

REVIEW

Virtual Exchange in Higher Education: Emerging Discussions and Recommended Practices

Luciana Cabrini Simoes Calvo ^{1*} , Angela Alonso ² , Robert O'Dowd ² , Kyria Rebeca Finardi ³ 

¹ Department of Modern Languages, State University of Maringá, Maringá 87020-900, Brazil

² Department of Modern Philology, University of León, 24071 León, Spain

³ Department of Languages, Culture and Education, Federal University of Espírito Santo, Vitória 29075-910, Brazil

ABSTRACT

As a powerful catalyst to internationalize higher education institutions, advancing strategies of internationalization at home (IaH) and internationalization of the curriculum (IoC), virtual exchange (VE) has played a significant role in the development of participants' intercultural, linguistic, digital and transversal skills as well as in Global Citizenship Education. Although it has been integrated into many undergraduate and graduate programs across the globe, its successful implementation requires strategic planning and informed pedagogical considerations. Drawing on recent scholarship as well as on our own research and accumulated practice in VE, this paper revises current and emergent discussions offering recommendations for its implementation in different fields of knowledge. The discussion afforded in the paper considers the following aspects of VE: i) preparing students for intercultural encounters; ii) language use and communication in multilingual, lingua-franca, and translanguaging environments; iii) task design and assessment aligned with collaborative and action-oriented pedagogies; iv) digital tools, artificial intelligence (AI) and digital/AI literacy; v) challenges and critical considerations for equity, inclusion and Global South participation. By addressing those issues and providing pedagogical insights and strategies, the paper contributes to the ongoing discussion of how VE can support the internationalization of higher education in a more informed, engaged and critical way.

Keywords: Virtual Exchange; Internationalization; Higher Education; Recommended Practices

*CORRESPONDING AUTHOR:

Luciana Cabrini Simoes Calvo, Department of Modern Languages, State University of Maringá, Maringá 87020-900, Brazil; Email: icsimoes@uem.br

ARTICLE INFO

Received: 13 March 2026 | Revised: 10 June 2026 | Accepted: 29 June 2026 | Published Online: 10 July 2026

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30564/jiep.v9i2.13299>

CITATION

Calvo, L.C.S., Alonso, A., O'Dowd, R., et al., 2026. Virtual Exchange in Higher Education: Emerging Discussions and Recommended Practices. *Journal of International Education and Practice*. 9(2): 16–32. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30564/jiep.v9i2.13299>

COPYRIGHT

Copyright © 2026 by the author(s). Published by Bilingual Publishing Group. This is an open access article under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International (CC BY-NC 4.0) License (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>).

1. Introduction

Virtual Exchange (VE), defined as a broad term to refer to various types of sustained online intercultural collaboration between groups of students from different contexts, integrated into their educational programmes and mediated by teachers or facilitators^[1], has undergone a significant transformation in the last decade. It has moved from a niche practice implemented by a small group of language educators to a recognized pedagogical format embraced by different areas in higher education institutions across the globe. Recent publications (2020–2025)^[1–5] show that VE now plays a central role in advancing Global Citizenship Education (GCE)^[2], Internationalization at Home (IaH)^[4] and the Internationalization of the Curriculum (IoC)^[5], supporting the development of students' intercultural, linguistic, digital, and transversal skills^[1]. VE's expansion accelerated during and after the COVID-19 pandemic^[3], when institutions worldwide were compelled to adopt, refine and scale virtual projects of international engagement to substitute physical mobility during the social distancing measures. Today, VE is not only an alternative to mobility but also a catalyst for more equitable, critical and sustainable forms of internationalization.

As highlighted in O'Dowd^[6], the field now faces unprecedented challenges and opportunities. VE partnerships increasingly involve Global North–South collaboration projects with institutions in conflict zones, exchanges among highly mobile and internationally experienced students as well as with those who face challenges for international travel and access to digital resources. Moreover, it is possible to observe more VEs that make use of pedagogical frameworks that emphasize global citizenship, social justice and active engagement with transnational issues. These shifts demand more critical approaches^[7] to VE design that foreground equity, linguistic justice^[8], trauma-informed engagement, and meaningful impact beyond mere exposure to cultural difference. VE has therefore reached a critical juncture: its mainstreaming has expanded in reach, but also revealed ethical, political and structural tensions^[9] that must be addressed if it is to remain transformative.

At the same time, emerging scholarship and practice in VE across the Global South bring new perspectives that challenge traditional patterns of Western-North-centric leadership, knowledge production and linguistic dominance^[4]. Although much has been written about the importance of

integrating Global North and Global South perspectives, VE scholarship still tends to be disproportionately authored from the Global North^[7] despite meritable exceptions^[4]. This paper contributes to shifting this imbalance by integrating authentic practice examples, research insights, and pedagogical frameworks developed in both geopolitical regions, particularly those stemming from Brazil (with the first author and last author) and Spain.

The perspectives brought to bear in this paper foreground multilingual approaches, translanguaging, critical digital literacy, and the situated nature of intercultural encounters, expanding the theoretical lenses through which VE is conceptualized and implemented. Taken together, these themes contribute to the discussion on more equitable, critical, context-sensitive and plural approaches to VE.

In contrast to essentialist models that see culture as fixed, stable and nationally bounded, intercultural encounters in VE are now approached as dynamic, negotiated and relational processes, informed by concepts such as “positionality”^[10], “locus of enunciation”^[11] and “Third Space”^[12] frameworks. Language is increasingly understood as a social, multimodal, and translanguaged practice, rather than as a static system. Task design has moved beyond information exchange into collaborative, action-oriented projects with the potential for decolonizing knowledge with glocal impact^[13]. Digital literacy has expanded into critical digital and AI literacy^[14,15], requiring students and digital users to reflect on how technologies mediate communication, power and knowledge.

At the same time, these innovations coexist with significant tensions^[4,6]: structural inequalities in North–South partnerships; linguistic hierarchies in lingua franca and English as a medium of education communication; risks and ethical dilemmas when working with conflict zones; institutional constraints; and growing challenges in sustaining student motivation in contexts where international exposure is no longer novel. Such complexities require deliberate pedagogical choices and informed mentoring so that VE remains equitable, inclusive and meaningful.

Having outlined the panorama above, this article reviews these emerging discussions and, based on recent research and accumulated practice, proposes a set of evidence-based recommendations for VE implementation across different fields of knowledge. The recommendations draw mainly on our own extensive experience in VE coordination and

participation in Global North and Global South contexts. In addition, they are informed by a substantial body of literature that enables comparison and critical reflection. This literature includes journal articles, book chapters, handbooks, doctoral theses and reports. Recently published research was prioritized due to the rapidly growing field of VE and most sources are internationally oriented. These materials were gathered from online platforms through particular web searches and complemented by a set of previously read texts. Accordingly, the recommendations are structured around five central dimensions:

1. Preparing students for intercultural encounters;
2. Language use and communication in multilingual, lingua franca, and translanguaging environments;
3. Task design and assessment aligned with collaborative, critical and action-oriented pedagogies;
4. Digital tools, AI integration and critical digital/AI literacy;
5. Challenges and critical considerations for equity, inclusion and Global South participation.

By articulating these dimensions and offering concrete pedagogical insights and strategies, the paper contributes to ongoing debates about how VE can support more just, multilingual and globally engaged higher education systems. Ultimately, it argues that VE, when designed critically and collaboratively, can be a powerful tool for transforming internationalization practices and amplifying underrepresented voices in global academic ecosystems.

2. Emerging Discussion and Recommended Practices

This section addresses emerging discussion on VE, focusing on the following topics: i) intercultural encounters; ii) language use and communication; iii) task design and assessment; iv) digital tools, AI and literacy; v) critical considerations and challenges. After exploring each dimension, suggestions and pedagogical recommendations are provided for VE practitioners and coordinators.

2.1. Intercultural Encounters

One of the key elements of VE is the intercultural aspect of the interactions among participants. Interculturality

can be seen as a dynamic and relational process focusing on the negotiated construction of meaning among culturally diverse individuals^[16,17]. In the context of intercultural collaboration, it is essential for participants to understand and appreciate the similarities and differences between their own culture and others, as well as to recognize how cultural, social and educational backgrounds can potentially shape the encounter. Reflecting on the concept of “positionality” or “locus of enunciation”^[11] may help them acknowledge from where they speak/write as well as how this position can impact the way they see and understand the world. In this sense, in intercultural encounters, participants will also see their partners not as representatives of one specific culture/country but as individuals with different backgrounds. This can challenge the biases and stereotypes one may bring to the interaction. It is important to highlight the richness of these encounters to experience cultures as complex and dynamic systems whose boundaries are fluid and continuously co-constructed and transformed^[17,18]. This discussion about culture and interculturality in VEs can pave the way for students to become global citizens who apply this knowledge and skill in order to actively engage in improving their glocal contexts^[1].

The aforementioned considerations bring us to the notion of “Third Space”^[12], understood as a safe environment where cultural differences can be negotiated, stereotypes questioned, critical reflection fostered and reality can be seen from an outsider’s perspective^[8,19,20]. This space can foster a democratic environment where everyone’s knowledge can be considered and valued.

It is important to note that there is no single way to promote interculturality and global citizenship in VE. Helm^[17] presents the following distinct approaches that can also be combined in some VEs: Comparative; Challenge-based and Dialogue-based. In the Comparative approach, as its name suggests, there is usually a focus on the comparison of “cultural products, practices and/or processes”^[17] (p. 24), developing participants’ cultural knowledge, attitudes and linguistic skills. This can, however, reinforce the ideology of one nation/one language, bringing a binary approach to culture and simplifying the diverse and multifaceted nature of individuals into single, uniform national identities. The Challenge-based approach addresses global issues and challenges in a way that participants can understand their role

and responsibility in society as well as the importance of collaborative work and solutions^[17]. When working with topics such as environmental crisis, global health or poverty, students can gain deeper knowledge about these issues and learn about their impact on people from different contexts. Nevertheless, as outlined by the author, this approach may romanticize or oversimplify difference, prioritizing problem-solving over meaningful interpersonal exchange. A further concern involves who defines the problems and who proposes solutions, as well as whose knowledge is included or excluded. There is a risk of “reproducing colonial dynamics (...) where students in the western world/global north are tasked with finding solutions to problems in the global south”^[17] (p. 48). Finally, the dialogue-based approach focuses on active listening to promote understanding among diverse groups or those in conflict. According to the author, the tensions that emerge should not be avoided but seen as a transformative part of the intercultural conversation. This approach brings a rich opportunity for participants to position themselves and share knowledge about their experiences^[17]. The limitation has to do with the language of the interaction and issues related to access, power and hegemonies.

After discussing these approaches, Helm^[17] advocates engagement with interculturality from a “more critical, political, and decolonial perspective”. Criticality^[21], thus, is central to reflect on one’s contexts and assumptions as well as those of others, by encouraging learners to analyze “the relationships among perspectives, language, power, social groups and social practices”^[21] (p. 49). This critical perspective on education as a driver of social change is inspired by the Critical Pedagogy framework developed by Paulo Freire^[22,23] who emphasized the political dimension of education as a means of empowering learners to challenge the status quo, take action in the world and transform their realities.

Recommended Practice

- A key recommendation for VE practice is the delivery of Pedagogical Mentoring (PM)^[24] focused on intercultural encounters. This PM involves supporting students before, during, and after the VE for more successful intercultural encounters. This support can include:
 - Providing students with a cultural context regarding the participants’ backgrounds, as it is impor-

tant to acquire informed knowledge about the other context. Exploring websites and other resources to gather and compare information about the cultures involved in the VE, and encouraging an open discussion, are also great opportunities for this joint examination. Suggested websites are Dollar Street (<https://www.gapminder.org/dollar-street>); Cultural Atlas (<https://culturalatlas.sbs.com.au/>) and The Culture Factor (<https://www.theculturefactor.com/>).

- Teachers are also encouraged to raise awareness of culture beyond nation and territory since “people belong to and identify with diverse groups and communities, not just a nation-state”^[17] (p. 35).

Facilitators are recommended to incorporate authentic input resources that prompt students to challenge and question singular ways of seeing and understanding the world, avoiding the reinforcement of stereotypes. One resource that could be used to explore this topic is the TED Talk “The danger of a single story”, by the writer Chimamanda Adichie (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D9Ihs241zeg>). This TED Talk as well as the Dollar Street website have been used as one of the materials of the BRASUIS (Brazil and Switzerland) VE^[2] to prepare tasks for the students.

- It is also important to recognize the situatedness of the VE and the interactions in a way that fosters a Third Space and the team’s culture. Taking this into account, it is paramount to respect student groups’ intercultural dynamics and norms and be interculturally sensitive, especially as regards the topics they want to address (including those beyond the focus of the VE) as well as the controversial questions they want to ask.
- Teachers can also encourage students to go beyond the surface part of their interaction in a way that promotes critical engagement with their partners, “by creating spaces where they are safe to analyse and experiment with other forms of seeing/thinking and being/relating to one another”^[21] (p. 49). This involves the establishment of bonds with their partners in a way that they can feel comfortable, valued and respected.
- It is relevant to offer students strategies or collaboratively develop them, to help facilitate effective collaboration in intercultural teams (e.g., when there is uneven

participation; lack of responsibility; disrespectful comments).

- Discussing critical incidents through sociopragmatic/sociocultural examples is also an effective way for students to analyze and reflect on the cultural situation described.

2.2. Language Use and Communication

VE interactions often take place in one or more foreign languages and participants' views of language can significantly impact the way they engage in communication. Rather than conceiving language as an enclosed system (a structuralist idea), viewing it as a social practice^[25] underlies the ongoing communication in online collaboration. In VE, meaning is continually negotiated and co-constructed with interlocutors, as language is action^[26]. It emerges through interaction and is shaped by its context. In line with this, Jordão^[27] explains that this perspective entails an ongoing openness to negotiation and effort both to understand others and to be understood. As a result of this, intelligibility is seen as contextual and situated, emerging from specific communicative interactions rather than being predetermined.

Building on this view of language in foreign language interaction, particularly English, the English as a lingua franca (ELF) perspective emphasizes the situatedness of interactions, the negotiation of meaning, adaptation, cooperativity, creativity, accommodation, solidarity and intelligibility as key features of intercultural communication^[28,29]. For Kohn^[29], in a general way, successful ELF communication has to do with "the speakers' ability to understand and mean more than what is 'encoded' by the words and structures used" (p. 15). Pragmatic competencies/behaviors and communicative appropriateness are emphasized by Godwin-Jones^[28] as characteristic of ELF exchanges.

Given that most ELF interactions happen among bilingual speakers who can draw on their first language as a resource and that online settings offer additional multimodal and non-linguistic resources that contribute to meaning-making^[30,31], the notion of translanguaging is also useful to understand communication in VE. Translanguaging^[32] can be understood as the use of semiotic, linguistic and multimodal repertoire and resources that bilingual speakers rely on to make meaning and communicate in their interactions. It is one of the key elements of Critical Virtual Exchange

(CVE^[33]) to promote inclusion and equity. Recent research results^[34-36] demonstrate that translanguaging practices are growing in VE initiatives, offering participants the opportunity to navigate through communication in a wide range of ways. In VE, teachers and facilitators can provide opportunities for students to activate or expand their repertoire by planned pedagogical translanguaging activities^[37]. These can foster the development of multilingual speakers and raise awareness of the diverse nature of communication in these intercultural contexts.

It is also relevant to explore how intercomprehension operates in VE. The notion of intercomprehension is related to how speakers use their first language to understand other languages they have not learned. A VE approach that gives attention to intercomprehension can help participants to build on mutual intelligibility to support communication and comprehension without requiring fluency in the target language^[2].

Recommended Practice

- Pedagogical mentoring^[24] for language issues is also suggested here as a tool to raise students' awareness of the nature of communication in VE contexts. In this case, pedagogical mentoring can involve analyzing critical incidents, vignettes or VE excerpts involving language use. These incidents and excerpts could bring aspects related to:

- Negotiation of meaning;
- Accommodation and other pragmatic strategies;
- Creative uses of language;
- Intelligibility and accents.

A common situation that teachers can address in multicultural VEs is how learners initially feel and react to different accents. This vignette, created by the authors based on their previous experience in mentoring VE groups, together with the excerpts below from VE final reports could be explored with the students before the exchange:

"In a VE with participants from different nationalities and countries, a student reported her difficulties in comprehending her colleagues' accents during their first interactions. What was a difficulty at first became a new skill and a rich opportunity to explore accents diversity, opening up the experience to new and authen-

tic ways of communication in international settings.”

The following excerpts from VE final reports can also be used to exemplify and discuss with students.

One of the main difficulties was understanding different accents. For example, some French and Spanish accents were unfamiliar to me at first, and I had to ask them to repeat what they said. Luckily, everyone in the group was patient and supportive. Sometimes, when someone struggled to understand, another group member would help clarify, which created a collaborative and respectful atmosphere (STUDR3_83) (From a lingua franca VE coordinated by the University of León in 2025).

Also it helped me a lot to understand foreign accents better, which is something I didn't have much chance before, because in academic contents or movies there are foremost native speakers talking (STUDR3_1) (From a lingua franca VE coordinated by the University of León in 2025).

- Teachers can also provide examples (or collaboratively construct those examples with students) of specific language use or ready-made expressions for VE or online communication-related situations. For instance, they can organize a group glossary with examples of expressions for the following situations: interrupting your colleague in a polite way; agreeing and disagreeing with

your partners; asking for clarification; among others. O'Dowd^[6] also suggests “supplying subject-specific vocabulary lists and expressions relevant to meeting topics, and creating structured task sheets for each weekly working group session that outline discussion topics and provide learners with a sense of security and organisation” (p. 6). Short workshops previous to the VE on pragmatic strategies such as clarification requests, paraphrasing, turn-taking, among others, and cultural norms in communication and interaction could also be helpful.

- This video, by English to Excel (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PLhAzAymMsY>), titled “40 English Phrases You Need for Online Meetings”, offers students useful ready-made sentences and expressions that can be used in online meetings.
- This is an example of a glossary with useful ready-made expressions for students to use in video conferences. It can be produced by teachers or developed by students throughout the VE or in the introductory sessions. **Figure 1** below shows an example of a layout created by ChatGPT 5.2 considering the ready-made expressions provided by one of the authors. These expressions were previously used as part of pedagogical mentoring by the author in VE initiatives.



Figure 1. Sample glossary for video conferences.

- Another recommended practice is to encourage students to use all their linguistic and semiotic repertoire to communicate. Teachers can design tasks that require the use of multiple resources, such as combining oral and written texts with other forms of meaning-making (e.g., images, memes, screenshots, short videos, captions, photos, etc.). This would allow students to communicate in richer ways, supporting translanguaging practices within VE^[7].
- Using AI or automatic translation tools for students to follow the synchronous meetings with subtitles and have access to written summaries/reports/transcripts of the meetings to be read at their own pace and time^[6] can also be a strategy.
- Finally, it is important to empower students to be confident users of ELF. This can be done by working with different online materials that show people from different contexts and nationalities using the language in ways that express their agency and identity.

To illustrate the recommended practice of working with language-related excerpts, we take the following example from the Master's thesis developed by Silva^[38] (**Figure 2**). He presents this negotiation of meaning in a VE interaction among Brazilian, French and Taiwanese students:

Excerto 33 [Excerpt 33]	
1	BR-G1: I remember I went to to France some many years ago and I spent New Year's Eve there with a friend and we ate something very similar but it was really like something like this ...
2	FR-G1: [yes]
3	BR-G1: [that you melt the cheese on the top of this like this ((faz gestos com a mão como se estivesse derramando algo)) [BR-G1 makes gestures with his hands as if spilling something]
4	FR-G1: <i>la raclette?</i> ((risos)) [FR-G1 laughs]
5	BR-G1: yes that's it ((risos)) oh my god so good [BR-G1 laughs]
6	FR-G1: ((risos)) yes it is [FR-G1 laughs]
7	TW1-G1: can you type it can you type the word?
8	FR-G1: okay ((digita no chat)) so <i>la raclette</i> it's I think it's typical from France and it's you have many <i>charcuterie</i> you have potatoes too and you put um cheese on it it smells melted cheese on it [FR-G1 types in the chat]
9	BR-G1: it's amazing
10	FR-G1: ((risos)) yes it is amazing [FR-G1 laughs]
11	BR-G1: ((risos)) I remember when I came back to Brazil I I arrived in Brazil when I was I need to find this in Brazil like I can't survive and it was amazing it's really good
12	TW1-G1: (parece ter pesquisado a imagem na internet)) oh I see it's a kind of cheese but melted [TW1-G1 seems to be searching for the image on the internet]
13	FR-G1: [yes]
14	BR-G1: [yes]
15	TW1-G1: I'm so hungry now ((todos riem)) [Everybody laughs]

Fonte: Transcrição da interação do grupo 1 (primeiro encontro, minuto 49:47)

[Transcription of Group 1's interaction]

Figure 2. Negotiation of meaning in a VE interaction analyzed by Silva^[38].

Source: Reproduced from Silva^[38] (p. 112), with translation of Portuguese words added in blue.

By using this example as PM for the VE, teachers can illustrate the different resources the students used (gestures, writing the word in the chat, looking for an image of the word on the internet) to negotiate meaning and express their ideas - a stance of translanguaging. Silva^[38], in his analysis, mentions the strategy of “repetition” to ensure alignment with what was said before (here FR-G1 repeats what BR-G1 said about the way to prepare “la raclette”). In this excerpt,

we can also see that the French speaker uses some words in his first language and opts to explain their meaning to his colleagues.

2.3. Task Design and Assessment

A key feature of effective task design and VE structure is the scaffolding of student collaboration. O'Dowd

and Ware^[39] recommend gradually increasing task demands, beginning with introductory activities to build rapport, followed by cultural comparison and analysis tasks as the core of the exchange, and concluding with collaborative, goal-oriented product creation. This progressive structure supports learners' development from surface-level interaction towards deeper, meaningful intercultural collaboration, which is essential for students to understand other cultural perspectives and produce joint outcomes that can have an impact in their contexts^[1]. Although information exchange tasks are important in the beginning stages of the VE as they can help students to get to know each other and create bonds as a team, O'Dowd^[1] further highlights the importance of designing tasks that go beyond this. By providing examples of tasks that involve developing joint products relevant to students' contexts, the author points out key outcomes of this joint work: students work together, propose ideas, reach consensus, analyze and contrast information, and see themselves as active citizens when working on products that can contribute to both local and global communities.

Assessment of the task and project outcomes is key to address students' needs and problems, and to improve the planning and implementation of the VE^[40]. All partners should collaboratively define the purpose and objective of the assessment to ensure a shared understanding of its relevance and procedures, even if their specific practices differ^[40]. Dooly^[41] argues that as VE approaches have been embracing a focus on situated, learner-centered social practices, assessment should also be in line with this collaborative conception and nature of the VE. Thus, assessment designs that include peer evaluation and feedback match the collaborative learning that students experience in VE. Additionally, ongoing formative assessment can be used as a tool to provide students with feedback on their learning process and outcomes, to guide them and to increase their motivation to engage in the VE^[40]. Similarly, regularly monitoring participants to determine whether they feel valued and included can help ensure that students receive appropriate support and remain motivated throughout the exchange^[42]. Involving students in reflective (self-)assessment prompts can also be helpful to evaluate how effectively they collaborate, address challenges, and construct meaning from their intercultural interactions^[40]. When considering the final product(s) of the VE or its summative assessment, varied tools can be

used, such as reflective diaries and portfolios, oral presentations, surveys, narratives, joint projects, video pitches, and infographics, among many others.

In addition, VE assessment should be complemented by meaningful feedback that fosters critical reflection. It should balance encouragement with accurate and constructive guidance, helping students learn from mistakes without lowering standards. In online settings, thoughtful, motivating feedback, through voice or video, for example, can foster connection, social presence, and engagement^[43].

Recommended Practice

- In order to ensure students' active engagement with the tasks and group collaboration, VE should be incorporated into the curriculum. For example, it can be integrated as a component of a course, part of a Blended Intensive Program (combining virtual exchange activities and physical mobility) or as a preparation for mobility programs.
- It is also important to acknowledge students' participation in the collaboration by awarding grades, extra points or other forms of recognition.
- When designing the tasks, clear instructions and scaffolding should be considered. Additionally, teachers can provide different forms of input and examples for students to understand and complete the tasks.
- As mentioned earlier, teachers should aim to design tasks that go beyond superficial cultural comparison, allowing for real collaboration on a project or shared goal that is usually global-oriented and/or addresses social issues. Incorporating the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into the VE can provide a valuable opportunity to explore global challenges collaboratively.

Have a look at the following examples of task design provided by O'Dowd^[1]:

"In this task you will prepare for your partners a PowerPoint presentation about an ideal night out in your hometown"; "In this task you should share an image with your partner that exemplifies an aspect of your daily routine" (p. 119).

According to the author, although these tasks could be useful at the beginning of VE for a "getting to know each other" icebreaker, they do not encourage critical reflection

on culture. Other types of tasks, as illustrated by O'Dowd^[1] could engage students in understanding one another's cultural perspectives and collaborating in joint products or projects:

“Work together with your international partners to design a promotional video of sustainable practices to help deal with an ecological problem on your two campuses. Once your videos are ready, the best proposals will be published by both universities in their social networks” (p. 120).

- The view of learning in VE (student-centered learning and social constructivist) should be in line with the assessment practice considering formative, continuous, self and peer assessments. Also, make sure that the rubrics and/or criteria used in the assessment are previously shared with the students;
- Finally, giving visibility to students' work through blogs, websites or other forms of dissemination may be a motivation for deeper engagement in the final product. As an example, this e-book^[44] produced as the final result of the group discussions on a clinical case of hypertension, created collaboratively by medical students from universities in Brazil and Spain.

2.4. Digital Tools, AI and Literacy

One of the key characteristics of VE initiatives is the integration of synchronous and/or asynchronous digital tools for collaboration among participants. However, engaging meaningfully and effectively in these online spaces demands specific skills that cannot be taken for granted. We cannot assume that, just because students are digital natives, they are prepared to navigate and use those resources effectively. Teachers' mediation, support and scaffolding on specific tools are important in this regard. Moving beyond an instrumental and functional view of digital skills, Hauck^[45] discusses the development of critical digital literacy in VEs as a way to exercise agency that is mediated by contextual factors, such as “sites, tools and applications used by participants to collaborate across time zones and geographical distance” (p. 191). In this sense, the author argues that VEs provide rich and experiential contexts for exploring and examining how digital spaces shape ways of thinking, acting and perceiving otherness as well as for analyzing the lin-

guistic and non-linguistic dimensions of digital media. This requires that educators draw attention to the sociopolitical contexts of their VEs^[45].

Looking ahead to the integration of AI in VE initiatives, Dooley^[46] explains that teachers should reflect on the skills participants will need when interacting with non-human agents. In relation to task design, she suggests intentionally incorporating communicative activities that involve both humans and AI tools, followed by an analysis of the outcomes to understand how to address communication gaps and similar challenges that arise during VE. She also proposes using AI for more repetitive tasks to help students prepare themselves for online interactions, such as individual rehearsals before the collaboration. Finally, by bringing critical considerations to the ethical dimensions of digital practices, educators can also analyze bias in AI-based assessment tools and encourage learners to discuss and reflect on the algorithmic norms that shape public discourse and opinion^[46].

In the current scenario, AI literacy is also paramount. Rather than centering on technical abilities, it prioritizes the development of knowledge, critical thinking and ethical awareness, equipping individuals to interact responsibly with AI by analyzing its outputs critically, recognizing its limitations and making informed choices^[14]. This literacy also involves understanding how Generative AI (GenAI) functions, including its decision-making processes, the data sources and the possible biases embedded within these systems^[47].

Recommendations

- Although it is important that learners have hands-on experience with different digital tools, try to avoid a great diversity of technological resources/tools that can overwhelm them. Also, scaffold and assist students in learning how to use specific tools.
- Another recommendation is related to bringing real examples of challenges from previous VE implementations or critical incidents based on the integration of technology. The following critical incidents were created by one of the authors using ChatGPT and used in a recent VE as part of the preparation given to students prior to starting the VE:

1. “The Emoji Misunderstanding”: During a conversation in a VE WhatsApp group chat, Aiko (Japan) reacts to Ryan's (USA) message about finishing his section of the assignment with a single thumbs-up emoji.

For Aiko, this emoji is meant to show polite acknowledgement without taking up too much space in the chat. Ryan, however, feels confused. In his U.S. communication style, emojis are used to reinforce enthusiasm or signal tone, so the minimal thumbs-up seems cold or dismissive. He wonders if Aiko is annoyed or unhappy with his plan. Later, when Aiko sends another message with only a smiley face after a long explanation from Ryan, he interprets it as a lack of interest, and begins to withdraw from the conversation. Meanwhile, Aiko feels she is being respectful by keeping her messages concise and not overwhelming the group chat. She assumes her emojis are friendly and polite. Both students believe they are communicating clearly, yet their contrasting interpretations of emojis make the group feel awkward and uncertain about one another's intentions.

- When Aiko sent the thumbs-up emoji, what would you have thought it meant?
- How would you have interpreted Ryan's reaction?
- Should emoji use be clarified within the group? Why or why not?
- What strategies could help this group develop clearer communication norms?

2. “The Invisible Group Member”: During the first synchronous session of their VE, three students—Olivia (UK), Mateo (Chile), and Samira (Morocco)—log into the meeting and quickly begin greeting one another. A few seconds later, Arjun (India) joins the call, but his microphone and camera show an error message. Arjun types in the chat, “I’m here, but my mic and camera aren’t working. I’m trying to fix it.” The others respond politely, but after several minutes of waiting, they shift their attention to brainstorming the first task.

While the group discusses ideas, Olivia says, “I guess Arjun is not really participating today,” assuming he is distracted. Meanwhile, Mateo moves ahead quickly, assigning tasks without checking whether Arjun can hear or contribute. On Arjun's side, the situation becomes increasingly stressful. He can hear them, but they cannot hear or see him. Every time he tries a new fix, he anxiously types updates into the chat, feeling increasingly invisible. He worries the group will think he is unreliable or uninterested. Finally, after restarting his computer and re-entering the meeting, his micro-

phone suddenly works. “Hi, sorry! I’ve been here the whole time,” he says, breathless. The group falls silent, realizing they had moved forward without him. After completing the meeting, they reflected together that the issue could have been avoided if everyone had tested the video call platform in advance. They also agree to check the chat regularly, pause the conversation when a technical problem arises, and establish a communication backup (like WhatsApp) for future sessions.

- How would you have felt if you were Arjun during those first minutes?
- If you were in the group, what could you do to keep everyone included?
- What procedures could be established to avoid this situation in future VE sessions?
- Why is testing the platform beforehand an essential part of digital readiness in VE?

Besides working with critical incidents in the narrative format presented above, teachers can also use AI tools to create scenarios in which students identify the challenge(s) faced in the communication and discuss how they could manage the situation. **Figure 3** below shows this example created by ChatGPT 5.2 considering the prompts given by one of the authors. This critical incident was previously used by the author as part of pedagogical mentoring in VE initiatives.

- Design tasks for students to critically reflect on the use of digital tools and interactions involved as well as on the broader sociopolitical context in which the VE takes place^[45].

For example, as a PM related to technologies, teachers can bring some digital aspects that may influence students' participation in VEs, such as access to stable internet/connectivity, familiarity with digital tools, cultural aspects related to the selection of specific tools, etc., to discuss with the group.

Another task that could be developed, maybe at the end or during the collaboration, is to ask the students to choose a platform they've been using for their interaction and analyze some aspects related to it, such as: the communication form(s) the platform privileged, the affordances and constraints, the type of participation enhanced, privileged and marginalized, among other issues.

- Regarding AI in VE Projects, negotiate its use with your partners and establish clear, transparent and explicit guidelines on how AI/GenAI will be integrated throughout the project;
- Teachers can also discuss with their students appropriate and inappropriate uses of AI in the VE, ensuring a shared understanding of expectations, limits and ethical considerations.
- Some AI/GenAI tools have been incorporated in VEs (CVEinAI Consortium, Hayashi, Calvo et al., and Calvo et al.^[48–51] among others) and tasks have been designed to help students to critically evaluate and reflect on their use, limitations and cultural implications. For example, in the VE “AI [Artificial Intelligence] meets ELT [English Language Teaching]”, organized and conducted by professors from Brazil, Turkey, Hong Kong and Chile^[51] between September and December 2025, one of the tasks required students to use an AI tool to generate images or texts about themselves or the place where they live. They were then asked, guided by critical reflection questions, to analyze the outputs collaboratively, considering the ways in which AI tools may reinforce or reproduce stereotypes, generalizations, or cultural bias.
- Recommended practices, when students are asked to incorporate AI tools in their VEs, would include:
 - Ask them to be transparent about their use;
 - Encourage reflection about the affordances and constraints/limitations of those tools;
 - Discuss the type of information that should (not) be shared with AI tools, considering issues of privacy and data protection;
 - Compare the use of AI across cultures;
 - Share insights and suggestions on how AI tools can help them to be more linguistically prepared for the online interactions (e.g., practice oral tasks with chatbots, generate vocabulary lists on specific topics of the VE, etc.).



Figure 3. Critical incident vignette.

2.5. Critical Considerations and Challenges in VE

As an internationalization-at-home initiative, VE has the potential to engage more students than traditional physical mobility programs because it reduces financial and logistical barriers to participation. Nonetheless, despite this broader reach and its various potential benefits, it should not be assumed that VE is necessarily and inherently equitable and/or inclusive^[33]. Aspects related to digital access and literacy, language proficiency, infrastructure, representations and power relations should be acknowledged and addressed. As stated by Kastler and Lewis^[52], even with the low cost of VE, due to the digital divide, marked by uneven access to technologies and internet connection, not all students are able to participate in an equitable way. Additionally, students from underrepresented cultures or from regions with geopolitical instability, for example, may have fewer opportunities to engage in VE, which can lead to educational marginalization^[53]. Similarly, VE has the potential to accommodate learners from various language proficiency levels, but this is also not always possible, as it can result in superficial-level interactions, ultimately resulting in a lack of engagement and unsuccessful VE experiences^[54]. Also, as stated by O'Dowd^[6], lingua franca interactions may tend to favor more privileged students.

Another aspect to consider is that, beyond collaborating with institutions from different geographical regions, it is important to involve those partners in the project's development and implementation. Facilitators should create a space where all of them can "share goals for their participants, develop programming that meets unique needs, and ensure that the benefits of participation are not one sided"^[52] (p. 18) or reinforce the hegemony of the Global North^[6]. Similarly, it is paramount to bring attention to fundamental questions about "whose voices are heard and valued in international collaboration"^[6]. In line with this, Helm^[9] explains that VE can unintentionally perpetuate inequalities, repeat colonial patterns and reinforce dominant knowledge structures, but it also has the power to foster global-centric perspectives and a more equitable, pluralistic international learning space.

The lack of engagement or motivation among groups of learners, especially the ones who are more exposed to international experiences, can be a challenge in VE. This motivational decline can be due to imbalances in language

proficiency levels, curiosity and openness to intercultural experiences, individual perceptions or the more recent "Zoom fatigue"^[42] and the increasingly ubiquitous nature of intercultural learning opportunities^[6], among many other factors.

Other challenges involve the emotional or psychological risks for students collaborating with peers in conflict regions; political and institutional constraints that may arise in controversial partnerships; and aspects related to whether VE can really have a social impact or whether participation and engagement are merely symbolic^[6].

By addressing some of those challenges, the aforementioned author puts forth five recommendations: a) fostering equitable partnerships, critically analyzing who brings challenges, gives solutions and whose knowledge is valued; b) linguistic scaffolding and support for students even in lingua franca interactions, as this context does not guarantee balanced conditions for participation; c) including approaches that are both trauma-informed and politically aware when engaging with conflict zones or discussing sensitive global issues; d) distinguishing between "tokenistic and genuine active citizenship" (p. 12) VE and Blended Mobility (BM); e) plan and design more stimulating and challenging interactions (going beyond superficial and basic intercultural exchanges) that will be valuable to all students, including those with previous international experience.

Finally, in her efforts to propose a framework to foster equity and inclusion in VE, Hauck^[33] presents the approach of Critical Virtual Exchange (CVE) and its key elements: a) the adoption of low-bandwidth online tools and platforms; b) the engagement of students who are usually underrepresented in IaH initiatives; c) the choice of topics related to the UN SDGs; d) the integration of students' community-based work with local businesses, NGOs and charitable organizations; e) the incorporation of translanguaging practices.

Recommendations

- Raise awareness among participants of how most interactions can be influenced by power imbalances among the interlocutors. Reflect with students on issues related to access to technologies/materials, participation, and positionality.

Providing students with opportunities to disrupt power imbalances within the VE can also be useful. Examples of this are bringing theoretical references, examples or resources that represent all parties of the exchange and

designing tasks that value equitable collaboration and participation among all groups of students.

By acknowledging power relations, we are not assuming that collaborations should be built based on a supposed consensus. As stated by Jordão and Martinez^[55], considering the relations among countries and cultures, those relations are based on differences, multiplicity and negotiations. If they happen in democratic spaces, the legitimacy of all parties should be acknowledged. According to the authors, the knowledge and ways of knowing from the cultures of different countries are not regarded as identical, but they are also not seen as better or worse: they are legitimate and deserving of our engagement^[55] (p. 72).

- Teachers should also critically reflect on the way they position themselves in the VE collaboration as well as on the way they are perceived in the partnership. This is important because “all participants should be recognised as co-constructors of knowledge with meaningful agency in shaping the project’s direction, goals, and learning outcomes”^[6] (p. 5).
- Bring critical questions and issues when designing the collaboration, as those by Helm^[9] (p. 397): “VE *may* offer the potential to go beyond telling and hearing the story from a single perspective, but can it ‘change the terms of the conversation’ (Mignolo, 2007) in order to re-localise the global, mark the unmarked and ‘provincialise the apparently universal’? To what extent does the essentially transnational/translocal nature of VE help to render visible and relevant the participants’ loci of enunciation? Can VE offer possibilities for encounters with radically different ways of being and knowing or does its reliance on Internet technology and connectivity, and the often unquestioned use of the English language, preclude such encounters? Can VE offer opportunities for languaging whereby multiple language varieties and modalities are brought into play?”

3. Conclusions

This paper reviewed current and emerging discussions in VE studies and, informed by the authors’ research and experience in the field, offered recommendations for im-

plementing VE across different areas of knowledge. The following dimensions were considered: i) preparing students for intercultural encounters; ii) language use and communication in multilingual, lingua franca, and translanguaging environments; iii) task design and assessment aligned with collaborative and action-oriented pedagogies; iv) digital tools, artificial intelligence (AI) and digital/AI literacy; v) challenges and critical considerations for equity, inclusion and Global South participation. By articulating those dimensions and providing examples, materials as well as pedagogical insights and strategies, the paper contributes to the ongoing discussion on how VE can support the internationalization of higher education in a more informed, engaged and critical way.

For teachers designing VE projects, the recommendations presented throughout this paper converge on the single, overarching principle that successful VE is never simply the product of connecting two groups of students online and allowing interaction to unfold naturally. As Richardson^[56] has argued, the assumption that contact with difference will, in itself, produce transformation has long been discredited. Online collaborative learning projects are no exception to this rule. Effective project design requires teachers to integrate their exchanges meaningfully into the curriculum, to develop tasks that move beyond superficial cultural comparison towards collaborative, action-oriented engagement with substantive and often contested global issues, and to build in systematic opportunities for structured reflection. We have argued here that, alongside these pedagogical considerations, teachers must also approach the design of their partnerships with a critical awareness of the structural inequalities that can so easily reproduce themselves within VE, particularly in North–South collaborations. This means attending carefully to questions of who defines the problems, who proposes the solutions, and whose knowledge systems are centered or marginalized within the project’s tasks and assessment frameworks^[6,17]. Linguistic equity also demands attention. The decision to conduct a VE exclusively in English is never a neutral or straightforwardly practical choice, and teachers should, wherever possible, explore multilingual and translanguaging approaches that allow all participants to communicate from a position of relative confidence and competence.

Teacher trainers working in initial teacher education programmes face an additional layer of responsibility, in-

sofar as they are not only preparing student teachers to engage in VE as learners but also equipping them to design and facilitate such projects with their own future students. The experiential learning dimension here is of considerable importance. Evidence from large-scale initiatives such as EVALUATE^[57] has demonstrated that student teachers who participate in VE during their training develop not only the intercultural and digital competences associated with VE more broadly, but also a grounded, practical understanding of what effective project design entails—the kind of understanding that is difficult to develop through theoretical instruction alone. Teacher trainers should therefore ensure that VE is integrated into teacher education programmes as a genuine curricular activity rather than as an optional enrichment, and that it is accompanied by pedagogical mentoring that helps student teachers move beyond the role of participant to develop a critical reflective perspective on the design choices that structure the exchange. This means creating opportunities for student teachers to interrogate such questions as: What communicative norms does our task design privilege? How are power relations among the partners likely to play out in online interaction? And how might our assessment practices either reinforce or challenge existing hierarchies of knowledge and language?

Taken together, the recommendations offered in this paper point towards a conception of VE that is both more demanding and more ambitious than earlier models of the practice. The maturation of VE as a field has brought with it a richer and more critical pedagogical vocabulary, one that draws on concepts of positionality, linguistic justice, equity-centred design, and decolonial knowledge practices. This speaks directly to the practical choices that teachers make every time they design a task, select a partner institution, or decide which languages will carry the weight of interaction in their exchange. If VE is to fulfill its considerable potential as a tool for transforming internationalization by making it more just, more multilingual, and more genuinely global, then both practicing teachers and those who train them must engage with these dimensions not as peripheral concerns but as central to what it means to do VE well. The field stands at a critical juncture: the recommendations offered here are intended not as definitive answers but as starting points for the kind of sustained, evidence-based reflection that the continued development of VE practice requires.

Author Contributions

Conceptualization, L.C.S.C.; resources, L.C.S.C. and Á.A.; writing—original draft preparation, L.C.S.C. and Á.A.; writing—review and editing, L.C.S.C., Á.A., K.R.F. and R.O.; supervision, K.R.F. and R.O. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding

Luciana Cabrini Simões Calvo's research is funded by the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq) through postdoctoral research funding and an academic visit grant to the University of León. Ángela M. Alonso's study is funded by the University of León and Santander Bank under the 2021 predoctoral research programme (Programa de ayudas para la realización de estudios de doctorado en el marco del Programa Propio de Investigación de la Universidad de León 2021). Kyria Rebeca Finardi's research is funded by the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq) through a PQ fellowship and by Fapes (Brazil) through projects 13/2025 (Universal) and 12/2024 (Profix).

Institutional Review Board Statement

Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement

Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement

Not applicable.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

AI Use Statement

During the preparation of this manuscript, the authors used ChatGPT (OpenAI) for language refinement and development of examples of some critical incidents. In addition,

the conceptual content and design of **Figures 1** and **3** were originally developed by the authors, and were subsequently visualized with the assistance of AI tools. No AI tools were used for data analysis, interpretation, or generation of scientific content. All outputs were critically reviewed and edited by the authors. The authors take full responsibility for the integrity and accuracy of the work.

References

- [1] O'Dowd, R., 2022. *Internationalising Higher Education and the Role of Virtual Exchange*. Routledge: London, UK. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315393704>
- [2] Finardi, K., Salvadori, J., Wehrli, A., 2024. Global Citizenship and Internationalization at Home: Insights from the BRASUIS Virtual Exchange Project. *Studies in English Language Teaching*. 12(2), 59–72.
- [3] Guimarães, F.F., Finardi, K.R., 2023. Pandemic and Paradigm Shift in Internationalization: From Competition, Mobility and Exclusivity to Cooperation, Virtuality and Inclusion. In: Wiseman, A.W., Matherly, C., Crumley-Effinger, M. (Eds.). *Internationalization and Imprints of the Pandemic on Higher Education Worldwide*. Emerald Publishing Limited: Bingley, UK. pp. 113–128. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1108/S1479-367920230000044007>
- [4] Finardi, K., Asik, A., 2024. Possibilities of Virtual Exchange for Internationalization at Home: Insights from the Global South. *Journal of Virtual Exchange*. 7, 1–22. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.21827/jve.7.39593>
- [5] Beelen, J., Doscher, S., 2022. Situating COIL Virtual Exchange within Concepts of Internationalization. In: Rubin, J., Guth, S. (Eds.). *The Guide to COIL Virtual Exchange*. Routledge: New York, NY, USA. pp. 32–54. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003447832-4>
- [6] O'Dowd, R., 2025. Virtual Exchange in the New Educational Landscape: Challenges for Foreign Language Teachers. *Language Learning & Technology*. 29(1), 1–16. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.64152/10125/73659>
- [7] Hauck, M., 2025. Critical Virtual Exchange: At the Interface of Critical CALL, Critical Digital Literacy, and Critical Global Citizenship Education. In: Britton, E., Kraemer, A., Austin, T., et al. (Eds.). *Advancing Critical CALL Across Institutions and Borders: Reimagining Possibilities for Languages, Literacies, and Cultures*. University of Toronto Press: Toronto, ON, Canada. pp. 29–54. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3138/9781487567255-005>
- [8] Hildeblando Jr., C.A., 2023. Virtual Exchange as a Third Space to Decolonise ELT (VETSDELTA) Project: Report on Its First Action-Research Cycle. In: Orsini-Jones, M., Hildeblando Júnior, C.A., Cerveró-Carrascosa, A., et al. (Eds.). *Discussing Global Citizenship through Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL)—Virtual Exchange (VE) in Language Learning and Teaching*. Coventry University: Coventry, UK.
- [9] Helm, F., 2025. Interrupting Coloniality: (De)humanizing Digital Technologies Related to Language Education. In: Bagga-Gupta, S. (Ed.). *The Palgrave Handbook of Decolonising the Educational and Language Sciences*. Palgrave Macmillan: Cham, Switzerland. pp. 379–405. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-80322-2_14
- [10] Bourke, B., 2014. Positionality: Reflecting on the Research Process. *The Qualitative Report*. 19(33), 1–9. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2014.1026>
- [11] Diniz de Figueiredo, E.H., Martinez, J., 2021. The Locus of Enunciation as a Way to Confront Epistemological Racism and Decolonize Scholarly Knowledge. *Applied Linguistics*. 42(2), 355–359. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/amz061>
- [12] Bhabha, H.K., 2004. *The Location of Culture*, 2nd ed. Routledge: London, UK.
- [13] Menezes de Souza, L.M.T., 2019. Glocal Languages, Coloniality and Globalization from Below. In: Guilherme, M., Menezes de Souza, L.M.T. (Eds.). *Glocal Languages and Critical Intercultural Awareness: The South Answers Back*. Routledge: New York, NY, USA. pp. 17–41. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351184656-2>
- [14] Chiu, T.K.F., 2025. AI Literacy and Competency: Definitions, Frameworks, Development and Future Research Directions. *Interactive Learning Environments*. 33(5), 3225–3229. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/10494820.2025.2514372>
- [15] Kalantzis, M., Cope, B., 2025. Literacy in the Time of Artificial Intelligence. *Reading Research Quarterly*. 60(1), e591. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1002/rrq.591>
- [16] Glimäng, M.R., 2024. Reading the World through Virtual Exchange: Critical Interculturality and Glocal Awareness in English Teacher Education [PhD Thesis]. Malmö University: Malmö, Sweden.
- [17] Helm, F., 2024. *Intercultural Communication in Virtual Exchange*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, UK. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009385589>
- [18] O'Dowd, R., Dooly, M., 2020. Intercultural Communicative Competence through Telecollaboration and Virtual Exchange. In: Jackson, J. (Ed.). *The Routledge Handbook of Language and Intercultural Communication*, 2nd ed. Routledge: London, UK. pp. 361–375. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003036210-28>
- [19] Yeh, H.-C., Heng, L., 2022. Creating a Virtual “Third Space” in a Telecollaborative Project to Promote English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Learners’ Language Proficiency and Intercultural Awareness. *Interactive Learning Environments*. 31(10), 6667–6677. DOI:

- <https://doi.org/10.1080/10494820.2022.2043384>
- [20] Vinagre, M., Llopis-García, R., 2023. Multilingual Landscapes in Telecollaboration: A Spanish-American Exchange. In: Dubreil, S., Malinowski, D., Maxim, H.H. (Eds.). *Spatializing Language Studies: Pedagogical Approaches in the Linguistic Landscape*. Springer: Cham, Switzerland. pp. 67–86. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-39578-9_4
- [21] de Andreotti, V.O., 2006. Soft versus Critical Global Citizenship Education. In: McCloskey, S. (Ed.). *Development Education in Policy and Practice*. Palgrave Macmillan: London, UK. pp. 21–31.
- [22] Freire, P., 1970. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Continuum: New York, NY, USA.
- [23] Freire, P., 1998. *Pedagogy of Freedom: Ethics, Democracy, and Civic Courage*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers: Lanham, MD, USA. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5040/9798216425137>
- [24] O'Dowd, R., Sauro, S., Spector-Cohen, E., 2019. The Role of Pedagogical Mentoring in Virtual Exchange. *TESOL Quarterly*. 54(1), 146–172. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.543>
- [25] Bakhtin, M., 2006. *The Aesthetics of Verbal Creativity*, 4th ed. Bezerra, P. (Trans.). Martins Fontes: São Paulo, Brazil. (in Portuguese)
- [26] Rajagopalan, K., 2019. Language Issue in the 21st Century and the Centuries Ahead: An Exercise in Crystal-Ball Gazing. *DELTA: Documentação de Estudos em Linguística Teórica e Aplicada*. 35(1), e2019350102.
- [27] Jordão, C., 2025. English as a Lingua Franca: New Wine in Old Bottles? In: Colombo-Gomes, G.S. (Ed.). *Language, Teaching and Work: (In)disciplinary Themes*. Pedro & João Editores: São Carlos, Brazil. (in Portuguese)
- [28] Godwin-Jones, R., 2020. Towards Transculturality: English as a Lingua Franca in Intercultural Communication and in Online Language Learning. *Languages and International Studies*. 23, 23–54.
- [29] Kohn, K., 2021. The Art of ELF Communication and How to Get There. In: Lopriore, L. (Ed.). *ELF Pedagogy: A Research Study on ELT Practices*. Editoriale Anicia: Rome, Italy. pp. 9–26.
- [30] Bosso, R., 2023. Understanding Hybridity in VELS Exchanges: Overt, Covert, and Technology-Enhanced Translational Phenomena. In: Pineda, I., Bosso, R. (Eds.). *Virtual English as a Lingua Franca*. Routledge: New York, NY, USA.
- [31] Pineda, I., Bosso, R., 2023. Introduction: Virtual English as a Lingua Franca: Investigating the Discourse of Digital Exchanges and Understanding Technology-Enhanced Learning. In *Virtual English as a Lingua Franca*. Routledge: New York, NY, USA. pp. 1–14.
- [32] García, O., Lin, A.M.Y., 2016. Translanguaging in Bilingual Education. In: García, O., Lin, A.M.Y., May, S. (Eds.). *Bilingual and Multilingual Education*. Springer: Cham, Switzerland. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-02324-3_9-1
- [33] Hauck, M., 2023. From Virtual Exchange to Critical Virtual Exchange and Critical Internationalization at Home. Available from: <https://oro.open.ac.uk/95015/7/95015.pdf> (cited 10 March 2026).
- [34] Guo, Z., Xu, X., 2023. Understanding Intercultural Virtual Exchange through a Translanguaging Lens in Chinese as a Foreign Language. *Journal of China Computer-Assisted Language Learning*. 3(1), 132–167. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1515/jccall-2022-0018>
- [35] Turnbull, J., Yazan, B., Uzum, B., et al., 2025. 'That was crazy': Confronting Monolingual Ideologies and Courting Translanguaging in International Telecollaboration. *Language Teaching Research*. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/13621688251349519>
- [36] Mardegan, B.S.S., 2025. *Interculturality, Language Ideologies, and Teacher Education in a Virtual Exchange between Brazil and Honduras [PhD Thesis]*. Universidade Estadual de Maringá: Paraná, Brazil. (in Portuguese)
- [37] Cenoz, J., Gorter, D., 2022. *Pedagogical Translanguaging*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, UK. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009029384>
- [38] Silva, J.R.B.D., 2024. *Meaning Negotiation in English as a Lingua Franca in a Virtual Exchange in the Field of Education [Master's Thesis]*. Universidade Estadual Paulista: Araraquara, Brazil. (in Portuguese)
- [39] O'Dowd, R., Ware, P., 2009. Critical Issues in Telecollaborative Task Design. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*. 22(2), 173–188. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/09588220902778369>
- [40] Cazura, A., Dooly, M. (Eds.), 2022. *Assessment in Virtual Exchange: A Summary of the ASSESSnet Project*. In *Assessing Virtual Exchange in Foreign Language Courses at Tertiary Level*. Research-publishing.net: Voillans, France. pp. 47–64.
- [41] Dooly, M., 2022. The Evolution of Virtual Exchange and Assessment Practices. In: Czura, A., Dooly, M. (Eds.). *Assessing Virtual Exchange in Foreign Language Courses at Tertiary Level*. Research-publishing.net: Voillans, France. pp. 13–27. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.14705/rpnet.2022.59.1407>
- [42] Stevens Initiative, 2023. *2023 Virtual Exchange Impact and Learning Report*. Stevens Initiative: Washington, DC, USA. Available from: <https://bit.ly/4nwROF2>
- [43] Kennette, L., Chapman, M., 2021. Providing Positive Student Feedback in an Online Environment. *Academia Letters*. 203. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.20935/AL203>
- [44] Sheth, C., Weber, S.A.T., Ponce, D., et al., 2020. *Hypertension: A Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) Project between Botucatu School of Medicine and Universidad Cardenal Herrera CEU*. Available from: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1PdGqthIxxHv9zXl8lGSxq8gG1j_Vy2yV/view (cited 30 October 2026)

- 2025).
- [45] Hauck, M., 2019. Virtual Exchange for (Critical) Digital Literacy Skills Development. *European Journal of Language Policy*. 11(2), 187–210. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3828/ejlp.2019.12>
- [46] Dooly, M., 2022. Language Teaching, Language Learning, and Virtual Exchange in an Age of Complexity. *International Journal of Computer-Assisted Language Learning and Teaching*. 12(3), 1–18. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4018/IJCALLT.316459>
- [47] Hackett, S., Dawson, M., 2026. Will AI Kill Collaborative Online International Learning? Available from: <https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20260107091513821> (cited 9 February 2026).
- [48] CVEinAI Consortium, 2025. Detailed Design Document. Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange Project Deliverable. CVEinAI Consortium: Rome, Italy. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17194126>
- [49] Hayashi, M., 2024. Generative AI and XR in Education: Student Co-Created Metaverse Worlds in an International Virtual Exchange. In *Proceedings of the 32nd International Conference on Computers in Education (ICCE 2024)*, Quezon City, Philippines, 25–29 November 2024. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.58459/icce.2024.5032>
- [50] Calvo, L.C.S., Rosenberg, S., Finardi, K.R., et al., 2026. Artificial Intelligence in Education: Connecting Brazil, Honduras, Israel and Germany through a Virtual Exchange Project. In: Summer, T., Gerholz, K.-H., Kaplan-Rakowski, R. (Eds.). *Digital and AI Competence in Subject-Specific Education: International Contexts*. Routledge: London, UK.
- [51] Calvo, L.C.S., Asik, A., Finardi, K.R., 2026. Generative Artificial Intelligence in Virtual Exchange: Promise, Peril, and Pedagogical Implications. In: Tzoumis, K. (Ed.). *Handbook of Using Virtual Exchange across Disciplines: Building Global Citizens from Home*. Springer: Cham, Switzerland. pp. 35–50.
- [52] Kastler, K., Lewis, H., 2021. Approaching Virtual Exchange from an Equity Lens. In *Proceedings of the Global Inclusion 2021 Conference*, Atlanta, GA, USA, 25–29 October 2021; pp. 17–19. Available from: https://daglobal.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/gie_summer-21.pdf
- [53] Alami, N., Albuquerque, J., Ashton, L., et al., 2022. Marginalization and Underrepresentation in Virtual Exchange: Reasons and Remedies. *Journal of International Students*. 12(S3), 57–76. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.32674/jis.v12iS3.4665>
- [54] Alonso, A.M., 2026. What Happens When Virtual Exchange Fails? Reflections and Implications. In: Casañ-Pitarch, R. (Ed.). *Virtual Exchanges in the Foreign Language Classroom: Language, Culture, Content, and Digital Literacy*. Tirant Lo Blanch: Valencia, Spain.
- [55] Jordão, C., Martinez, J., 2015. Between the Quotation Marks of Borders: Internationalization as an Agonistic Practice. In: Rocha, C.H., Braga, D., Caldas, R.R. (Eds.). *Language Policies, Language Teaching, and Teacher Education: Challenges in Times of Globalization and Internationalization*. Pontes Editores: Campinas, Brazil. (in Portuguese)
- [56] Richardson, S., 2015. *Cosmopolitan Learning for a Global Era: Higher Education in an Interconnected World*. Routledge: London, UK. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315871004>
- [57] Baroni, A., Dooly, M., García, P.G., et al., 2019. Evaluating the Impact of Virtual Exchange on Initial Teacher Education: A European Policy Experiment. *Research-publishing.net*: Voillans, France. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.14705/rpnet.2019.29.9782490057337>