

CAT 4 RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

Group 4-14

Project Reconnecting Through Dialects

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Abstract

Project RTD (Reconnecting through dialects) is an interactive and user-friendly online platform which intends to teach grandchildren how to start communicating with their grandparents in dialects so that there are less breakdowns in communication which will lead to a smoother flow of conversation without much frustrations. The platform houses 3 different PowerPoint folders for each of the three dialects available. Each folder includes an audio recording of the pronunciation of a conversation starter in that particular dialect, as well as an English translation of what that phrase's meaning is. It also includes some possible replies to conversation starters in the event of the elderly initiating a conversation with one of the starters. There is also an email to contact us should there be any problems encountered or any recommendations on how we could further improve the website to serve its users better.

1 Introduction

1.1 Rationale

As the world of languages progress on each day, it is clear to see that English is becoming more commonplace and has been the go-to language for most people these days. Gone are the days when people used to communicate in dialects, especially the most commonplace ones like Hokkien, Teochew and Cantonese. However, some grandparents are unable to keep up with the times and have constantly resorted to using the one form of communication that they are comfortable with... dialects. However, since majority of their grandchildren has never grown up in a dialect-speaking environment, there may be a constant breakdown in the conversation between these two generations given the difference in language used. This may in turn lead to frustrations on both parties' side given the lack of vocabulary one knows to fully express themselves, and possibly result in deteriorating family relationships.

1.2 Objectives

The objectives of Project Reconnecting Through Dialects were to:

- Teach grandchildren on the know-how of starting a conversation in dialect.
- Teach children, as a whole, a new dialect
- Provide a basis on how to converse in dialect

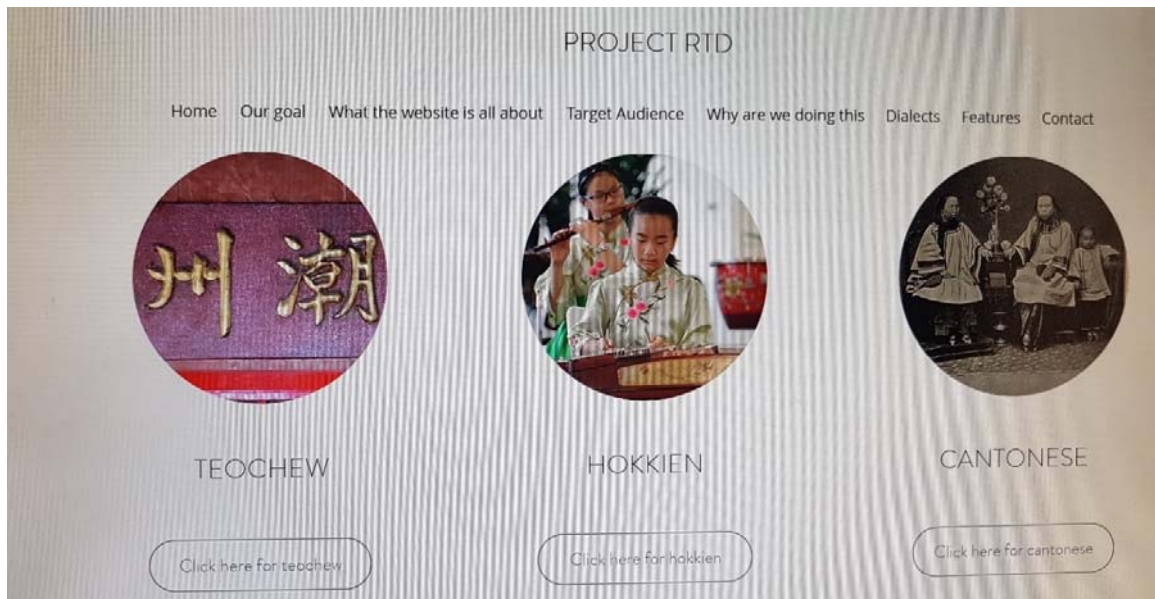
1.3 Target Audience

The target audience for this project are grandchildren, particularly those whom have issues communicating in dialect with their grandparents.

1.4 Resources

The resources created for this project was a website compromising of 3 PowerPoint folders with audio recording and English translation of a conversation starter, replies to a conversation starter and follow-ups to the starter (a.k.a continuers)





Photos of the main components of our website

2 Review

Most translation websites that we referenced before starting our own website did not really recognize dialects as a language and skipped it altogether. However, websites that did recognize a certain dialect are far and few in between and did not really provide user-friendly translations as these websites offered either a “call us” basis service or a word-for-word translation that did not really capture the true meaning of some phrases. Furthermore, all of the websites that we referenced were for translation services only, and only serve one dialect at most on a web page.

3 Methodology

3.1 Needs Analysis

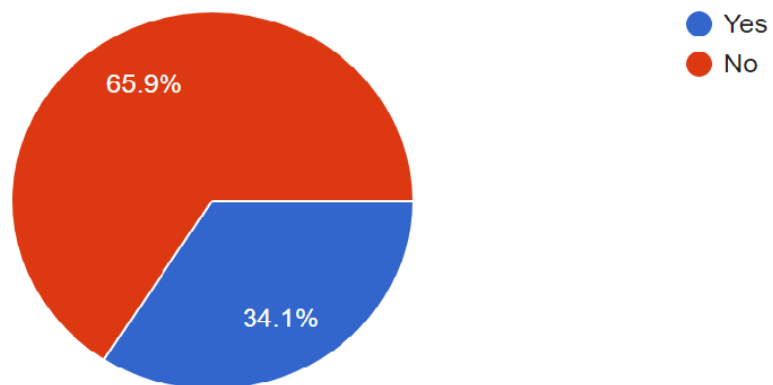
We started off the needs analysis by giving out a survey to get a rough idea on whether this project is relevant before we embarked on it. Around 70% of the respondents stated that they were unable to communicate in any dialects and around 90% stated that they thought that this was a good idea. We also interviewed some of the respondents to find out if they had ever

encountered scenarios where the knowledge of how to speak a dialect would have come in useful and how they felt when they encountered such a scenario. Their responses confirmed the relevance and feasibility of our project.

3.2 Survey Results

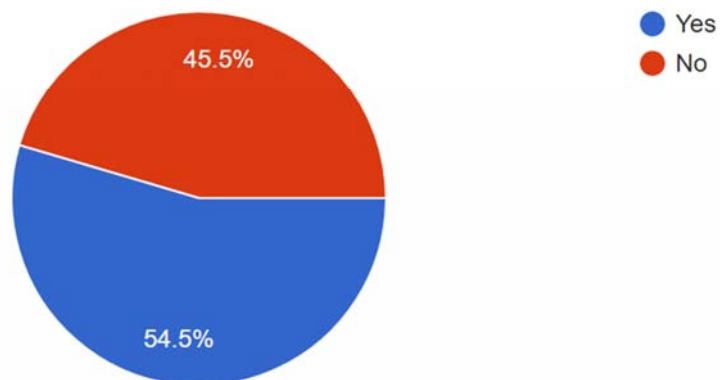
Do you know how to speak a dialect?

44 responses



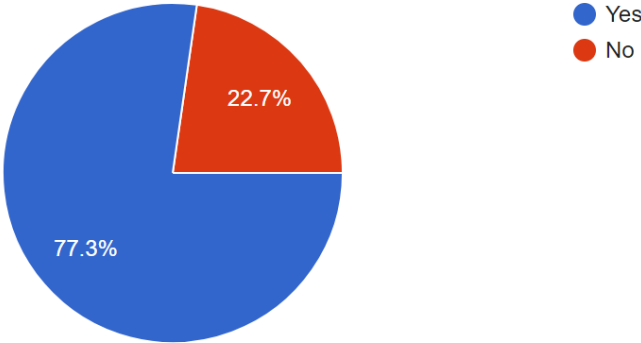
Have you ever met and instance where there was problems communicating with an elderly?

44 responses



Finally, do you think it is important to learn a dialect for communication with the elderly?

44 responses



Responses to the survey

“I couldn't speak to my relatives as they didn't know how to speak English or Chinese but only another dialect”

“When I was doing CIP during primary school at an old folks' home, I did not know how to speak dialects and this resulted in me feeling guilty and apologetic as I could not serve their needs”

Responses from interviewees about encountering a scenario when they felt the ability to speak dialect was useful

“I can understand and converse with my relatives much better”

“This is to ensure the continuity of our dialects and it is what makes us special. Besides, communication is essential in our lives.”

Responses from interviewees on their thought about the usefulness of this project

3.3 Development of Resources

We carried out a review of several websites that offer translation services and started doing up our own website. We also researched on some common conversation starters to translate so that the user will feel comfortable using that greeting/starter as it is more commonplace. After that we created PowerPoint slides for each of the three dialects with the starters. Then, we recorded audios of people who are fluent in each dialect to translate each of the starters before uploading it to the PowerPoint slides. After finalizing the slides, we uploaded it to the online platform.

3.4 Pilot Test

A pilot test was administered. As we wished for the product to be used in a relaxed setting with both the user and the elderly comfortable and able to strike up a conversation, we sent the website to other Sec 1s via social media, together with a survey to gather feedback on how we could improve the product. On the survey, participants were asked to rate their experience using our product as well as their views on how the product could be further improved to increase user satisfaction. Recommendations from a few respondents were incorporated into our product to fine-tune it. Generally, the feedback received was positive and respondents said that they felt the product was useful as a whole and some did give suggestion for us to improve which we acted on.

I think it is very useful and allows younger people to be able to communicate more easily in the older generation

Great! Easy way to learn basic dialect

It is a well thought out idea with a good purpose and sense of service to the community. It also shows awareness of current societal issues, such as the generation gap between youngsters and elderly and the language gap that may also occur

Some responses on the users' thought on our project and product

Include quizzes at the end to test their understanding

More languages

translate more words

Some feedback on how we should improve our product

4 Outcome and Discussion

As the product received positive feedback from its pilot test, we decided to only make some minor improvements to the product given the lack of time to further improve it since some features may be rather tedious to include.

4.1 Limitations

As there are too many dialect groups to choose from, we were unable to provide conversation starters for all of them hence we were limited to making a choice to provide starters for the three most commonplace dialects in Singapore, hence limiting the outreach of this project to a

handful as of now. Furthermore, due to the differences in topics that may be discussed during a conversation, we cannot really dictate how a conversation might progress on, hence we are only limited to providing the three categories of “Starting the conversation”, “Replies to the starter” and “Possible replies to those replies”, as we want the conversation to progress smoothly without any guidelines holding the conversation back.

4.2 Future Work

As mentioned, there are many improvements that can be still made to the product. We aim to include more dialects, if possible, like the Hakka dialect. We also wish to add in more choices of conversation starters as one of the feedbacks given was that the range of choice available was not wide enough. We are also working towards making it more accessible via mobile phones as one of the respondents stated that our product was not accessible via mobile devices since we are using PowerPoint and it is not supported by the devices.

5 Conclusion

All in all, Project RTD was an interesting project to undertake as we touched on dialects, the language of the past. It was fun but tiring as we spent countless hours researching on websites that were providing services in the field that we were doing on. The entire journey taught us a few valuable skills set as well as allowing us to get our first taste of what Project Work is all about. Division of labour, the ability to multitask and time management was especially important towards the exam periods to ensure that we had sufficient time to study while keeping on schedule with our project. Perseverance was crucial as we made a final push to complete the project and ensure that it is as good as possible.

References

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