

# ENHANCING CROSS-CULTURAL IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING: DIGITAL INNOVATIONS AND ITS REACTION ON COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS AND CULTURAL LEARNING

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## Abstract

As globalization advances, English has emerged as the global lingua franca. This research explores the way digital innovations and modern learning tools have impacted and transformed English language teaching into a cross-cultural learning platform beyond linguistic capability enhancement. The research concepts are built upon several theoretical frameworks; sociocultural theory, TPACK, and SAMR. The research findings are anticipated to provide insights on the role of technology and English language in enhancing cross-cultural interactions.

**Keywords:** *Globalization, English, digital tools, cross-cultural interactions.*

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## 1. Introduction

As technologies advances, the world is becoming more and more a smaller interconnected unit with diminishing boundaries. English language serves as a lingua franca that facilitates operations of such interconnected world across diversities. As of 2023, an estimated 1.5 billion people worldwide speak English either as the native or second language. This accounted for 18% of the global population (Statista, 2024). As English has attained this new role as the language that interconnects world, its form, shape, and language rules have also changed with contributions coming from various cultures and communities worldwide.

With the rapid globalization, the role of English educators has shifted beyond teaching linguistic skills to a more sophisticated sociocultural and global communication competency development. The teaching of English language plays a pivotal role in fostering cross-cultural communication (Ilahude, Inawati, & Pratolo, 2023). The advancement of technology is an important element that supports English educators to embrace this new role with more ease and competence. For example, innovations such as virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), and artificial intelligence (AI) have enhanced both the teaching and learning processes. These digital tools not only support educators to enhance linguistic skills in learners but also to enhance their cultural competencies by creating an immersive and personalized learning environment that bridges cultural divides.

Some advantages associated with these modern learning tools are their ability to create a real-life social environment within the digital world, helping learners to use their inherent communication skills in navigating these tech-created contexts, and the ability to tailor and personalize learning experiences according to the learner's background. Despite these benefits, there are some disadvantages of these modern learning tools. Some of these disadvantages are hindering the development of critical thinking skills with extreme dependence on technology, the impact of unequal access to technology, and the creation of digital divide within society.

## 2. Objectives

The current study aims to understand the impact of digital innovations on the enhancement of cross-cultural communication competencies of learners while teaching the language. It explores the way English language education redefined by modern tools such as VR, AR, and AI. The specific objectives under this aim are as follows.

- To examine the role of VR, AR, AI and similar interactive platforms in learning engagement and motivation within English language teaching.

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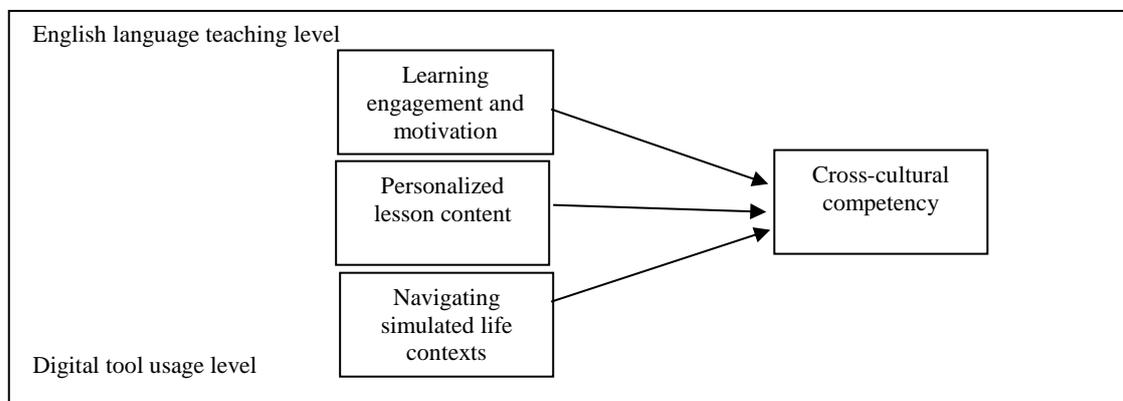
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- To assess the influence of VR, AR, AI and similar interactive platforms on developing personalized lesson content within English language teaching.
- To assess the influence of VR, AR, AI and similar interactive platforms on offering opportunities to navigate simulated life contexts.
- To examine the influence of VR, AR, AI and similar interactive platforms on enhancing the cross-cultural competency within English language teaching.

### 3. Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework of the research is built upon two theoretical models: sociocultural theory of learning and technological, pedagogical, content knowledge (TPACK) model. Sociocultural theory emphasizes that learning is a social process stimulated by interactions, dialogue, and cultural factors (Poehner & Lu, 2023). TPACK describes the importance of aligning technology with lesson content and teaching strategies for an effective learning outcome (Poehner & Lu, 2023). The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) will be used in assessing the language teaching level and approach while substitution, augmentation, modification, and redefinition (SAMR) will be used in understanding digital tool usage.

Figure 1. Conceptual framework of the research.



### 4. Methods

#### 4.1. Research onion framework

Research design describes the fundamentals associated with the research build up. One of the common frameworks associated with building the research design is research onion model. It includes six different layers; research philosophy, research approach, research strategy, choice of method, time horizon, and data collection and analysis techniques (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019). Research philosophy describes the underlying philosophy of research about truth. Current research adopts a positive research philosophy, which believes the truth is objective. It describes the underlying philosophy of the research about truth. The approach of this research is deductive as it uses existing theories in understanding the research context. Research strategy discusses the overall implementation plan of the research. There are several types of research strategies. Some of them are surveys, case studies, experiments, ethnographic studies, action reviews, and systematic reviews. The current research adopts a survey-based approach. The common methodological choices are qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods. Quantitative method uses numerical data while qualitative methods use all types of non-numerical data. Mixed method uses a combination of both these approaches. This research adopts a quantitative approach. Research can be conducted at a single point of time or across several time points. The ones conducted in a single time point are called cross-sectional research and those that involve several time points are called longitudinal research. This research adopts a cross-sectional approach.

#### 4.2. Study population

The study population consists of English language educators worldwide. They play a critical role in shaping the linguistic and cross-cultural competencies of learners. However, this population is broad and scattered globally. Therefore, the population was characterized by several features, for the purpose of this study. Table 1 elaborates these characteristics.

Table 1. Characteristics of the study population.

Characteristic	Description
1. Professional background	Educators need to attain accepted certification to teach English as a second language (ESL) or English as a foreign language (EFL)
2. Technological experience	Educators need to be exposed to the integration of digital tools into their teaching process for a minimum of one year or more. They have familiarity with using at least one or more tools out of AI, AR, VR, and similar interactive platforms.
3. Geographic and cultural diversity	Educators from multiple regions provide a broad spectrum of insights about the integration of digital tools and cultural contexts in teaching English language. Therefore, no regional differentiations were made in determining the study population.
4. Teaching levels	Educators teach English language to students at various competency levels ranging from beginner, intermediate, to competent. At the beginner and intermediate levels more focus is given on language rules and technicalities rather than emphasizing the cross-cultural contexts. The individuals at competent level focus more on cultural context compared to the other two levels. Therefore, the study population involved English language educators who are teaching the language at competent level.

In addition to the characteristics elaborated in Table 1, the educators included in the study population must currently teach English language. They also need to work with learners from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds to ensure that they are familiar with the cross-cultural communication competencies. Educators teaching subjects other than English or those who are not using any type of modern digital tools are excluded from the population.

### 4.3. Sampling framework

The study population size is difficult to estimate. Therefore, a random sample size of 150 educators was selected as the sample size. Previous research has justified that a 150-sample size is sufficient in educational research to achieve a balance between statistical validity and feasibility [Besekar, Jogdand & Naqvi, 2024]. Since no official sampling framework is available, a non-probability sampling approach, specifically convenience sampling is adopted. Social media platforms and prominent public/private/online teaching institutes will be used to identify suitable educators to be included in the sample.

### 4.4. Data collection and analysis

A questionnaire is developed as a data collection instrument which addresses both quantitative and qualitative insights on English language teaching, digital tools, and cross-cultural communication. The questionnaire will be divided into seven main sections; demographic description of the respondent, English language teaching approach, digital tools used, learning engagement and motivation, personalized lesson content, navigating simulated life contexts, and cross-cultural competency. This will be shared with the sample in the form of a Google questionnaire survey.

The data analysis process will start with a descriptive evaluation of the respondents' demographic details. Then it will assess different types of English language teaching and the extent to which digital tools are used in the process. Several Likert scales will be used to assess the relationship between variables illustrated in Figure 1. This relationship would be assessed under different levels of English language teaching and digital tool usage. A MANOVA is used for the analysis purpose.

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