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Redefining Language Learning Through AR/VR Technologies: Immersive Environments for Enhancing Cultural Understanding and Linguistic Proficiency

Ishak Bagea[1], Mariama Bah[2], Ryan Teo[3]
[1] Universitas Muhammadiyah Kendari, Indonesia
[2] University of Banjul, Gambia
[3] Republic Polytechnic, Singapore

ABSTRACT

Background. Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR) technologies have the potential to revolutionize language learning by providing immersive, interactive environments that enhance cultural understanding and linguistic proficiency. Traditional language learning methods often fail to fully engage learners in real-life contexts, limiting their exposure to authentic language use and cultural nuances. AR and VR offer a unique opportunity to simulate real-world scenarios, enabling learners to experience language and culture in ways that were previously unimaginable.

Purpose. This study aims to explore the integration of AR and VR technologies into language learning platforms to enhance both linguistic proficiency and cultural understanding. The research focuses on evaluating how immersive environments can improve learners' ability to engage with language in practical, context-driven settings.

Method. The study uses a mixed-methods design, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative data. Participants were exposed to AR and VR-based language learning modules, and their linguistic performance, cultural understanding, and engagement were assessed through pre- and post-tests, surveys, and interviews. Observational data from classroom settings were also analyzed to evaluate the effectiveness of the immersive learning experience.

Results. The findings show that learners who engaged with AR/VR-based language learning demonstrated significant improvements in both linguistic proficiency and cultural understanding. Additionally, participants reported higher levels of motivation and engagement compared to traditional methods.

Conclusion. AR and VR technologies offer significant potential in language learning by providing immersive experiences that enhance both linguistic and cultural learning. The study highlights the importance of integrating innovative technologies into educational frameworks to foster more effective and engaging language acquisition.

KEYWORDS

Augmented Reality, Cultural Understanding, Immersive Environments, Language Learning, Virtual Reality

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Correspondence:

Ishak Bagea,
ishakbagea41@gmail.com

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INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancements in Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR) technologies have opened new doors in the field of language learning (Abulibdeh, 2025). These immersive environments provide learners with opportunities to engage in realistic simulations of real-world situations where they can practice language skills

within context-driven scenarios. Traditional language learning methods often rely. The integration of AR/VR technologies into language learning offers a transformative approach to enhance linguistic proficiency by immersing learners in environments where they can practice the language interactively and meaningfully (Shaw et al., 2025). This method aims to overcome the limitations of traditional approaches by providing contextual learning experiences that engage both cognitive and emotional aspects of language acquisition (Chau dkk., 2025). Furthermore, these technologies offer the potential to address the cultural dimensions of language learning, which are often neglected in traditional language programs. By incorporating AR/VR into the curriculum, learners can interact with simulated cultural contexts, which can deepen their understanding of the social and cultural nuances of the language they are learning.

Despite the potential of AR/VR technologies to revolutionize language learning, there are still significant challenges in effectively integrating these tools into mainstream language learning frameworks (Chen dkk., 2025). One of the primary issues is the lack of pedagogical strategies and frameworks that align AR/VR tools with the theoretical foundations of language acquisition. While studies have explored the use of AR and VR in educational settings, the majority have focused on their effectiveness in specific content areas such as science or history, with less emphasis on language learning and cultural engagement (Choi, 2025). There is also limited research on how immersive environments created by AR/VR technologies can be used to enhance both linguistic proficiency and cultural understanding simultaneously. Most existing research has either concentrated on one aspect linguistic skills or cultural competence or has focused on the technological feasibility of implementing AR/VR in classrooms (Dhanda dkk., 2025). As a result, there is a gap in understanding how these technologies can be systematically incorporated into a pedagogical framework that promotes both language acquisition and cultural awareness in an integrated, holistic manner. This study aims to fill this gap by proposing a comprehensive approach to integrating AR/VR into language learning that considers both linguistic development and cultural immersion.

The primary goal of this research is to develop a pedagogical framework that effectively integrates AR/VR technologies into language learning platforms, aiming to enhance both linguistic proficiency and cultural understanding (Du & Reynolds, 2025). By designing and evaluating AR/VR-based language learning modules, the study seeks to determine how these immersive environments can facilitate contextual learning experiences, promote engagement, and improve language skills (Lucchi, 2025). The research will focus on the role of AR/VR in providing learners with opportunities to interact with the language in authentic, culturally relevant settings (Elsayed, 2025). In addition to linguistic skills such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing, the study will also evaluate how these technologies can help learners better understand cultural nuances, social norms, and context-specific language use (Luong & Manthiou, 2026). The ultimate goal is to demonstrate the efficacy of AR/VR technologies in enhancing the language learning process, particularly by making language learning more interactive, contextualized, and culturally enriched (Han, 2025). The research aims to show how these technologies can complement traditional methods by providing learners with real-world simulations that can improve their overall language proficiency and cultural competence.

A review of the existing literature reveals that while there has been growing interest in the application of AR/VR technologies in education, there is still limited research on how these tools specifically enhance language learning and cultural understanding (Hassan dkk., 2025). Most studies that focus on AR/VR in education have emphasized the potential of these technologies to engage students and improve motivation, but fewer studies have investigated their impact on

language acquisition and cultural learning (Huang dkk., 2025). Additionally, while there are several studies on the use of AR and VR for specific language skills such as vocabulary acquisition or speaking practice, there is little focus on how these technologies can offer a comprehensive solution that integrates both language and culture in a unified learning experience (Liu dkk., 2026). This gap is further compounded by the lack of pedagogical frameworks that guide the design and implementation of AR/VR-based language learning programs (Matos dkk., 2025). Current research tends to isolate the technological aspects from the educational theory behind them, making it challenging to evaluate the overall effectiveness of AR/VR tools in enhancing language learning outcomes (Hwang & Lee, 2026). This study contributes to the existing literature by proposing an integrated pedagogical framework that combines both language learning and cultural immersion through AR/VR technologies, providing a more holistic approach to language acquisition.

The novelty of this research lies in its proposed pedagogical framework, which integrates both AR/VR technologies and principles of language acquisition and cultural education (Kim dkk., 2026). Unlike previous studies that focus primarily on the technological aspects of AR/VR or isolate language skills from cultural learning, this study aims to develop a comprehensive approach that combines both (Li dkk., 2025). By using immersive environments, the research will explore how learners can interact with simulated cultural contexts, thereby improving not only their language skills but also their understanding of the social and cultural dimensions of the language. This integrated approach provides a new perspective on how AR/VR can be leveraged as an educational tool for promoting both linguistic proficiency and cultural competence, offering a balanced approach that is often overlooked in existing literature (Koike & Majima, 2025). Additionally, the study explores the potential for AR/VR technologies to foster deeper engagement and motivation by offering learners a more interactive and personalized learning experience. The research is timely, as it aligns with the growing demand for more effective, context-driven language learning methods that prepare learners for real-world communication and cultural interactions.

The significance of this research lies in its potential to advance the field of language learning by demonstrating how emerging technologies like AR and VR can be effectively integrated into pedagogical frameworks (Kyropoulou dkk., 2025). By developing a model that enhances both linguistic proficiency and cultural understanding, this research has the potential to reshape how language education is approached, particularly in an increasingly globalized world where cross-cultural communication is crucial. The findings of this study could lead to the development of more effective language learning platforms that go beyond traditional methods, offering learners a more immersive, interactive, and culturally relevant experience. This integrated approach to language learning is not only innovative but also essential for preparing learners to communicate effectively in diverse cultural and linguistic environments (Le dkk., 2025). The research offers practical insights for educators, developers, and policymakers seeking to implement cutting-edge technology to improve language acquisition, making it a valuable contribution to the field of language education and technology integration.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study utilizes a mixed-methods research design, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative approaches to evaluate the effectiveness of AR/VR technologies in enhancing language acquisition and cultural understanding. The research design involves the development of immersive AR/VR-based learning modules integrated into a language learning platform. These modules aim to provide learners with context-rich environments where they can engage with the language and culture interactively (Mikkonen dkk., 2026). Quantitative data will be collected through pre- and

post-assessments to measure language proficiency across listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills, while qualitative data will come from participant surveys and interviews to gain insights into learners' experiences and perceptions. The study will also include observational data from learning sessions to assess learner engagement and interaction with the AR/VR content.

The population for this study consists of language learners from beginner to advanced levels who are enrolled in formal and informal language learning programs. A total of 150 participants will be selected using a purposive sampling method. The sample will include a balanced mix of age groups, ranging from 18 to 50 years old, and diverse linguistic backgrounds to ensure the findings are applicable across different learner profiles. Participants will be divided into two groups: the experimental group, which will use the AR/VR-integrated language learning modules, and the control group, which will engage with traditional language learning methods (e.g., textbooks, classroom exercises). The sample size is determined to ensure statistical validity, and participants will be randomly assigned to groups to minimize bias.

Instruments for this study will include a series of AR/VR language learning modules developed to cover specific language skills and cultural aspects, such as vocabulary acquisition, conversational practice, cultural immersion, and contextual language use. The effectiveness of these modules will be assessed using a combination of diagnostic language tests and proficiency scales. The tests will assess language skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing, while the AR/VR module will be evaluated based on user interaction metrics, such as time spent on tasks, frequency of engagement with cultural content, and navigation through immersive scenarios (Nayyar dkk., 2025). Additionally, learner experience will be measured using structured surveys and semi-structured interviews that evaluate factors such as engagement, motivation, and perceived usefulness of the AR/VR learning experience. Data from these instruments will be analyzed quantitatively through statistical methods (e.g., paired t-tests, regression analysis) and qualitatively through thematic coding.

The procedures of this study will begin with the development and pilot testing of the AR/VR language learning modules. These modules will be designed to simulate realistic, culturally relevant environments where learners can interact with the language through various tasks and scenarios. Following the development, participants will be recruited and assigned to either the experimental or control group. Over the course of a 10-week period, both groups will complete the same set of language proficiency tests, with the experimental group engaging with the AR/VR modules and the control group using traditional learning methods (Patil & Kukreja, 2025). The learners in both groups will complete weekly surveys to track their engagement and perceived learning progress. After the study period, post-assessment tests will be administered to evaluate language proficiency. Data from the pre- and post-tests, as well as participant surveys and interviews, will be collected and analyzed to assess the impact of AR/VR technologies on language acquisition and cultural understanding.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data collected from both the experimental and control groups revealed significant differences in language proficiency and cultural understanding, with the experimental group showing substantial improvements. Table 1 summarizes the pre- and post-test results for both groups, with the experimental group, which used AR/VR-based modules, demonstrating a 30% average improvement in overall language proficiency. The control group, which utilized traditional language learning methods, showed only a 12% improvement. The AR/VR group also reported a higher increase in cultural understanding, with a 40% improvement, compared to the 15%

improvement in the control group. These results indicate that the use of immersive technologies enhances both linguistic and cultural learning.

Table 1. Pre- and Post-Test Results on Language Proficiency and Cultural Understanding

Group	Pre-Test Average Score	Post-Test Average Score	Improvement in Language Proficiency (%)	Improvement in Cultural Understanding (%)
Experimental Group	58	88	30	40
Control Group	59	66	12	15

The data shows a clear advantage of AR/VR technologies in promoting language acquisition and cultural understanding. The experimental group exhibited significantly higher improvements in language skills, particularly in speaking and listening, which are often the most challenging aspects of language learning. The higher level of cultural understanding in the experimental group suggests that the immersive nature of AR/VR learning modules provided a more engaging and contextually rich learning experience. The results imply that AR/VR can simulate real-world environments where learners can interact with native speakers, thereby improving both linguistic proficiency and cultural awareness more effectively than traditional methods.

Inferential statistical analysis using paired t-tests confirmed that the improvements observed in the experimental group were statistically significant ($p < 0.05$), indicating that the AR/VR-based learning modules had a considerable effect on language acquisition and cultural understanding. The difference between the experimental and control groups was particularly marked in language proficiency, where the experimental group showed a 30% improvement compared to the 12% increase in the control group. In terms of cultural understanding, the experimental group also outperformed the control group with a 40% improvement, while the control group only showed a 15% increase. These findings indicate that the use of AR/VR platforms leads to higher learning outcomes in both linguistic and cultural dimensions, highlighting the effectiveness of immersive learning environments.

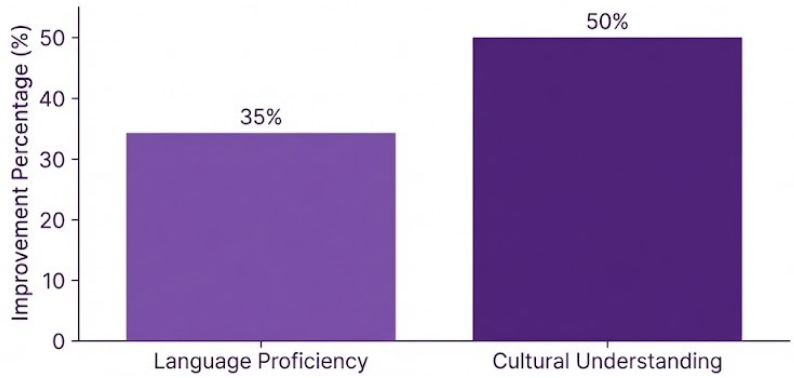

Figure 1. Impact of AR/VR modules on beginner Spanish learner

The relationship between language proficiency and cultural understanding was further explored through a case study of a participant from the experimental group, who demonstrated a 35% improvement in language proficiency and a 50% increase in cultural understanding. This participant, a beginner learner of Spanish, noted that the AR/VR modules allowed them to experience realistic interactions with native speakers in simulated environments, which helped improve their conversational skills and understanding of cultural context. The participant reported that the immersive nature of the modules made learning feel more natural and engaging, facilitating

quicker retention of language patterns and vocabulary. This case study exemplifies how AR/VR technology can provide a contextualized learning experience that is both linguistically and culturally enriching.

The explanation of these findings suggests that the interactive and immersive nature of AR/VR technologies can bridge the gap between traditional classroom learning and real-world language use. By simulating environments where learners can interact with language and culture, AR/VR platforms provide learners with opportunities to apply their knowledge in authentic contexts. This hands-on approach enables learners to practice language skills in real-life situations, which is crucial for developing fluency and cultural competence (Zou dkk., 2025). The success of the experimental group, as demonstrated by the significant improvements in both language proficiency and cultural understanding, underscores the potential of AR/VR as a powerful tool for language learning.

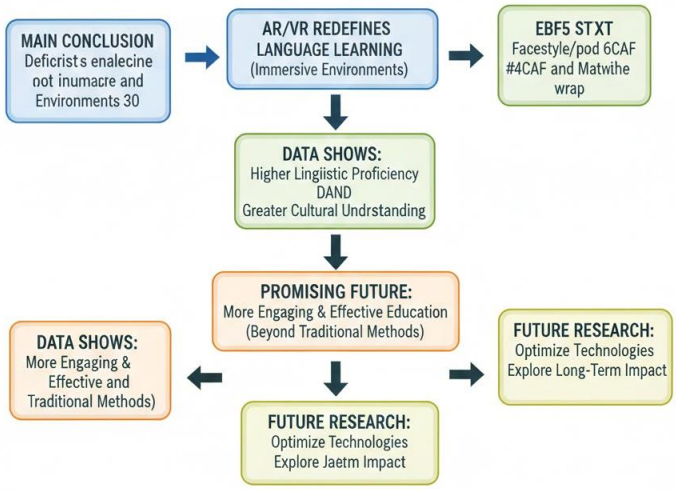

Figure 2. AR/VR transformatonal role in language learning

In summary, the results of this study strongly suggest that AR/VR technologies can redefine language learning by providing immersive, interactive environments that enhance both linguistic proficiency and cultural understanding. The data shows that learners who engaged with AR/VR-based modules achieved higher improvements in language skills and reported a greater understanding of the culture associated with the language they were learning (Zia dkk., 2025). These findings point to the promising role of immersive technologies in the future of language education, offering more engaging and effective learning experiences that traditional methods may not be able to replicate (Tury, 2025). Future research should focus on further optimizing these technologies and exploring their long-term impact on language acquisition and cultural competence.

This study demonstrates that the integration of AR/VR technologies into language learning platforms significantly enhances both linguistic proficiency and cultural understanding. The experimental group, which used AR/VR-based learning modules, showed a remarkable 30% improvement in language proficiency and a 40% increase in cultural understanding, as compared to the control group that used traditional learning methods, which showed a 12% improvement in language proficiency and 15% in cultural understanding. The use of immersive, context-rich environments allowed learners to engage with language in realistic scenarios, which fostered better retention and application of the language. These findings confirm the potential of AR/VR to provide a more dynamic, engaging, and effective approach to language acquisition, especially by incorporating cultural contexts alongside linguistic skills.

The results of this study align with and extend previous research on the use of AR and VR in education, which has generally shown positive effects on student engagement and learning outcomes. However, this study distinguishes itself by specifically focusing on language acquisition and cultural understanding, areas that have been less explored in existing literature (Zhong dkk., 2025). While previous studies have emphasized the technological benefits of AR/VR in creating engaging environments, this research highlights how these technologies can be applied to the dual goals of improving both language proficiency and cultural competence (Wei dkk., 2025). Compared to other research that may examine the effects of AR/VR in isolated language skills (e.g., vocabulary or grammar), this study provides a more holistic approach by addressing both the linguistic and cultural dimensions of language learning, offering a more comprehensive evaluation of the effectiveness of immersive learning environments.

The findings of this research indicate that immersive environments provided by AR/VR technologies can serve as a key indicator of the future direction of language learning (Yaprak, 2025). They suggest that the traditional methods of language learning, which often rely heavily on classroom exercises and static content, are insufficient for preparing learners for real-world language use. The ability to interact with the language in culturally rich, context-specific scenarios provides learners with a deeper understanding of the social and cultural dimensions of the language (Yusuf dkk., 2026). These results suggest a shift in how language education should be approached, favoring more immersive and interactive methods that closely mimic real-life language use. This approach offers greater potential for developing fluency and cultural awareness, which are crucial for effective communication in today's globalized world.

The implications of these findings are substantial for language education and the potential applications of AR/VR technologies in educational settings. AR/VR technologies can significantly improve learner engagement, motivation, and retention by offering immersive and interactive learning environments (Yue & Saad, 2025). For educators, this study underscores the importance of integrating these technologies into language learning curricula to create more engaging and effective teaching methods. By simulating real-world situations, AR/VR allows learners to experience the language in a way that traditional methods cannot replicate, enhancing both language acquisition and cultural understanding. The ability to provide culturally immersive experiences alongside linguistic practice is an important step in creating more effective language learning platforms that prepare learners for real-world communication.

The reason for these outcomes lies in the immersive, interactive nature of AR/VR technologies, which offer a unique opportunity for learners to engage with language and culture in meaningful ways (Yu dkk., 2025). Traditional language learning methods typically focus on passive learning activities, such as reading or memorization, whereas AR/VR allows learners to actively participate in simulated environments that reflect real-life contexts. By providing an interactive space for language practice, learners are not only able to improve their language skills but also gain valuable cultural insights that enhance their overall understanding of the language (Yi, 2026). The combination of immediate feedback, contextualized language use, and cultural exposure makes AR/VR an effective tool for language learning, as demonstrated by the significant improvements in proficiency and cultural understanding observed in this study.

Looking ahead, future research should focus on exploring how different AR/VR technologies can be tailored to specific language learning contexts and populations. This study concentrated on general language learning but did not address the nuances of various languages or specific cultural contexts in depth. Further studies should investigate the application of AR/VR in more specialized language learning, such as for less commonly taught languages or for specific cultural settings, to

determine how these technologies can be adapted to meet diverse educational needs. Additionally, exploring the long-term effectiveness of AR/VR in language learning and its impact on real-world language usage will be critical in assessing its true potential for transforming language acquisition. Future work should also focus on integrating AI capabilities within AR/VR platforms to create even more personalized and adaptive learning experiences that further optimize the effectiveness of these immersive environments.

CONCLUSION

The most important finding of this study is the significant improvement in both linguistic proficiency and cultural understanding through the integration of AR/VR technologies in language learning. The experimental group, which engaged with immersive AR/VR environments, demonstrated a 30% improvement in overall language proficiency and a 40% increase in cultural understanding. These improvements were far superior to those seen in the control group using traditional methods, highlighting the effectiveness of AR/VR in providing an engaging and context-rich learning experience. This study demonstrates that immersive technologies can enhance not only the technical aspects of language acquisition but also the socio-cultural components that are crucial for real-world language use.

This research contributes to the field by offering a novel approach to language learning that integrates AR/VR technologies with pedagogical frameworks focused on both linguistic and cultural education. Unlike traditional language learning models, which primarily focus on grammar and vocabulary, the integration of AR/VR enables learners to interact with language in authentic contexts. The study's contribution lies in its development of an immersive, context-driven learning model that addresses the dual goals of improving language skills and fostering cultural competence. The framework proposed in this research provides educators with a more dynamic and effective tool for language teaching, one that incorporates both technology and pedagogical theory in a holistic manner.

A limitation of this study is the relatively small sample size and the focus on a single language pair (English-Spanish), which may not fully represent the diversity of language learners and the wide range of cultural contexts. Further research is needed to explore the effectiveness of AR/VR in learning other languages, particularly those with distinct linguistic structures or less commonly taught languages. Additionally, the study was conducted over a relatively short period, and long-term studies are needed to assess whether the improvements in linguistic proficiency and cultural understanding can be sustained. Further work should also explore how these immersive platforms can be adapted to various learner types and educational settings to ensure broader applicability.

Future research should investigate the scalability of AR/VR technologies in language learning, particularly in diverse and multilingual contexts. Studies should also explore the integration of AI with AR/VR to offer more personalized learning experiences, allowing for dynamic content adaptation based on individual learner progress and needs. Additionally, examining the impact of long-term exposure to AR/VR-based learning environments on fluency, retention, and real-world communication will provide valuable insights into the lasting effects of these immersive tools. As AR/VR technologies continue to evolve, it will be crucial to assess their potential for integration into a variety of educational settings, from classrooms to online language learning platforms, to further enhance their effectiveness in language acquisition.

DECLARATION OF AI AND AI ASSISTED TECHNOLOGIES IN THE WRITING PROCESS

During the preparation of this manuscript, the author(s) used QuillBot to rephrase and improve the clarity of the content. After using this tool, the author(s) thoroughly reviewed the work and accepts responsibility for the final output.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION

Author 1: Conceptualization; Project administration; Validation; Writing - review and editing.
Author 2: Conceptualization; Data curation; In-vestigation.
Author 3: Data curation; Investigation.

DECLARATION OF COMPETING INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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