

## **Exploring a Lingua-techno Cultural Approach in the Global South: The Chilean Case**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study explores the use of fanfiction to integrate language, culture, and technology in Chilean EFL classrooms, addressing gaps in the national curriculum and limited professional development encompassing Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) and culture teaching methodologies. The research has two aims: (1) to examine EFL teachers' practices and views merging language, culture, and technology and (2) to report on the effectiveness of fanfiction tasks merged with the linguaculture (LC) construct (Risager, 2016, 2020) as a vehicle for this integration. Using a qualitative, multi-method design, the study involved an online questionnaire (N = 128), a professional development workshop (N = 15), and a classroom, multiple case study implementation (N = 3). Questionnaire findings showed teachers valued cultural reflection and intercultural interaction but struggled to effectively incorporate it, particularly through technology. Informed by these findings, the workshop introduced fanfiction and LC, which teachers found effective for boosting language development, cultural awareness, and ICT skills. However, in the follow-up of the three case study teachers' implementation, challenges surfaced such as students' limited language proficiency, cultural background knowledge, and curricular constraints prioritising linguistic over intercultural competencies. These findings advocate for innovative pedagogical approaches aligned with global educational agendas, preparing students for global citizenship, and navigating future communication challenges in diverse, multilingual landscapes.

*Keywords:* EFL, fanfiction, ICT, linguaculture, technology

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The integration of language, culture, and technology has gained increasing attention in foreign language (FL) education, particularly within Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL). However,

the intersection of these domains remains underdeveloped in many educational contexts, especially in constrained- educational settings (Lee, 2011; Liaw, 2006). This study addresses that gap by investigating the pedagogical potential of fanfiction a form of creative writing based on existent narratives—as a tool to support a linguacultural and technology-enhanced (LCT) approach in Chilean English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms.

Despite advances in CALL and critical cultural pedagogy, existing research has focused on Global North contexts, with limited empirical attention to how linguaculture a theory of teaching emphasising the inseparability of language and culture in communicative acts (Agar, 1994; Risager, 2016, 2020) is integrated with digital practices in the Global South. The present study narrows this gap by exploring how critical linguacultural pedagogy (Risager, 2016, 2020), CALL practices and critical, reflective learning (Sauro & Chapelle, 2017; Slaouti & Motteram, 2006; Sykes, 2017) can be operationalised through fanfiction (Jamison, 2013) in Chile’s linguistic diverse but digitally unequal context.

Chile offers an ideal setting for this inquiry due to its increasingly multilingual makeup—Spanish, Indigenous languages like Mapudungun, and migrant languages such as Haitian Creole (National Institute of Statistics, 2022) and persistent educational inequalities, including uneven access to technology urban-rural digital divides (OECD, 2022; Valenzuela et al, 2014). Recent curricular reforms emphasise strategic Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) classroom integration and global communication drawing on the United Nations (UN) principles of equality, quality of education and global partnerships (Ministry of Education, 2022; United Nations, 2023), yet teachers still report limited curricular guidance translate these expectations to classroom practice (Gonzalez-Vidal & Moore, 2024). These constraints are particularly acute in rural, public schools throughout the country.

To bridge these gaps, this study proposes LC-based fanfiction tasks as a way to enhance students’ techno-linguacultural (TLC) competence—that is, the simultaneous development of linguistic, cultural, and digital literacies (Sauro & Chapelle, 2017). In linguaculture; culture—”the meaning side of language” (Risager, 2020, p.116)-embeds into three interrelated LC dimensions: *Semantic-pragmatic*-how language functions to convey meaning in context, *Poetic*-the role of language in creative expression, *Identity*-the construction and negotiation of identities through language use. Through fanfiction practices like crossovers, alternate universes, or character transformations, these LC dimensions could be tapped into as learners engage in pragmatic adaptation, creative language use (e.g, code-mixing), and identity exploration (e.g., gender and race representation) (Sykes, 2017).

Although empirical research shows that fanfiction fosters digital creativity, pragmatic language use, and cultural reflection (Curwood et al., 2013; Fukunaga, 2006; Leppänen, 2007) in diverse educational settings, no studies have examined CALL-based classroom applications of the LC framework. This limits our understanding of how such practices

might support equity-oriented, linguaculture-informed teaching in Global South contexts, particularly in under-resourced settings.

Specifically, this study explores,

- 1a. How do teachers view the integration of language, culture, and technology?
- 1b. What are their reported practices in incorporating culture and technology in their teaching?
- 2a. How do teachers perceive fanfiction's value post-workshop? And,
- 2b. How if at all, do their practices change during implementation?

## METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative, multi-case study design grounded in a critical, participatory paradigm (Blaxter et al., 2010; Kemmis et al., 2014; Yin, 2003). Aligned with national curricular goals for digital literacy and intercultural learning (Ministry of Education, 2022), the research aims to explore teachers' views on LCT integration and pedagogical change following a professional development workshop (Kemmis et al., 2014). The study was conducted in three research phases.

- Phase 1: 128 in-service EFL teachers completed an online questionnaire.
- Phase 2: 15 teachers from the larger sample attended a two-module workshop on LC and fanfiction (1) theoretical foundations and (2) project plan design.
- Phase 3: A self-selected subset of teachers implemented LC-based fanfiction tasks in their classrooms over three months.

Based on the bigger sample, participants were mostly Spanish-speaking English teachers working in public and semi-private urban schools. Less than one-third reported indigenous affiliations (e.g., Mapuche) and most held a bachelor's degree in English-language teaching. Ethics approval was granted by the author's affiliated institution prior to data collection.

Data collection comprised 128 questionnaire responses, gathering quantitative and qualitative data on teachers' views and practices regarding the integration of language, culture, and technology (phase 1) which helped inform the content and approach of the workshop that followed, which was piloted with 3 non-participant, Chilean EFL teachers informing changes to instructional design before official delivery (Figure 1). The 36-item questionnaire covered five, 5-point Likert scales labelled as, (1) Language-culture integration, (2) Cultural familiarity, (3) Online activities, (4) ICT use in EFL, and (5) ICT usefulness (Byram & Risager, 1999; Oranje & Smith, 2018; Sercu et al., 2005; Wang & Coleman, 2009). Workshop data included project plans and reflective journal entries (phase 2), and classroom implementation data included revised project plans, journal entries, background surveys on teaching conditions, and email interviews with the case

study teachers. Datasets allowed for triangulation and an in-depth understanding of teachers' evolving views and practices before and after participating in the workshop.

Phase	Research Question	Dataset Source	Data size	Data Analysis		
<b>Phase 1</b> Online questionnaire	Teachers' views and practices on integrating language, culture, and technology	Questionnaire responses	8 pages each	Descriptive frequency, mean, SD, percentages		
<b>Phase 2</b> Workshop Phase		Usefulness of fanfiction tasks for integrating LCT	Lesson plans Reflective reports		25 pages (project plans) 4,635 words (reports)	Thematic analysis (NVivo)
<b>Phase 3</b> Implementation phase		Changes in teachers' views and practices	Background survey Email interviews		3 entries (survey) 1,376 words (interviews)	

Figure 1. Overview of research phases, data sources and analytical procedures

Data were analysed in stages through a combination of descriptive statistics (SPSS) for Phase 1 and thematic coding (NVivo 12 plus) for Phase 2 and 3. Phase 1 utilised frequency counts, means, and standard deviations to analyse questionnaire responses. For Phases 2 and 3, thematic analysis of qualitative data identified emerging patterns in teachers' perceptions and classroom practices. A reliability analysis of questionnaire items showed satisfactory internal consistency reliability ( $\alpha < .70$  for each scale) (Roever & Phakiti, 2018), and an intercoder reliability check for qualitative data was conducted with an agreement rate of 80% (Grabowski & Oh, 2018).

## STUDY FINDINGS

The questionnaire revealed strong support for integrating language and culture in EFL education ( $M = 3.6$ ,  $SD = 0.35$ ,  $N = 128$ ), with over 80% agreeing on its importance for students' intercultural communication skills. However, teachers reported moderate familiarity with cultural aspects, especially on topics like history and gender roles. For ICT use, teachers strongly agreed on its perceived usefulness ( $M = 3.7$ ,  $SD = 0.40$ ), but the actual use of ICT for culture teaching was moderate ( $M = 2.9$ ,  $SD = 0.61$ ). Teachers reported limited use of online activities ( $M = 2.8$ ,  $SD = 0.73$ ), especially interactive ones—such as telecollaboration (10% frequent use). The findings suggest a gap between teachers' supportive views on language-culture integration and their actual use of ICTs to promote it in the classroom.

Workshops' journal and interview data showed both perceived benefits and challenges associated with using fanfiction to integrate language, culture and technology in the classroom. Benefits included developing language creativity through reading and writing. Teachers noted that the approach enables students to “*create, think, and acquire new words*” (Sarah, Reflective Journal 2 or RJ2), and to develop “*knowledge of grammar aspects*” (Lilian; RQ2). It also expanded cultural awareness through the linguaculture framework (LC) by inviting students to “*think beyond the spectrum of action*” (Christian, RJ2) and to see English as “*another language that can enrich their own culture and language*” (Nadia; RJ2). In addition, teachers believed the approach reinforced ICT use and digital literacies, allowing students to “*generate different types of creative writing*” (e.g., incorporating images, as in picture stories) (Stephanie; RJ2) or connect with other fan authors online (Angelica; RJ2). Perceived challenges included student-related issues, such as limited English proficiency for creative writing; institutional constraints such as rigid curricula focused primarily on language development, and contextual barriers, including unequal access to technology—particularly in rural, public schools.

Regarding changes in teachers' views and practices, the workshop facilitated greater alignment between their beliefs about the importance of addressing both language and culture in EFL teaching and their actual use of technology to support this integration. Sarah, who initially valued identity analysis (Questionnaire item 4 or Q4), but used limited digital reflection tasks (Q18, RJ1), bridged this gap by designing a fanfiction project based on *The Secret Garden*, where students rewrote the story set in their local town prompting reflection on multiple identities and sense of affiliation. Christian, despite valuing controversial discussions (Q5), rarely promoted online collaboration (Q20) in the classroom; later, he recognised the potential of Fanfiction websites to enrich his teaching procedures. Christian planned a project in which students rewrote the ending of *The Diary of Anne Frank*, linking it to Chile's 2019 social unrest and highlighting underlying socio-political inequalities. Stephanie acknowledged the importance of intercultural communication (Q7) but had limited online classroom engagement (Q19); addressed this by using storyboard.com for a fanfiction project where students co-created picture stories that retold Mapuche folktales and colonial histories, connecting local heritage with global audiences (RJ1).

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This study builds on prior work in critical linguacultural pedagogy (Risager, 2016) by exploring how Chilean EFL teachers perceive and implement the integration of language, culture, and technology, with a focus on fanfiction (Jamison, 2013) as a pedagogical tool. In terms of teacher views and practices before engaging in the workshop, the study confirms prior findings on limited ICT use for intercultural learning (Lee, 2011; Liaw, 2006) and extends them by highlighting Chilean EFL teachers' surface-level cultural focus (Byram

& Risager, 1999) and training gaps (Figueredo-Canosa et al., 2020), compounded by infrastructure and socioeconomic disparities (OECD, 2022).

Consistent with earlier research (Brutt-Griffler & Kim, 2018; Cornillie et al., 2021; Fukunaga, 2006; Leppänen, 2007) teachers valued the use of fanfiction introduced in the workshop for fostering identity exploration and engaging with global relevant, controversial issues. This study extends prior work by identifying the affordances of LC-based fanfiction to promote creativity, language development and cultural awareness in a single, integrated task (Curwood et al., 2013; Sauro & Sundmark, 2016). Teachers reported that these tasks aligned with the LC framework as beneficial to promote reflection on identities and local realities, fostering deeper engagement with languages and cultures in the classroom (Risager, 2016; 2020). Furthermore, the study shows a shift from a surface-level treatment to culture through technology use in the classroom, to a more critical, LC-integrated practice, despite persistent barriers such as limited access to technology, infrastructure, and curriculum flexibility (Gonzalez & Moore, 2024; Lee, 2011; Liaw, 2006). Study limitations include reliance on self-reported data, the absence of student perspectives and a relatively short (three-month) follow-up period on teacher implementation. Future studies should consider including classroom observations, a broader range of stakeholders, and a longitudinal design to capture sustained pedagogical change. Ultimately, the study affirms that integrating LC and technology—especially through creative practices such as fanfiction—repositions language education as both a critical and transformative practice. In alignment with global educational agendas, this approach equips learners for global citizenship and prepares them to navigate the increasingly complex lingua-technocultural landscapes of the Global South and beyond.

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