161-TEMPUS-1-2013-1-UK-TEMPUS-JPCR>

The minimum 2-star quality of the research is demonstrated by its publication in a peer-reviewed international journal. Also, funding was awarded in an extremely competitive application process.

**4. Details of the impact**

Because of this project, language teaching practices have been advanced, new language teacher training has proliferated, new Masters' programmes have been introduced and employability of graduates has been improved.

The **beneficiaries** of the research were **Russian, Ukrainian and Uzbek secondary and higher education institutions**, particularly their **English language**:

- **teacher trainers**;
- **teacher trainees** studying on MA programmes;
- **teachers** in further training; and
- **students**.

The modules described in Section 2 above were:

- i. used as the basis for four new MA programmes in Russia, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan;
- ii. added to one existing MA programme in Russia;
- iii. incorporated into two existing MA modules in Russia and Uzbekistan; and
- iv. used on in-service language teacher training programmes for both secondary school teachers and higher education (HE) lecturers in Russia, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

Up to October 2018, approximately 600 **teacher trainees** had been enrolled on programmes described by i-iii above in 6 of the 7 partner universities leading to the following impacts:

- A. Educational and pedagogical practices in secondary school and higher education have advanced** with the transformation of training for English language teachers through new Master's modules based on context-appropriate content delivered via blended-learning practices (**S1**).

The impact on pedagogical practices is evidenced by graduates who report on both the innovative teaching that they experienced during their MA, and specific aspects of the programme they were able to apply; showing how theory and practice were effectively combined (**R1**). One **MA graduate** from the programme, since employed as an English as a Foreign Language teacher at another university, wrote:

*...the class conducted by [name of tutor] about digital literacy helped me discover dozens of tips and regulations on Internet use. This acquired knowledge and competence still assists me in finding and selecting reliable sources and materials...participation truly served as a milestone in our career paths. (**S2**)*

- B. New research-based English language teacher training has proliferated** via new and existing courses for in-service secondary and HE teachers.

In Uzbekistan, methods introduced in the course contribute to the retraining or upgrading of over 700 teachers from 17 universities each year, well beyond the original partner (**S3**).

In Russia, teacher training was extended beyond the initial project partner to 32 teachers on the Tobolsk city campus of Tyumen State University (2016), and to 50 teachers around the north-western Siberian province of Yamal-Nenetsky Autonomous Okrug (2015) (**S4**).

In Ukraine's Mykolaiv city and surrounding region, the In-service Teachers Institute for Foreign Language teachers has used the materials, which have also inspired the 2018 introduction of practical modules into the BA programme at Mykolaiv National University (**S5**).

**C. Four new Master's qualifications for English language teaching have been introduced** to Russia, Uzbekistan and Ukraine.

A new MA was validated in 2016 by the Uzbek Ministry of Education and introduced into all seven universities training foreign language teachers following its 2015 pilot by the Uzbekistan State University of World Languages (**S6**).

In Ukraine, a post-project monitoring visit in 2018 by the research funder confirmed:

*Both universities have also submitted their programmes to the Ministry Education and Science of Ukraine, to obtain national accreditation. (S7)*

In Russia, a new MA was introduced at Voronezh State University, which was commended by the State Examination Commission, commenting that:

*...students demonstrated the ability to solve the tasks of their professional and pedagogical activities in accordance with the competencies declared in the main educational programme, to present information, argue and defend their point of view, relying on the in-depth knowledge gained, skills and competencies formed. (S8,p.2)*

**D. Employability of graduate teachers and professional development of English teacher trainers have improved;** having gained knowledge of the new methods and practices which introduced more learner-centered and inductive approaches (**S1**).

Teacher trainers involved directly in the project changed their own training practices. They commented:

*Now I look through many sites and blogs before I design an activity. After analysis from the perspective of its usefulness I start thinking of its application... (S9,p.36)*

*I have learnt new things as now I use quite a lot of methodological approaches I witnessed... (S9,p.57)*

Graduates are sought-after by Head Teachers because of their abilities to implement new methods of language teaching. As one Head Teacher from the Voronezh region noted:

*Interlingua School of Foreign Languages is systematically pursuing a personnel policy aimed at recruiting graduates from the master programme "Teaching languages with the use of online technologies" ...they all demonstrate the best knowledge and skills acquired on the master programme and the ability to apply the knowledge and skills to their daily pedagogical work in the field of language education. (S10)*

The ultimate beneficiaries of the impacts are the current and future students of these teachers and trainees working across the three countries. By reaching thousands of **teacher trainers, trainee teachers, in-service teachers**, we have advanced the quality of English language teaching and the quality of education received by their **students**. Thus, the significance of our research impact is that it has developed and modernised English language educational programmes – not just for the original Russian, Uzbek and Ukrainian project partners – but far beyond (**S3-5,8,10**) (Fig. 2).



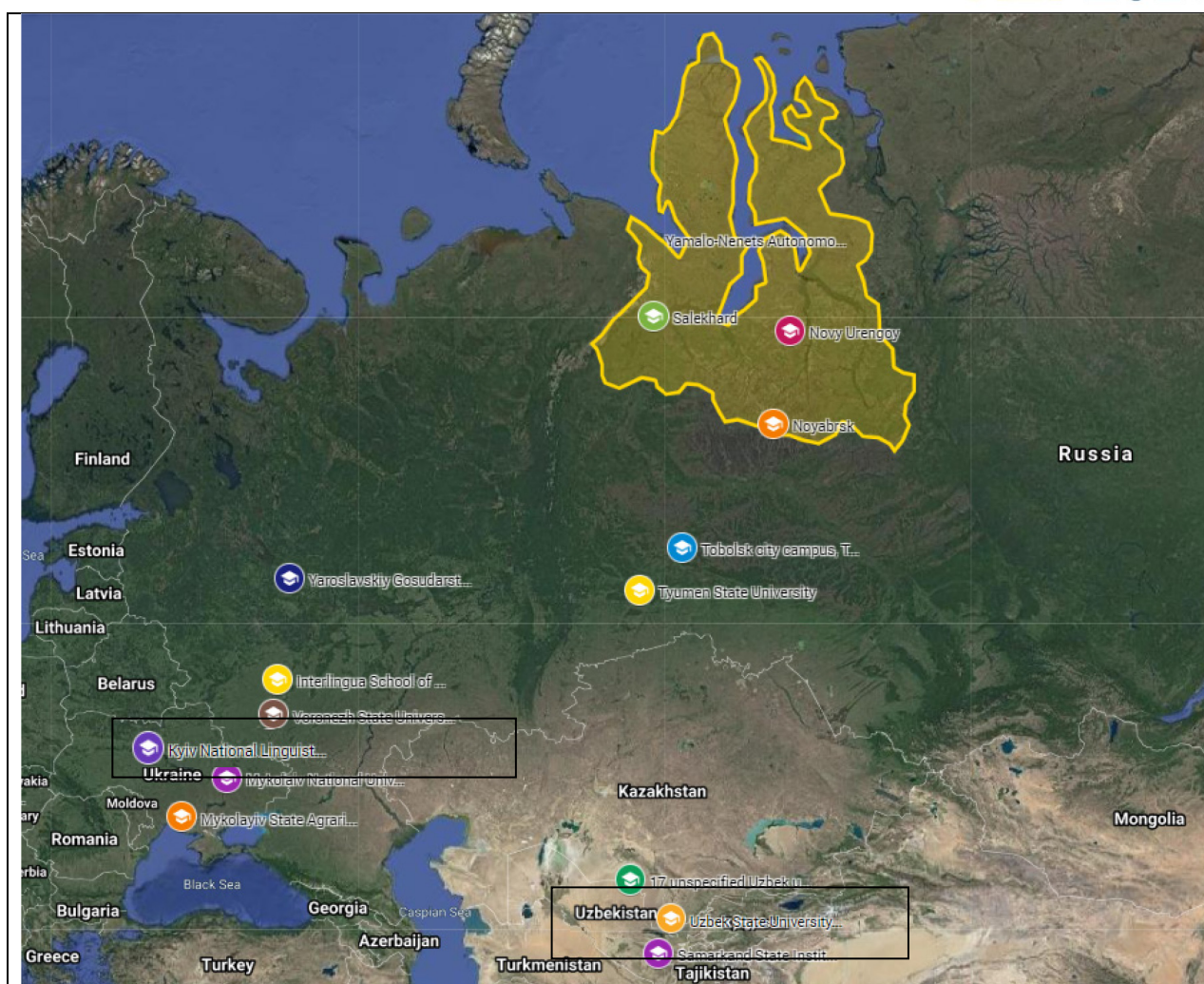


Figure 2. Geographic distribution of original Russian, Uzbek and Ukrainian DeTEL research project participants, plus locations of known onward beneficiaries of research impact (S3-5,8,10) (credit: GoogleMaps)

## 5. Sources to corroborate the impact

**S1** Testimonial from MA module materials writer on how teams worked to ensure context-appropriate materials.

**S2** Testimonial from a Masters graduate of Uzbekistan State World Languages University, now teaching at Tashkent State University of Uzbek Language and Literature.

**S3** Testimonial from the Innovation Centre in Uzbekistan about the use of materials beyond the initial target audience.

**S4** Testimonial from a teacher trainer at Tyumen State University on the use of materials for in-service teacher training.

**S5** Testimonial from the Vice Rector for Research and International Affairs, Mykolaiv National University, Ukraine, about the impact of the project in Mykolaiv region.

**S6** Testimonial from Uzbek State University of World Languages (UzSWLU) about validation of the new MA programme and its introduction across Uzbekistan.

**S7** Email from TEMPUS project administration reporting on a monitoring visit to Ukraine, noting the submission for accreditation of the MA programme

**S8** Report from the Russian State Examination Commission on the MA programme at Voronezh State University, Russia

**S9** DeTEL post-project evaluation survey of project participants (pp.1-61).

**S10** Testimonial from the Head Teacher of UNESCO Associated School “Interlingua” in Voronezh, Russia, about the employability of MA graduates.