Digital Diplomacy Rhetoric:

International Policy Frame Transformations in Diplomatic Discourse (The case study of the UK digital diplomacy)

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ABSTRACT

Keywords:

Cultural diplomacy

Digital media

European Commission

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UK

The research explores the UK digital diplomacy through rhetorical lenses of the European discourse on cultural agenda. The paper utilizes frame analysis to investigate the nature and objectives of digital diplomacy in the political context of the UK. The study argues that the UK as a part of the European Community successfully employs in its diplomatic discourse five rhetorical policy frames developed and promoted by UNESCO and European Commission. These frames help the UK to identify its own diplomatic goals with the international priorities of cultural development and, as a result, aid the country to project its positive image to the outside world. These policy frames include: preservation of cultural heritage, access to creative content, protection of cultural diversity, strengthening intercultural dialogue, as well as fostering development and the creative economy. The study reveals that despite the interactive and participative potential of digital diplomacy to facilitate cross-cultural cooperation, the UK digital diplomacy hardly goes beyond traditional cultural promotion.

Introduction

The European Union (EU) strives to make its diverse culture more accessible to people around the world. Digital diplomacy has become a new and increasingly popular strategy that aims to provide open access to Europe's cultural content and create a new way of interactive engagement with global audiences (Schaake 2011). In recent years, the European Community has been engaged in developing digital platforms for preservation and enhancement of its rich cultural heritage. However, digitizing national assets in the domains of culture and the creative industries is not enough to develop meaningful interaction with various audiences through cultural content:

> In this sense, the development of digital heritage platforms must be assessed from the point of view of what forms of cultural citizenship they promote. The question that every digital heritage project must answer is, what forms of cultural inclusion and participation does it encourage? (Paschalidis 2010: 179).

In the age of the information society, digital diplomacy is promoted within the European Community as a new and powerful instrument that can enable ordinary people, artists, and cultural organizations to become active ambassadors of their cultures. With the significant advance of new media communication tools, the old principles of cultural diplomacy based on a "top-down branding approach, which treats people as targets rather than participants in an exchange of views" (Leadbeater 2010) is no longer relevant. The traditional principles of cultural diplomacy, such as image cultivation, propaganda, and marketing-oriented activities (Melissen 2006, 3) have proved to be outdated diplomatic strategies. Digital diplomacy is able to go beyond mere one-way cultural promotion by utilizing the powerful opportunities of new media to provide means for interactive communication among various parties and to create engaging environments across borders.

The EU is one of the richest and most culturally diverse areas in the world. Due to its diversity and multiculturalism, every nation state within the EU understands and adopts the objectives of digital diplomacy in their own way. The major priorities shaping national cultural policies, as well as international economic and political interests, define how digital diplomacy is structured within the framework of foreign relations. Consequently, digital diplomacy, as exercised by different countries, aims at achieving various strategic goals and exerts specific cultural impacts on foreign audiences. Digital diplomacy discourse can mirror how national and international political contexts define digital diplomacy agenda in different countries respective to articulation by official governments in each nation state.

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (UK) was one of the first EU countries that recognized the powerful potential of digital diplomacy. The government enthusiastically promotes incorporating new media technologies into the work of cultural institutions and diplomatic organizations. The report "Cultural Diplomacy" produced in 2007 recommended that new technologies should become "the basis for innovative new working strategies" and online tools "should reflect the full range of possible contributions to cultural diplomacy" (Bound et al 2007:14). Furthermore, the authors of the report advised that their recommendations be regarded as a matter of urgent priority in order to make the UK "stay ahead of the pack on cultural diplomacy." The Chair of the Arts Council of England, Liz Forgan, in her Media Festival Arts speech enthusiastically advocated for wider use of the digital media that enables cultural institutions to work more effectively to reach new audiences. Specifically, she emphasized the opportunities brought by the Internet to best distribute and promote art and culture on a global scale so it can reach the widest possible audience: "We need to open our treasure stores to the public, making the arts a truly accessible and inspiring public service at home, and a powerful ambassador abroad, demonstrating the creativity, vibrancy and diversity of 21st century Britain" (Forgan 2010).

This study aims to critically analyze the rhetoric of digital diplomacy of the UK within the European context. Employing frame analysis as the main methodological approach, the paper intends to understand what digital diplomacy really means within the political context of the UK and how it is articulated to a wider international community. The study argues that cultural and digital diplomacy rhetoric of the UK is built upon the five policy frames developed and promoted by The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization United Nations Educational (UNESCO) and the European Commission. These policy frames include: Preservation of cultural heritage, access to creative content, protection of cultural diversity, strengthening intercultural dialogue, as well as fostering development and the creative economy.

Through the analysis of international policy frame transformations, as identified within the UK diplomacy rhetoric, this paper seeks to investigate to what extent digital diplomacy discourse in the country goes beyond traditional cultural promotion in international communication and if it encourages new digital models for cultural cooperation.

The structure of the paper consists of five parts. The *Methodology* section outlines the methods employed in the paper and justifies its selection for the research objective. The following part, *International Policy Frames,* discusses in detail the frames identified in the discourse of two major international organizations: UNESCO and the European Commission. These frames map the core objectives of the international agenda for cultural development and digital innovations. This section serves to explain the original meanings of each policy frame as articulated

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by the international organizations. In the next section, *Digital Diplomacy in the UK Context*, these policy frames are identified within the cultural diplomacy rhetoric of the UK and are critically analyzed to decipher its new meaning and reinterpretations. The concluding part summarizes the findings of the research.

Methodology

In the framework of this study, rhetoric analysis serves as a core methodological approach that helps to critically analyze the discourse of the UK's cultural and digital diplomacy. The main objects of analysis are policy documentation, cultural conventions, treaties and regulations of the European Commission and UNESCO adopted within the last ten years, as well as recent reports, corporate plans, agenda documents and diplomatic speeches of the British Council and other UK core political organizations. The UK documents are analyzed as rhetorical pieces because they serve to communicate the official position of the UK government to promote certain ideas and concepts, as well as to influence the opinion of international stakeholders.

The major methodological approach employed in this study is the frame analysis. Frame analysis has been utilized by many scholars as a method to explore mass media and political communication. (Chapman & Lupton, 1994 ; Entman, 1993 ; Iyengar, 1991 ; Ryan, 1991 ; Schon & Rein, 1994). Framing is known as a dynamic process that involves a continued generation of interpretations. "…frames are not static, but are continuously being constituted, contested, reproduced, transformed, and/or replaced" during discourse development. (Benford & Snow, 2000: 614). Framing usually occurs in a specific cultural situation or context as a dynamic process. Because frames can "travel" across cultures, frame development that takes place on a cross-cultural level is known as frames borrowing. It entails reframing cultural ideas or

practices in order "to enhance the prospect of their resonance with the host or target culture." (Benford and Snow, 2000: 627). This study explores how the UK government transforms borrowed frames from its national context in order to speak "international language" and generate a meaningful discourse to communicate the goals and objectives of its cultural diplomacy.

Bernford and Snow distinguish four basic processes of frames development: frame bridging, frame amplification, frame extension, and frame transformation. Frame bridging is based on linking of two or more ideologically similar but structurally unconnected frames in regards to a particular issue or problem. Frame amplification is "idealization, embellishment, clarification, or invigoration of existing values or beliefs." Frame extension, as the title suggests, entails extending beyond the primary interests to incorporate new important issues and concerns. Frame transformation is basically a generation of new meanings for the old understanding of existing frames. (Benford and Snow, 2000: 618). In the course of the present analysis, this transformation framework is employed to analyse how the policy frames of the international community change their meanings and acquire new interpretations within the context of the UK cultural and digital diplomacy.

In order to identify the dominant frames selected by UK politicians to articulate digital diplomacy in a cultural context, a series of content categories was developed. First, the cultural agenda contours of the UNESCO conventions, EU treaties and policies are mapped in order to determine the patterns that emerge from the international cultural strategies discourse. Next, the patterns are organized into thematic categories to distinguish digital strategies frames that are emerging around cultural issues. Then, these selected frames were identified and analyzed in the discourse of the UK's digital diplomacy. Through critical analysis of the transformation of these frames within the UK national context, it is revealed how these frames are constructed and to what degree meanings are implied

within a particular frame to correspond to the original concepts articulated by the EU and UNESCO.

International Policy Frames

The European cultural strategy is mostly defined by a number of UNESCO conventions, which are "fully integrated into the European agenda for culture" through pursuing "three shared strategic objectives: cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue; culture as a catalyst for creativity and innovation; and culture in international relations" (Burri 2010: 9). For example, the European Union has developed a significant number of policies that reflect the objectives of the 2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. These cultural policies of the EU are developed in the framework of the Article 167 – Culture Programme – that contributes to the Commission's efforts to emphasize the role of culture in all EU activities. (European Commission 2007 b). Digital technology implications for EU's cultural policies are also in many cases defined through the United Nation ICT[1] framework that outlines the major capacities and potentials of new media tools to support cultural development (European Commission 2007 a).

The following section of the paper will outline the major digital policy frames embracing the complex picture of existing cultural issues in the international arena and within the EU context. These identified categories will capture various trends of UNESCO and the European Commission in implementing cultural agenda policies.

Preservation of Cultural Heritage

UNESCO encourages the identification, protection, and preservation of cultural heritage around the world. This is embodied in an international treaty entitled the *Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage*, adopted by UNESCO in 1972.Within this framework, UNESCO supports efforts in developing and employing digital technologies for the preservation of cultural heritage. This includes developing new media based systems for storing "digital information and multimedia content in digital repositories, and support archives, cultural collections and libraries as the memory of humankind" (UN and ITU 2003).

In the European context, a wide variety of cultural projects and programs have been developed over the past years that particularly targeted the preservation and restoration of heritage sites and effective conservation of rare and unique cultural objects for future generations (European Commission 2007). To enhance the preservation of Europe's rich and cultural heritage, digital tools are enthusiastically promoted as effective means to ensure the survival of cultural heritage through digitized analogue collections that preserve and store digital content (European Commission 2005). In the past three years the European Commission launched the eEurope Action Plan, created a National Representatives Group on Digitization, and developed a vast policy framework resolutions and recommendations for digital preservation.

Access to Creative Content

Promoting access to information and creative content was announced as a major priority of UNESCO's line of actions in the 2010 -2011 (UNESCO 2010). Through this framework, digital tools are positioned as powerful means that are able to ensure that cultural institutions, as original and traditional content providers, can share their resources on a global scale. Digital media acquires strong potential to allow "libraries, archives, museums and other cultural institutions to achieve their full potential as content-providers in the Information Society by providing continued access to recorded information" (UN and ITU 2003).

The World Digital Library project developed by UNESCO serves as a vivid illustration of digital access policy within a cultural framework. The multilingual World Digital Library (http://www.wdl.org/en/) has been launched online in 2005 to make available free of charge the materials from different countries and cultures around the world (UNESCO 2011). It is built to expand the volume and variety of cultural content on the Internet, provide valuable resources for educators and scholars, and to narrow the digital divide within and between countries.

Policies enabling access to creative content in the European Union have been promoted to support Europe's rich cultural heritage. The most important initiative started with the Commission of Communication's "i2010: Digital Libraries", (European Commission 2005) that emphasizes the political objective of making Europe's cultural heritage accessible to larger audiences. Following up on this objective, European Digital Library (http://www.europeana.eu/portal/) - Europeana - was effectively launched in November 2008 which intends to serve as a multilingual access point to European cultural heritage (Europeana 2011). This online resource allows Internet users from around the world to search and gain direct access to digitized books, art works, maps, newspapers, film episodes, and photographs from various European cultural institutions.

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[1] ICT (information and communications technology) is an umbrella term that includes any communication device or application, such as: radio, television, cellular phones, computer as well as network hardware and software, satellite systems, etc. It also entails the various services and applications associated with communication devices, for example videoconferencing or distance learning platforms (ITU 2009).

Protection of Cultural Diversity

In recent years, globalization processes set some important priorities for cultural agendas around the world. In many communities, globalization is associated with the growth of cultural homogenization which erodes national and local cultural expressions and traditional identities. The *Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions* "is a legally-binding international agreement that ensures artists, cultural professionals, practitioners and citizens worldwide can create, produce, disseminate and enjoy a broad range of cultural goods, services and activities, including their own" (UNESCO 2010). The Convention was adopted in 2005 and has been ratified in 118 countries worldwide as of July 2010. Within the framework of the *Convention on Cultural Diversity,* the significant role of digital media is highlighted in three major dimensions. First, digital tools are promoted as a major innovative tool that contributes to development and strengthening of the cultural and creative industries through support of local content development and distribution. Second, digital media is accepted as a powerful means that can foster linguistic diversity through online publishing and translation. Finally, digital technologies are foreseen to reinforce creative, productive and managerial capacities of craftspeople and artisans to strengthen local and indigenous cultures (UN and ITU 2003).

The EU has greatly contributed to the efforts of UNESCO to protect and promote the diversity of cultural expressions through its developed policy framework ensuring the implementation of the 2005 Convention's major principles. The importance of this cultural policy agenda resonates with the promotion of Europe's cultural richness and diversity which is closely linked to the role and influence of the European Union in the world. "The European Union is not just an economic process or a trading power, it is already widely - and accurately - perceived as an unprecedented and successful social and cultural project" (European Commission 2007: 3). The European framework on digital policies is also marked by such objectives as promotion of cultural and linguistic diversity of member states, promotion of the e-mobility of artists and cultural professionals, as well as widening circulation of artistic expressions beyond national borders (European Commission 2007).

Strengthening Intercultural Dialogue

Among UNESCO's main missions is to revitalize various cultures throughout the world in order to counter their segregation. "This cultural dialogue has taken a new meaning in the context of globalization and current international climate in politics. Thus it is becoming a vital meaning of maintaining peace and world unity" (UNESCO 2010). UNESCO seeks to encourage countries to reflect their multi-cultural dimensions through international cultural co-operation policies and to reinforce conditions, capacities and modalities of intercultural dialogue at local, national and regional levels (UNESCO 2010). In regard to digital support of the intercultural dialogue objective, it is widely promoted that ICT can advance cooperation with indigenous peoples and traditional communities and enhance knowledge exchange between developing and developed countries to share experiences and promote best practices on cultural policies and tools (UN and ITU 2003).

With the freedom of movement ensured by the European Community Treaty, the EU has established a stable platform for developing cross-cultural collaborations on various levels. European cultural, political, and economic policy framework facilitates cultural exchanges and dialogue across borders. Thus, the European Commission actively articulates culture as "a vital element in the Union's international relations" and promotes political dialogue with all countries and regions in the field of culture (European Commission 2007:8). The European Community also widely promotes that digital technological innovations bring about new possibilities for intercultural and international communication. Such possibilities include global connectivity and the rise of networks which introduce unprecedented communication advances that can significantly enhance cross-cultural cooperation. The European Union tries to further advance the cause of international cultural co-operation by developing digital strategic support mechanisms to facilitate contact between artists, cultural managers, and curators (Culturelink 2008).

Fostering Development and Supporting the Creative Economy

As the UNESCO Convention on Cultural Diversity indicates, culture should be integrated into national policies and into international cooperation strategies to foster human development goals and poverty reduction. UNESCO urges the parties to integrate the full contribution of cultural industries to "sustainable development, economic growth and the promotion of decent quality of life through the creation, production, distribution and dissemination of cultural expressions" (UNESCO 2005). In this framework, the use of new technologies and the expansion of networked communication systems are particularly encouraged and articulated through the promotion of ICT in the development field. Digital tools employed for the economic growth and support of cultural industries are accepted and promoted as powerful means that can enhance local economies and bring new low cost solutions for development of small local communities. Digital policy in this regard is shaped by highlighting the potentials of new media to connect developing and developed countries in a faster, easier and more mobile mode, to establish a platform for good practices exchange and learning, to reach out to rural areas and to involve vulnerable and marginalised groups in cultural participation and production (UN and ITU 2003).

Within the context of the European Union, fostering the creative economy has become a widely promoted concept to frame the body of recent economic and cultural policies. Culture is advocated to be a catalyst for this "new" economy legitimated by the Lisbon Strategy for growth and jobs (European Commission 2007 a: 8). Especially with the recent economic turndown, the development and reinforcement of the creative industries is recognized as a powerful economic force that can revitalise communities and secure sustainable cultural diversity in the long run (Burri 2010: 28). The Internet, as a new communication channel, is promoted as a "driver of greater pluralism in the media" that is able to provide better access to a wider range of sources, as well as to permit local industries and small cultural communities to express themselves fully and openly. The European Commission is developing a strong body of new policies to support and promote the incorporation of digital media in the cultural and creative industries. By proposing such measures on a European scale, the EU seeks to create new business models which would benefit the cultural industry "by creating a wider market and protecting the intellectual profit and related investments" (European Commission 2010).

In summation, this section outlined five major policy frames that shape the international cultural agenda. In the next section these frames will be identified and analysed within the context of the UK cultural policy.

Digital Diplomacy in the UK Context

The British Council is the main cultural diplomacy organization in the United Kingdom which aims to develop international cultural and educational relations with countries worldwide. Maintaining a nongovernmental status, the British Council is the UK's second biggest charity allowing it to be operationally independent from the UK government. This political freedom allows the organization to sustain trustworthy relationships, especially with countries in a conflict, or in politically tense situations. Over 75 years the British Council has opened more than a hundred offices around the globe and has established its active presence in a wide variety of countries. The main purpose of the British Council is to provide "cultural, diplomatic and economic benefit for the UK" through development of relationships with the international community (British Council 2010 a: 11).

The Royal Charter sets out the major purposes of the British Council's work which are to 1) "promote a wider knowledge of the United Kingdom", 2) "develop a wider knowledge of the English language", 3) "encourage cultural, scientific, technological and other educational co-operation between the United Kingdom and other countries" (British Council 2010 a:11). These strategic goals are embedded within a broad framework of British Council programs that include building intercultural dialogue, fostering the creative economy, and providing access to the UK's expertise, knowledge, and resources.

Digital media technologies are extensively used by the British Council in its major activities and are promoted as powerful tools affecting every aspect of the new society, economy, and culture. "Arts and cultural organisations can now connect with the public in new ways, bringing them into a closer relationship with culture and creating new ways for them to take part" (Arts Council England 2010: 8).

The UK is one of the few countries in the world where digital policy is taken seriously. Digital tools are widely promoted in the country specifically in the cultural and creative industry sectors. The Department of Culture, Media and Sport in the UK advocates that "all cultural organisations should have an overarching digital strategy that fits the overall strategic purpose of the organisation and clearly fits with its vision and mission" (Department of Culture, Media and Sport 2010: 12). Moreover, it is advised that more digitally-savvy people should be on the trustee and management boards of the cultural institutions to give guidance on and support innovative services and partnerships:

> Encouraging digital access means a radically different approach to managing technology from the way that large-scale legacy systems have been managed. Technology needs to be better integrated into creative processes (Department of Culture, Media and Sport 2010: 22).

Digital media is promoted among the creative industries as a powerful means that can develop new business models through employing social networking and "encouraging the culture of sharing" nurturing through the Internet. The Department of Culture, Media and Sport recommends that cultural entrepreneurs use social networks "rather than always attempting to bring audiences to one monolithic site" (Department of Culture, Media and Sport 2010: 15). In the framework of cultural diplomacy, digital media is enthusiastically promoted to support the major objectives of the British Council.

The following five sections will look closely at the British Council's programs and the country's international framework to explore how international agendas on culture and digital media are articulated through UK cultural diplomacy discourse. In each of the sections the framing transformation model will be identified and analysed with the reference to the UK national context. However, before this analysis is presented, it is important to explain why this framing approach is appropriate. This study argues that the UK cultural diplomacy rhetoric employs identification technique to communicate its international goals in a way that most resonates with international agendas on culture set by such organizations as the European Commission and UNESCO. Identifying UK domestic

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strategies related to an international cultural framework is a deliberate rhetoric strategy that can be explained with three main reasons.

First, in diplomatic discourse the UK positions itself as an international political leader that helps to define international agendas and sets innovative approaches in resolving cultural, economic, and political problems. The following five sections will provide a significant number of illustrations from the UK official rhetoric that clearly articulates the intention of the country to lead the international community in cultural development with its "excellence and expertise." Such a position urges the UK to "speak the international language" of recognized, accepted, and promoted concepts, ideas, and values that matter to people worldwide. The British Council tries to advertise high quality and diverse UK culture, as well as its technological and industrial advances to overseas audiences by framing their international promotion work in terms of global peace keeping, development, and cultural preservation efforts.

Second, such identification with international policy frameworks is defined by competition among the European institutions for the "European Union contracts to promote the expertise of their nationals and generate income" (Fisher 1999). In the case of the British Council it is particularly relevant, because the budget of this agency is dependent on external contracts and funding. Around 70% of the British Council income comes from services fees and contracts activities, the majority of which originate from external sources.

Finally, there has been a change in the policies of many European cultural institutes and agencies in the past five years. Foreign policy efforts that traditionally were directed towards presenting a positive image of a country through cultural promotion have been reframed to associate more closely with cultural relations. The substitution of the idea of cultural diplomacy with cultural relations intends to promote mutual understanding and co-operation, rather than a one-sided advantage: "Agencies such as the British Council continue to promote high quality and diverse UK arts to audiences overseas … However, the emphasis is now on the development of

sustainable, mutually beneficial, international partnerships in the arts." (Fisher 1999). The European Union National Institutes for Culture (EUNIC), formed in 2006 with driving investment and help of the British Council, can serve as an illustrative example of such a cooperative paradigm in diplomacy. EUNIC is the network of the international cultural relations institutes from the member states of the European Union (EUNIC 2011). Such a collaborative initiative provides the British Council with a direct access to cultural diplomatic institutions across Europe connected with each other through the Council's network agencies, located in most of the countries.

These changes in cultural diplomacy paradigm, as well as the competition for money and power among nation states in the European context explain why the British Council utilises identification as a primary rhetoric device in the cultural diplomacy discourse. The UK borrows international policy frames from the cultural framework of the international institutions such as the European Commission and UNESCO to make its international strategies more relevant to the global cultural agenda.

Preservation of Cultural Heritage

The UK has long recognized the digital potential in preservation and enhancement of national cultural heritage and resources. The National Archives of the UK has been established by the government to preserve the heritage of the country in a digital form which can also be accessible for people online. As the government's national archive for England, Wales and the United Kingdom, it holds over a thousand years of "the nation's records for everyone to discover and use" (The National Archives 2011). This official institution provides detailed guidance to government departments and the public sector including national museums, galleries, and cultural institutions on information management and advises how to take care of historical archives employing new digital technologies (The National Archives 2011).

Until October 2011, the Museums Libraries and Archives Council[2] was a part of the National Archives as a leading national institution that promoted best practice in cultural organizations "to inspire innovative, integrated and sustainable services for all" (Museums, Libraries, and Archives Council 2011). The major purpose of this partnership was to empower national museums and libraries to provide people in England with high quality experiences through connecting them to national cultural heritage.

The preservation of cultural heritage is not necessarily a component of cultural diplomacy as the emphasis is on preserving cultural assets for the national public. However, the UK effectively employs *frames bridging* to connect national priorities with the international cultural agenda of the UK. Therefore, within the national framework on the preservation of cultural heritage, the UK is promoting the 2012 Olympic Games as an important event that through its international significance can revitalize national heritage and can bring more visibility to the national cultural resources.

The 2012 Olympics is widely advertised in the country as an international event that will provide the UK with another opportunity to showcase its excellence in the global arena:

> The London 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympics Games will be the biggest and best event the UK has ever hosted. But the five weeks of the Games will not be the only test of our success (Department for Culture Media and Sport 2008).

Museums, Libraries and Archives Council is using the affiliation with the 2012 Olympic Games to bridge its primary objective to preserve cultural heritage through cultural diplomacy goals to "engage with young people, celebrate diversity and help deliver the best ever Games, sustaining a legacy for people in London and in all regions" (Museums Libraries and Archives Council 2007). The institution intends to "champion the development of collections, audiences and workforce so that the 2012 Games will be a transformational event for the sector" (Museums Libraries and Archives Council 2007).

The "Stories of the World" project (see Picture 1) has been developed by the Council as a part of the London 2012 Cultural Olympiad "to showcase to a worldwide audience innovation and excellence in museums, libraries and archives" (Museums Libraries and Archives Council 2011). The project aims to "welcome the world to Britain" by showcasing UK cultural collections to "tell inspirational stories about the UK's relationships with the world" (Museums

Libraries and Archives Council 2011). The project involves 1500 young people from various cultural backgrounds, born or recently arrived in the UK, to work in collaboration with curators to make the UK heritage from past generations relevant and important to contemporary societies" (Museums Libraries and Archives Council 2011). Through the eyes of the immigrants, the British national collections will be reinterpreted with personal and cultural insights to build bridges across borders for better appreciation of British cultural treasures.

The Chair of the Arts Council England Liz Forgan in her speech about the project emphasizes:

> Nowhere in the world can the cultural heritage of the world be seen so completely in one place as in the UK. That story lies partly in the physical evidence of centuries of adventure, exploration, trade, piracy, empire and scholarship but also in the living communities of a multicultural and rapidly changing modern nation… A series of exhibitions across the country will enable the great cultures of the world to see themselves honoured and understood (Forgan 2011).

It goes without saying that the impacts and outreach of the project will be reinforced with the support of digital media and a vast Internet campaign. The online activities accompanying the project will aim not only at providing the information on exhibitions across the countries but also at recording and delivering the project to the audiences worldwide.

The section demonstrates how the UK utilises digital diplomacy for the promotion of the national cultural heritage to the outside world. By employing the frame of cultural preservation within their cultural diplomacy discourse, the UK bridges national cultural tasks with the development of international relations and reinforces the importance of national resources within the domestic, as well as global contexts.

Access to Creative Content

The UK utilizes the frame of "access to creative content" as a powerful means to promote its national resources and the English language worldwide. The rhetoric of cultural diplomacy transforms the original concept of "access" promoted by the UNESCO and EU by extending the primary frame. This extension is performed through elaboration on the idea of providing access to the UK cultural resources by including promotion of cultural products and services of the country on the global scale.

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stories
of the world

Stories of the World is one of the major projects of the London 2012 Cultural Olympiad, led by Museum's Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) in partnership with the London Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games (LOCOG).

PICTURE 1. "STORIES OF THE WORLD" PROJECT ADD DEVELOPED BY MLA
(AVAILABLE AT http://bit.ly/tULhh8)

In the process of the frame extension, first, the UK positions itself as a leading country possessing extraordinary rich cultural and educational resources that can be employed worldwide to build a secure and better future. The British Council claims that:

> People want to connect with the UK's world-class higher education institutions. We can ensure policy makers have contact with those in the UK who can help in reforming classroom practice so children all over the world have better prospects. People want to learn English and governments understand that English can help them with economic progress. People want to draw inspiration from the UK's creativity and tens of millions of young people are improving their lives thanks to the UK's most attractive of assets, sport, and culture (British Council 2010 a:9).

The British Council enthusiastically promotes the UK's assets of English language, educational and cultural resources as "attractive to leaders and learners across the world" (British Council 2010 a: 19). The British Council rhetoric is full of claims like the following: "The UK is recognized internationally as a leader in creative practice" (British Council 2010 b:5). The frame of "access to creative content" is employed to highlight the positive contribution of the British Council to global promotion of education and culture through its hard work "to increase access for the millions of people who want to learn from, share in and access what the UK has to offer" (British Council 2010 b:5).

In regards to digital diplomacy, the UK's position is to employ the full potential of the Internet and new media "to encourage new audiences to delight in the richness of our arts and culture – and to enrich and deepen the experiences of those who are hungry for more" (Department of Culture, Media and Sport 2010). Over the past ten years in the UK, museums, galleries, archives, libraries, and other cultural organizations have been experimenting with digital technologies in order to reach out to new audiences. "The best of these have blazed a trail demonstrating the power of the internet and online media to change radically the way arts and cultural institutions communicate with their audiences" (Department of Culture, Media and Sport 2010).
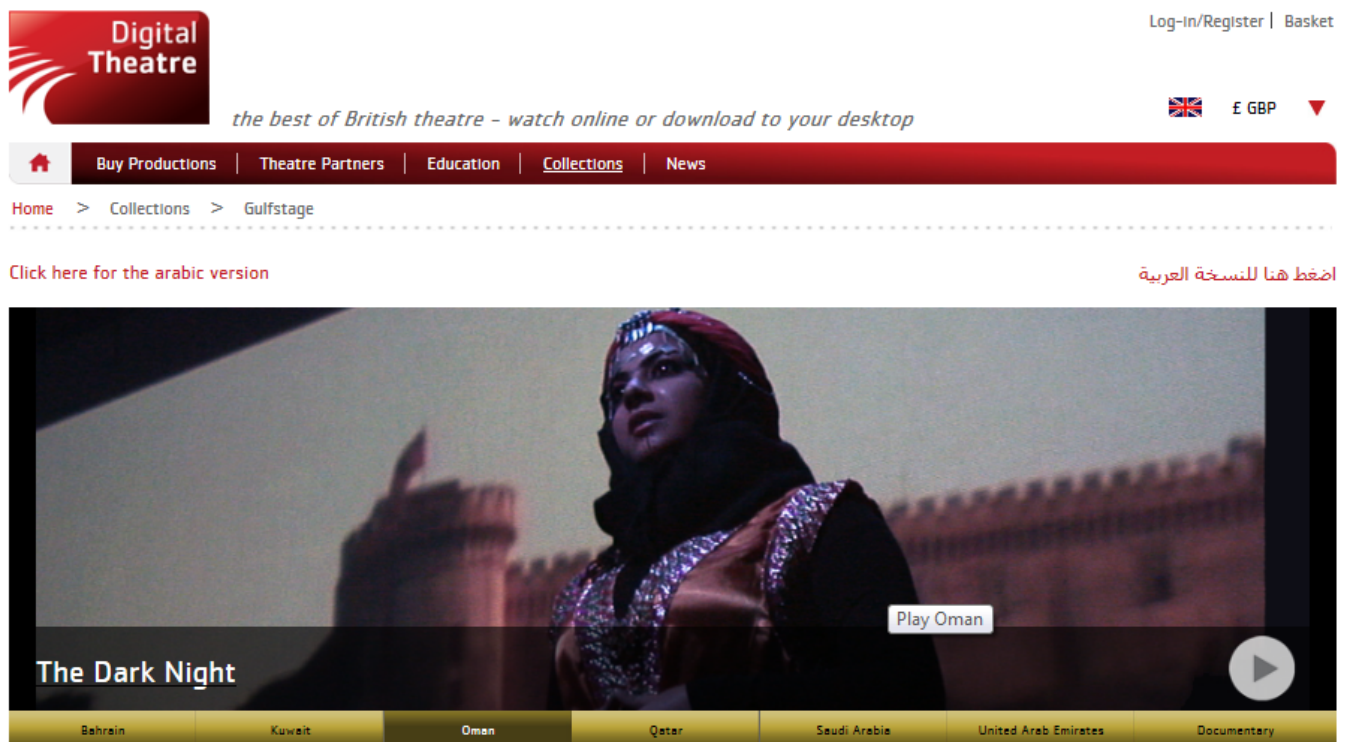
PICTURE 2. GULF STAGE DIGITAL THEATRE PROJECT
(AVAILABLE AT http://www.digitaltheatre.com/collections/gulfstage)

The British Council has developed an impressive number of online programs that provide and access to the creative and cultural products of the UK on a global scale[3]. "British Council Film", "British Council Collection", "Contemporary Writers", "Design in Britain", "Forward Motion" and many more programs (see Picture 2) hosted on the British Council web site demonstrate "the creativity, vibrancy and diversity of 21st century Britain" (Forgan 2010). Therefore, in the context of the UK, one of the main objectives of the digital diplomacy is to showcase UK cultural resources to wider audiences with an emphasis on national excellence and superiority. The descriptions of all the mentioned above programs heavily employ such epithets as "the best creative talent", "world-renowned British collection", "the UK's vast talent", etc. to advertise the UK artists and cultural content creators and to promote British national culture to larger audiences.

Within cultural cooperation framework, Gulf Stage Digital Theatre project, developed by the British Council, is one of the most illustrative examples of how the policy of access to creative content allows the UK to advance its diplomatic objectives in a collaborative context. These objectives are achieved by inviting target countries to share their cultural content on a digital platform that simultaneously promotes national culture and leads audiences to further explorations of the British digital cultural resources. Gulf Stage is a digital project expanding geographical boundaries through artistic innovation and bringing "theatre from the Gulf to an online global audience". It is based on a partnership between the British Council, Digital Theatre and the Ministry of Culture, Arts and Heritage of Qatar along with the Cultural Development Centre of the Qatar Foundation (Digital Theatre 2011). Utilizing digital technologies the online portal showcases 6 theatre plays staged originally in Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and United Arab Emirates.

Though the project does promote cultural cooperation and initiates a dialogic exchange, it is displayed within the British context on the Web space, specifically designed to promote the UK theatre and

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[3] "British Council Film" is a comprehensive portal about the British audiovisual industry that includes a database of all British films since 1998. "British Council Collection" is a web-based resource dedicated to the visual art collection which contains over 8,000 British works of art, craft and design. "Contemporary Writers" is an online program that provides an access to detailed biographical and bibliographical information on hundreds of living UK authors. "Design in Britain" is an informational online portal that showcases works of the UK designers, architects and design movements. "Forward Motion" is an online collection of outstanding British screen dance works curated by the British experts. "The Selector" is a weekly two hour radio broadcasting the best of the UK contemporary music (British Council 2011).

> "THE MULTICULTURAL STRUCTURE OF THE BRITISH SOCIETY IS ADVOCATED TO BE A POWERFUL MODEL THAT CAN 'NURTURE PROGRAMMES AND ACTIVITIES AROUND SHARED INTEREST AND AMBITIONS' WITH THE OUTSIDE WORLD."

attract attention to national artistic creation. Thus, cultural promotional objectives within this project shape specific reading of the rhetorical discourse communicated through the Digital Theatre platform. The platform, though suggesting cooperative paradigm, heavily utilizes advertising of national culture on each of the Web pages of the project, for example through display of such slogan as "Digital Theatre - *the best of British theatre* - watch online or download to your desktop" (Digital Theatre 2011).

Digital diplomacy in this case serves to help with promotional outreach of national cultural products and creations. However, diplomatic promotion is masked by the extension of the international policy frame of "access to creative content" through inclusion within this policy objective the national strategy to promote the UK culture and English language.

Protection of Cultural Diversity

Cultural diversity is widely promoted throughout the programming and overall strategies and policies of the British Council. The organization emphasizes that the commitment to equality and diversity is "reflected in all British Council activity around the world" (British Council 2011). Moreover, cultural diversity is articulated as the core quality of the Council's work ethics and environment, as well as a model of international cooperation:

> Equality and diversity are at the heart of our cultural relations ambitions. They contribute to the mutual trust, respect and understanding we strive for on behalf of the UK. They are integral to our brand, our reputation, our success and are an integral part of our cultural relations impact (British Council 2011 a).

The British Council works toward further promotion of cultural diversity within the agreement of the international cultural objective set by the 2005 Convention of UNESCO and is guided by its ambition to use its " increasing knowledge and experience to make a leading contribution to international aspects of equality and diversity" (British Council 2011 a). The major approaches selected for these activities include "mainstreaming" and "highlighting what our collective efforts can achieve for individuals, communities, organisations and nations" (British Council 2011 a).

The UK's society is communicated and promoted as highly diverse in terms of cultures represented and social groups included. This society model defines the workforce, partnerships and business relations of the cultural diplomacy actors in the UK context. The multicultural structure of the British society is advocated to be a powerful model that can "nurture programmes and activities around shared interest and ambitions" with the outside world (British Council 2011 a). Therefore, by utilising the frame of amplification the British Council transforms the frame of cultural diversity protection into a powerful rhetorical means to promote the UK in the international arena as a progressive society safeguarding international cultural values.

Through hyperbolization and the idealization of its cultural values, the UK articulates and emphasizes its ambition to represent a unique model of cultural diversity that allows it "to provide the very best practices and services we can, in line with our organisational values and human rights' principles" (British Council 2011 a). Such a strong objective to communicate itself as a best example of culturally diverse community aims to "change outdated perceptions of the UK" and to find an effective way to "to help people to see the UK not just for what it was … but for the very best in creativity and innovation that it offers today and is expecting tomorrow" (British Council 2005).

The Diversity Strategy is based on the premise of mainstreaming by utilizing the potential of new media to share best practices and to showcase the variety of projects and programs being implemented worldwide with the support of the British Council. The Council has launched a "Diversity Website containing information on the main areas of diversity (gender, race, disability, work-life balance, age, religion and sexual identity) as well as examples of good diversity practice from across the British Council and elsewhere" (British Council 2005). This online
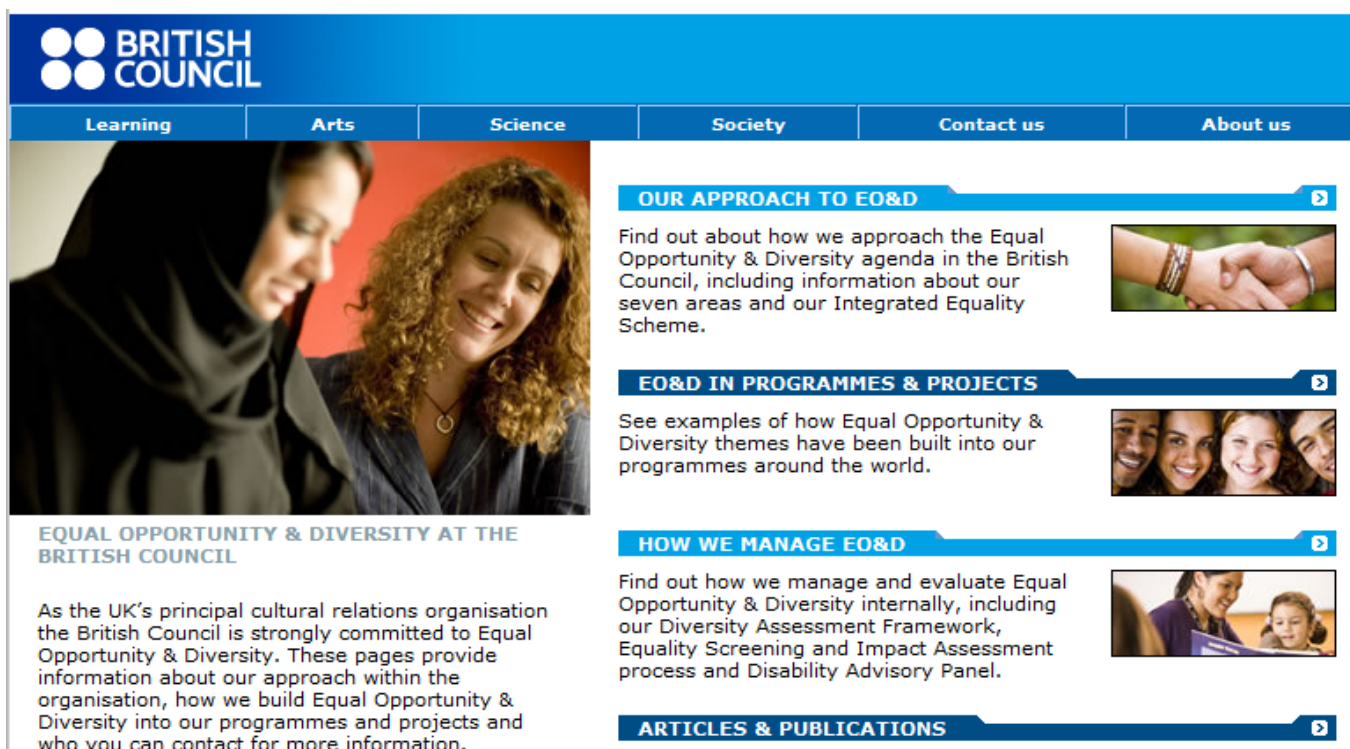
PICTURE 3. BRITISH COUNCIL'S DIVERSITY WEBSITE

(AVAILABLE AT http://www.britishcouncil.org/home-diversity.htm)

resource (see Picture 3) features recent projects, programs and initiatives which have a strong diversity focus and demonstrate the commitment of the British Council to provide guidelines for further promotion of cultural diversity principles worldwide (British Council 2011 c).

In this case, digital diplomacy serves the British Council to promote its innovative practices in social and cultural management. This particular image of the UK advertises its unique ability and expertise to help the international community to build democratic and inclusive societies. Through frame amplification the cultural diplomacy rhetoric of the UK aligns national promotion with international agendas on culture. This positions the country as an active member of the international community that enthusiastically addresses social dilemmas and cross-cultural challenges.

### Strengthening Intercultural dialogue

Intercultural dialogue is a core, fundamental program of the British Council that is being implemented on multiple levels and involves a wide network of stakeholders through diverse projects and activities. The major mission of the British Council is "to build engagement and trust for the UK through the exchange of knowledge and ideas," and has a strong connection to the promotion and establishment of intercultural dialogue between the UK and other countries. The British Council clearly communicates that it acknowledges differences in cultures with respect and appreciation and works hard to "develop mutual trust and understanding between people with diverse opinions, viewpoints and values" (British Council 2008). The British Council supports intercultural dialogue by initiating projects that aid people from various backgrounds "to find their voice" in a cross-cultural dialogue touching different aspects of human activities: arts, education, governance, and science.

British Council programs that support the framework of intercultural dialogue "celebrate creative expression; promote the knowledge economy; support positive social development; and advance international co-operation in response to climate change" (British Council 2008). Indeed, the Council has developed a wide variety of activities through a network of field offices that respond directly to international cross-cultural issues in the places where it matters the most. The priority regions include "Central and South Asia, Middle East and Near East and North Africa and we are also working with minority communities in Europe, including supporting community cohesion in the UK" (British Council 2010 b:13). These programs aim at:

> …generating international trust; strengthening the consensus against extremism; helping rebuild post-conflict societies; and increasing the capacity of individuals and organizations around the world to contribute to positive social change (British Council 2008).

At the heart of the British Council's approach to intercultural dialogue "lies the idea of mutuality and a
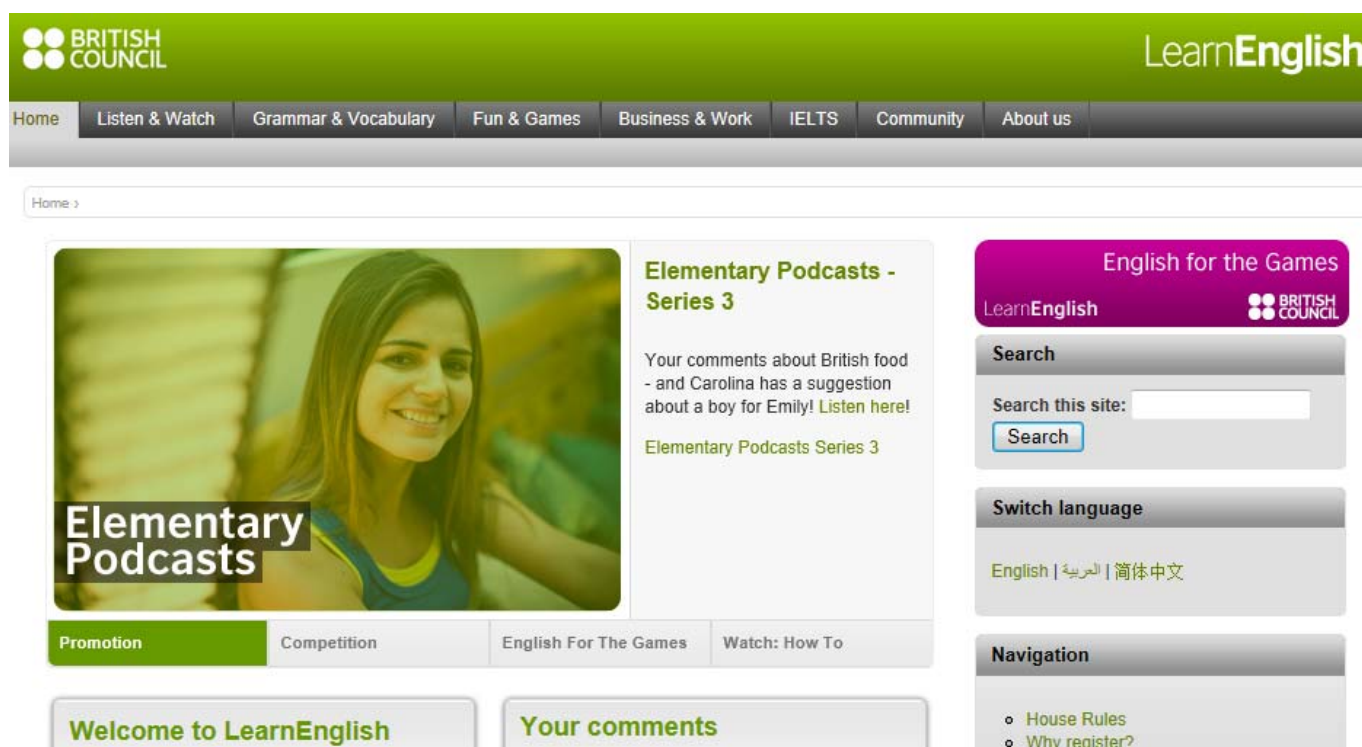
PICTURE 4. BRITISH COUNCIL'S LEARN ENGLISH WEBSITE
(AVAILABLE AT http://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/en/)

commitment to listen with respect and to communicate with directness" (British Council 2008). One of the programs of the British Council that is listed in the framework of supporting the intercultural dialogue is teaching English language. The vital strategic goal of the British Council is "to increase the use of English as a tool for international communication and intercultural understanding" (British Council 2008). Though the British Council acknowledges that a successful dialogue can be achieved in a variety of languages, still it stresses the importance of English language as international. The British Council emphasizes that English has become "the basis for the self-development of hundreds of millions of people" and a crucial element in "building long-term relationships, understanding and sharing knowledge" (British Council 2010 b: 14):

> For example,   the language of the internet is overwhelmingly English – people without it may effectively   be locked out of online knowledge and online debates. The British Council is a world   leader   in   English   language teaching and we have ambitious plans to expand our global 'offer' (British Council 2008).

By framing the teaching of English as an activity that supports the development of intercultural dialogue the rhetoric of the British Council extends the original policy frame and includes "extracurricular activity" in the original framework of actions. By this frame extension the UK reinterprets its English language promotion to larger audiences as a program corresponding to the fundamental policy on the international cultural agenda.

Indeed, one of the most important activities of the British Council is providing English language training. This activity is crucial not only in implementing the Council's major strategy of expanding of the English language worldwide. It is also imperative for sustaining the financial stability of the organization because more than a half of the British Council budget is earned through the income originating from services, including teaching English[4] (British Council 2010 a: 59). Language training activities are communicated with emphasized promotion by the British Council as the "best starting point for learning English. We have 500,000 learners, over 2,000 teachers, 80+ teaching centres in 49 countries; and a course that is perfect for you" (British Council 2011 b).

Digital media is employed extensively to support the activity of English teaching and promotion. The British Council has developed a powerful interactive resource online – Learn English website (see Picture 4), "currently used by two million teachers and learners each month" (British Council 2010 a:14). The web site provides unlimited, access-free materials necessary for effective language learning and practicing, language examinations resources, and

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[4] Total income of the British Council for 2009–10 increased by nine per cent (£60 million) to £705 million, compared with last year. This increase came principally from fees and income from services, including from teaching and examinations operations, which rose by £49 million (16 per cent) to £362 million and constitutes 51% of the total budget (British Council 2010 a: 59).

programs supporting curriculum and teacher trainings. This online platform provides opportunities not only to download resources, listen to the audio podcasts and watch videos with English classes for free, but also enables users to interact with other learners and leave feedback:

> Learn English includes interactive features such as user comments, discussion forums, content rating and polls, as well as media-rich materials including podcasts, flash games and video (British Council 2011 b).

The online Learn English program is designed in the most innovative and progressive web 2.0 mode and one of the few digital activities of the British Council that truly corresponds to the demands of the contemporary society to take an active part in communication processes. Such a strong online representation of the program that appeals to young generation and English learners worldwide highlights the importance of this activity for the British Council.

In addition to general English skills the British Council has developed some programs that provide training for specific goals. For example the Peacekeeping English Project was designed to give "international peacekeepers and disaster relief workers a common language for their operations" (British Council 2008). This program, that has been active in more than 30 countries for the last five years, focuses not only on teaching English but also on "encouraging respect for human rights and democratic values" (British Council 2008).

In the framework of developing intercultural dialogue, the British Council conducts activities that can be better described as promotion and expansion of their national language in the international arena. The cultural and digital diplomacy rhetoric employs policy frame extension by communicating national core strategy as the international cultural policy affecting every society in a global community.

Fostering Development and Supporting Creative Economy

The British Council recognizes the imperative role of supporting cultural and creative industries in domestic and international strategies for economic growth and regeneration. "Their new international agendas see a pivotal role for innovation and culture in forging relationships" (British Council 2010 b:5). The programming of the Council actively supports the development of creative and knowledge economy through a number of activities in China, India, Mexico, Brazil, Nigeria and Russia, the US, and Europe (British Council 2010 b:5). The UK Creative and Knowledge Economy program is one of the core activities of the British Council that encompasses the work in the fields of arts and culture, science, higher education, innovations, and sport.

The importance of the creative economy in the national context has been enthusiastically promoted since 1997. The Department for Culture, Media and Sport actively advocated for employing creativity in the UK's economic, health, and cultural infrastructure development. Therefore, the international work of the British Council "is rooted in the vibrancy of the UK's own creative and knowledge economy." The recent downturn in the global economy has urged the UK to develop programming that allows "the UK creative and cultural sector has access to global markets and ideas" (British Council 2010 b:14).

Drawing on its extensive experiences in developing a creative economy in the country, The British Council incorporates the "the UK's aspiration to become a creative hub for the world" in its rhetoric (British Council 2010 b:5). In the framework of international activities aimed at fostering development and supporting creative economies in developing countries, the British Council actively "promotes the UK's creative excellence" and "understanding of the UK as positive influence power in the modern world" (British Council 2010 b:14).

The UK development work around the world is mostly performed by the Council in the form of "sharing of knowledge and ideas." In building trust and engagement the programs are designed to ensure "that others are not cut off from the benefits of international creative collaboration." This programming positions the UK as an international partner and "a global policy leader and practitioner" in creative economy development (British Council 2010:14). Therefore, the British Councils effectively utilises the frame of creative economy development to promote its expertise and services in economic, social, and cultural management:

> UK Creative and Knowledge Economy programme aims to enhance the UK's reputation as a source of expertise and a partner for skills development; increase the UK's contribution to international co-operation in research and innovation; enhance the UK's reputation as a leader and innovator in higher education; and position the UK as a global partner of choice (British Council 2010 b:12).

In regard to digital technologies, the national ambition of the country is to secure the UK's position "as one of the world's leading digital knowledge economies" (Department for Culture, Media and Sport 2009). The UK clearly articulates that employing digital technologies in economic initiatives aims "to make the UK one of the world's main creative capitals in the digital age" (Department for Culture, Media and Sport 2009). In recent years the UK has been concentrating on developing an effective digital framework for the creative industries. This work was mostly grounded in the belief that creative industries "can be scaled and industrialized in the same way as other successful

> "THE UK UTILIZES THE FRAME OF CREATIVE INDUSTRIES AND DEVELOPMENT SPECIFICALLY WITH AN EMPHASIS ON DIGITAL INDUSTRIES TO MOSTLY ADVERTISE ITS STRONG CREATIVE ECONOMY AND PROFESSIONAL EXPERTISE IN DEVELOPING COMMUNITIES."

high-technology or knowledge industries" (Department for Culture, Media and Sport 2009). Through the promotion of making cultural assets more digitally accessible, the UK intended to create better opportunities for the creative economy. The rhetoric of digital creative industries also emphasised business benefits to arts and cultural institutions and encouraged cultural organizations to engage with partners in experiments with new business models (Department of Culture, Media and Sport 2010).

As a result of this work, now the UK considers itself as a highly innovative country in both technology and the creative industries. Within the UK, many cultural industries and companies work "to provide leadership and ensure the UK is at the forefront of ICT development" (Department for Culture, Media and Sport 2009). The UK enthusiastically promotes its ICT sector internationally to increase trade with international customers, advance investment into the UK from the international businesses, and enhance reputation of the UK and its ICT and creative industry on the global market (Department for Culture, Media and Sport 2009). The government encourages "all sectors of the Digital Community to get involved in cross promoting the UK through the strategy to grow and enhance our digital proposition to the world" (Department for Culture, Media and Sport 2009).

In regards to digital diplomacy, the Digital Diplomacy Group was established in recent years by the Communication Directorate of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) of the UK. The aim of the Digital Diplomacy Group is "to ensure that the FCO is a 'web-savvy' organisation and to use digital diplomacy to enhance campaigns in a way that positions the FCO as the best in the world at digital diplomacy" (Foreign and Commonwealth Office 2011). The main objective of the Digital Diplomacy Group is to make the "FCO recognised as world authority on theory and practice of digital diplomacy" (Foreign and Commonwealth Office 2011). Digital diplomacy is understood as a new type of diplomacy employing the opportunities provided by the Internet. This communication medium is articulated as a new means "to listen, publish, engage, and evaluate in new

creative ways." Also digital diplomacy is considered a tool to widen reach for a variety of stakeholders and to provide a channel for direct communication with civil society, governments, and influential individuals:

> Our shift from one-way web publishing into active digital diplomacy reflects the changing way we all use the web - as a multi-way social medium as well as a source of information. We lose credibility and cannot claim to be an open organisation if we don't take part (Foreign and Common Wealth Office 2011).

The UK utilizes the frame of creative industries and development specifically with an emphasis on digital industries to mostly advertise its strong creative economy and professional expertise in developing communities. Through extension of its original policy frame, the UK promotes its national economy, services, and economic management skills to secure its leading position on the global market.

As this section demonstrates, in all five cases of frame transformations the UK cultural diplomacy discourse reflects the major international cultural strategies of the country, such as "promoting a wider knowledge of the United Kingdom" and "develop a wider knowledge of the English language (British Council 2011 a: 2). Though the diplomatic rhetoric refers to international cultural cooperation and development agenda, still much effort is focused on the national promotion.

Conclusion

This study presents research on the cultural diplomacy of the UK with a focus on how digital technologies are communicated through diplomatic discourse. The paper clearly illustrates that digital technology is promoted with a unique enthusiasm in the national context, as well as in international communication. The UK positions itself as a country that fully embraces the potentials and opportunities brought

PICTURE 5. DIGITAL DIPLOMACY WEBSITE

(AVAILABLE AT http://digitaldiplomacy.fco.gov.uk/en/)

about by new media to different dimensions of economic and cultural development. Moreover, the digital media is advertised as a tool that not only brings benefits in the domestic industries, but is communicated as a means to keep the UK stay ahead in its technological and cultural advance on the global arena. Therefore, the rhetoric of UK digital diplomacy serves to promote further the country's professionalism, excellence, and expertise. In such a way, digital technologies are communicated as very powerful tools that can serve the country to compete with other nations.

However, this research also clearly demonstrates that though the UK is a great promoter of new media, in some cases cultural diplomacy doesn't fully employ the potential of digital and new social media technologies that they provide. In many cases, the focus on cultural promotion doesn't allow the UK cultural diplomacy to transform into two-way cross-cultural cooperation and communication. Many online programs of the British Council are not designed to provide foreign audiences with the tools to contribute to the content, leave feedback, or engage with counterparts in a dialogue.

As the analysis illustrates, the British Council does use social media platforms that allow two-way interactions online but only for specific projects. For example, the Learn English website is impressively interactive and allows users to enjoy the full potentials of the cutting edge social technologies. This makes this resource even more attractive for English learners worldwide and helps the British Council to spread the

language to wider international communities. Because language learning first and foremost depends on practicing it in a native environment, the Learn English website is a perfect "soft power" tool that can help overseas audiences to master their English online. This strategic use of the social media for the core project of the British Council not only helps users to practice English, but also make them engage more with UK culture, traditions, and values which influence their perception of the country.

Overall, the UK makes a significant contribution to the international discourse on digital technologies. New media tools have a favourable image in the country and are communicated internationally as a means that can help humanity with a number of cultural and development tasks. Though the use of digital media in the UK cultural diplomacy is strategic and employs the full potential of new media through particular programs, the impulse of the UK digital diplomacy is positive and strong. However, it is important to mention that the digital divide still remains present in various economic, political, and social contexts. From the economic perspective, the share of online users who can be potentially targeted through digital diplomacy is rather high in the circle of wealthy countries with strong economies, and in many less economically developed countries the online activity of major population is significantly lower. Nevertheless, the recent report of the Pew Research Center points out that increasing online participation of people from less economically advantaged areas is only a matter of time. The research reveals that the

low level of online engagement in these countries is mainly due to the fact that they have a limited access to the Internet, rather than there being a lack of interest in online activities (Pew Research Center 2010). Though now the digital divide is indeed imposes significant constraints on the audiences diversity on the social Web, it opens up promising opportunities for future. The UK enthusiastic and encouraging promotion of digital media on the international arena helps to spread the digital industries to developing countries and rural communities reinforcing the powers of digital diplomacy in the information society.

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