

# The Impact of Interactive E-Book through Culturally Responsive Teaching Approach on Enhancing Language Learning: A Case Study of University's English Literature Students

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**Abstract.** This study aims to explore the integration of interactive e-books in teaching using the Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) approach. The background of this research stems from the need for inclusive teaching materials that accommodate students' cultural diversity, thereby enhancing their comprehension and engagement. Interactive e-books serve as a relevant tool to support CRT by offering multimedia content and interactive activities tailored to students' cultural backgrounds. The research employed a qualitative method, involving 43 University students in English literature program of Universitas Negeri Medan (UNIMED) as samples. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and document analysis. Data were analyzed thematically to identify patterns and students' perceptions of the use of CRT-based interactive e-books. The discussion results show that integrating interactive e-books with CRT improves student participation and motivation. Students feel more valued and connected to materials relevant to their culture, leading to increased conceptual understanding. However, technical challenges such as access to technology remain an obstacle that needs to be addressed. In conclusion, the integration of CRT-based interactive e-books effectively supports inclusive learning, although strategies are needed to overcome technological limitations in certain educational contexts.

**Keywords:** interactive e-books, culturally responsive teaching, qualitative, inclusive learning.

## 1 Introduction

In the education system, the use of e-books has grown exponentially along with technological advancements and various teaching approaches. Culturally responsive teaching, in its context as an approach to integrating technology in the format of interactive Electronic books (e-books), offers a platform that can accommodate the learning needs of students from various cultural backgrounds. Cheng [1] highlighted the potential of technology that e-books can utilize in marine education for sustainable development, although this technology is often used more as a visual aid than a tool used in collaborative learning, the integration of culturally relevant e-book materials encourages greater student engagement and is capable of providing interactive and more accessible learning resources, which has great utility in multicultural

educational environments. Technology can certainly serve as a powerful tool to enhance culturally responsive teaching. Digital platforms are enabled to provide access to a wide range of cultural resources, allowing students to explore different cultures and perspectives. For instance, using online collaborative projects can facilitate cross-cultural interchange, allowing students to interact with peers from different backgrounds [1]. In addition, integrating multimedia resources, such as videos and podcasts that highlight different cultural narratives, can enrich the curriculum and engage students in meaningful ways and addresses the potential of technology-enabled learning environments to provide culturally responsive contextualized teaching. [1].

E-books have been developed to construct and offer a learning system that is not constricted by time or space, as they are both student-centered and controlled. [2]. Various forms of media can be easily accessed for educational purposes, such as audio, video, text, images, including animation. In addition, offline and online lectures using textbooks or slide presentations continue to be regarded as conventional educational methods. In universities, electronic textbook systems have been for a certain period of time established as a significant component of the educational infrastructure. [3]. E-books are quite practical in their usability, attractiveness, and usefulness. Several previous studies have shown the need for practical materials in teaching and learning activities [4].

Yuli Rahmawati [5] developed an e-book based on the Culturally Responsive Transformational Teaching (CRTT) model that integrates chemical concepts with Indonesian cultural values. The study found that this culturally responsive e-book not only helped students understand chemical concepts, but also increased their awareness of cultural heritage preservation. The interactive features of the e-book enabled students to access a specially designed ethnochemistry text that provided them with a cultural perspective for understanding scientific concepts. This highlights the potential of the e-book as a powerful tool for academic learning and promoting cultural sustainability.

Similarly, as part of an identity project, Sharleen Pevec-Zimmer [6] demonstrated the effectiveness of e-books in increasing cultural awareness among future teachers. The project used e-books to encourage future teachers to reflect on their own cultural identities and the impact of this identity on their teaching practices. As a result, teachers' self-efficacy and understanding of culturally responsive teaching increased significantly. The interactive nature of the e-book led to a more personalized and reflective learning experience and prepared future teachers to meet the challenges of a multicultural classroom. This study highlights the role of e-books not only as a medium for delivering information, but also as a transformative tool that enables educators to develop inclusive and culturally responsive teaching methods.

Culturally responsive teaching (CRT) in English language education is an essential pedagogical approach that acknowledges and incorporates students' cultural backgrounds into the learning process. This approach not only enhances student engagement but also promotes a deeper understanding of the English language as it relates to diverse cultural contexts. The integration of cultural elements into English language teaching (ELT) is crucial, especially in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) settings, where students may have limited exposure to English-speaking cultures. Research indicates that culturally responsive teaching practices can significantly improve students' attitudes towards learning English and their overall academic performance [7], [8].

One of the primary tenets of CRT is the recognition of the inseparable relationship between language and culture. Language is not merely a set of grammatical rules and vocabulary; it is a vehicle for cultural expression and identity. As such, effective English language instruction must include cultural education that reflects the diverse backgrounds of students while also

introducing them to the cultures of English-speaking countries [8]. This dual focus helps students develop cross-cultural communication skills, which are increasingly important in our globalized world [8].

Moreover, the implementation of culturally responsive teaching strategies can lead to improved student motivation and engagement. Studies have shown that when students see their own cultures reflected in the curriculum, they are more likely to participate actively in the learning process [7]. For instance, integrating local cultural elements into English language textbooks can make the learning experience more relatable and meaningful for students (Anggraini et al., 2022). This approach not only fosters a sense of belonging but also encourages students to take pride in their cultural identities while learning a new language [9].

In addition to enhancing student engagement, CRT also addresses the challenges faced by EFL teachers in culturally diverse classrooms. Teachers often encounter difficulties in balancing the cultural content of their lessons with the linguistic objectives of the curriculum. However, research suggests that incorporating local cultural contexts into English language teaching can alleviate some of these challenges by making the content more relevant to students [10]. For example, teachers can draw on local folklore, traditions, and values to create lessons that resonate with students' experiences, thereby bridging the gap between their cultural backgrounds and the English language [9].

Furthermore, culturally responsive teaching practices can facilitate the development of critical thinking and analytical skills among students. By engaging with texts and materials that reflect diverse cultural perspectives, students are encouraged to think critically about their own cultural assumptions and biases [7]. This reflective practice not only enhances their language skills but also prepares them to navigate an increasingly interconnected world where cultural competence is essential [8].

Professional development for teachers is also a critical component of effective culturally responsive teaching. Educators must be equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to implement CRT strategies effectively. This includes understanding the cultural backgrounds of their students, recognizing the impact of cultural differences on learning, and developing inclusive teaching practices that honor and celebrate diversity [7], [10]. Training programs that focus on culturally responsive pedagogy can empower teachers to create more inclusive and equitable learning environments [7].

Moreover, the use of technology in culturally responsive teaching can further enhance the learning experience. Digital tools can provide access to a wealth of cultural resources and materials that can enrich English language instruction. For instance, online platforms can facilitate cross-cultural exchanges, allowing students to interact with peers from different cultural backgrounds and practice their language skills in authentic contexts [7]. This not only enhances their language proficiency but also broadens their cultural horizons, fostering a deeper appreciation for diversity.

One of the foundational strategies for implementing CRT is to gain a deep understanding of the cultural backgrounds of students. This involves recognizing the unique identities, traditions, and values that students bring to the classroom. Educators can achieve this by conducting surveys, interviews, or informal discussions to learn about students' cultural histories and preferences. Douglas emphasizes that CRT helps connect students to a cultural identity they are eager to realize, which can enhance their learning experience [11]. By acknowledging and validating students' cultural identities, teachers can create a more inclusive classroom atmosphere.

Integrating culturally relevant content into the curriculum is a critical strategy for CRT. This can include selecting texts, materials, and examples that reflect the diverse cultures of the

students in the classroom. For example, using literature from various cultural backgrounds can help students see themselves represented in the curriculum, fostering a sense of belonging and engagement [12]. Additionally, incorporating local cultural elements into lessons can make learning more relatable and meaningful. Achamrah's research highlights the positive outcomes of relating classroom training to the culture of the learners' families, which can improve the classroom environment [13].

Creating a supportive classroom environment is essential for the successful implementation of CRT. Teachers should establish norms that promote respect, empathy, and understanding among students. This can be achieved by encouraging open discussions about cultural differences and fostering an atmosphere where students feel safe to express their identities. Moore emphasizes the importance of reflective practices for educators, suggesting that teachers should critically examine their biases and assumptions to support equity and engage in culturally responsive pedagogy [14]. By modeling inclusive behavior and promoting cultural sensitivity, teachers can cultivate a positive learning environment.

Employing diverse teaching methods that cater to various learning styles is another effective strategy for implementing CRT. This can include collaborative learning, project-based learning, and differentiated instruction. For instance, using group work allows students to share their cultural perspectives and learn from one another, thereby enriching the learning experience [15]. Furthermore, incorporating hands-on activities that relate to students' cultural backgrounds can enhance engagement and retention of knowledge. The use of culturally responsive instructional strategies has been shown to stimulate learner participation and enhance their engagement in the learning process [15].

Assessment practices should also reflect the cultural diversity of the student body. Traditional assessment methods may not accurately capture the abilities and knowledge of culturally diverse students. Therefore, educators should consider culturally relevant assessment practices that take into account students' cultural backgrounds and learning styles. This can include using formative assessments, self-assessments, and peer assessments to gain a comprehensive understanding of student learning [16]. By adopting inclusive assessment practices, teachers can ensure that all students have equitable opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge and skills.

Building strong relationships with students' families and communities is an essential aspect of culturally responsive teaching. Educators should actively engage with families to understand their cultural values and expectations regarding education. This can involve organizing community events, parent-teacher conferences, and workshops that invite families to participate in the educational process [17]. By fostering partnerships with families, teachers can create a more supportive learning environment that reflects the cultural context of the students. Educators should engage in regular reflection on their teaching practices to assess the effectiveness of their culturally responsive strategies. This can involve self-assessment, peer feedback, and student evaluations to identify areas for improvement [18]. By critically examining their approaches and making necessary adjustments, teachers can enhance their ability to meet the diverse needs of their students and promote an inclusive learning environment.

The impact of technological advancements on higher education has been profound, especially for Generation Alpha, who are growing up in a digital world. Coolsaet emphasizes that universities must embrace technology-integrated curricula to cater to the evolving needs of this generation, thereby fostering an environment that is responsive to cultural diversity [19]. This aligns with the findings of Siminto, who argues that educational policies should incentivize collaborative efforts among educators to foster continuous improvement and innovation in

teaching practices [20]. Such collaboration can lead to the development of curricula that not only incorporate technology but also reflect the cultural contexts of the students.

The dynamics of educational digitalization are also evident in various cultural contexts, such as Indonesia, where the influence of Korean culture through digital media has significantly shaped educational preferences among students [21]. This example illustrates how cultural elements can be integrated into technology-enhanced learning environments, making education more relatable and engaging for students. Farooqi further emphasizes the need for CRT to focus on each student's cultural distinctiveness, which is essential for addressing societal fragmentation and promoting a sense of belonging in educational settings [22].

Incorporating technology into CRT requires a thoughtful approach that considers the diverse cultural backgrounds of students. Eppard et al. advocate for an EdTech Culturation approach, which encourages educators to make informed decisions about course design and implementation that reflect culturally relevant pedagogies [23]. This approach is supported by research indicating that technology can enhance the learning experiences of students from various cultural backgrounds by providing access to diverse perspectives and resources.

The integration of technology in teacher education is crucial for preparing educators to implement CRT effectively. Yanmei's comparative study highlights the importance of understanding and respecting cultural diversity in educational practices, which is essential for developing policies that support culturally responsive teaching [24]. This understanding is further reinforced by Wang's research, which assesses the impact of multicultural curricula on student performance, demonstrating that technology plays a vital role in redefining educational landscapes [25].

Lastly, Culturally responsive teaching in English language education is a multifaceted approach that benefits both students and teachers. By integrating cultural content into the curriculum, educators can create a more engaging and meaningful learning experience that respects and values students' cultural identities. This approach not only enhances language acquisition but also prepares students for success in a diverse and interconnected world. As the landscape of English language teaching continues to evolve, the importance of culturally responsive pedagogy will only grow, necessitating ongoing research and professional development to support educators in this vital endeavor [7], [8].

## **2 Method**

This study employed a qualitative approach to explore the impact of Interactive E-Book through the Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) approach on enhancing language learning among English Literature students. A total of 43 students from an English Literature program Universitas Negeri Medan (UNIMED) participated in the study. The participants were selected using purposive sampling based on their active engagement in classes utilizing the interactive e-book. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and students' reflective journals.

The primary data collection instrument was semi-structured interviews with students to explore their perceptions of the use of e-books in language learning. The interview questions were designed within the CRT theoretical framework, emphasizing the importance of integrating students' cultural contexts into the learning materials. Additionally, students' reflective journals, written throughout the learning process, were analyzed to examine how they connected language learning with their cultural identity. Classroom observations were

systematically conducted to capture real-time interactions and student engagement with the interactive e-book.

Thematic analysis was employed to analyze the collected data. Thematic analysis is a widely utilized qualitative research method that provides a systematic approach to identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within qualitative data. This method is particularly valuable in social sciences, psychology, and health research, where understanding the complexities of human experience is paramount. Thematic analysis allows researchers to move beyond mere description of data, facilitating a deeper understanding of the underlying meanings and implications of the findings. This paper aims to provide an exhaustive exploration of thematic analysis, detailing its theoretical foundations, methodological steps, and practical applications, while also addressing its strengths and limitations.

Thematic analysis is versatile and can be applied across various research contexts, including health, education, and social sciences. In health research, for instance, thematic analysis has been employed to explore patients' experiences of chronic illness, revealing themes related to identity, coping strategies, and the impact of illness on daily life. By understanding these themes, healthcare providers can tailor interventions to better meet patients' needs.

In educational research, thematic analysis has been used to investigate students' experiences of online learning, uncovering themes related to engagement, motivation, and the challenges of remote education. These insights can inform the design of more effective online learning environments that foster student success. Data from interviews, observations, and reflective journals were categorized into key emerging themes, such as student engagement, cultural content comprehension, and language skill enhancement. Data validity was reinforced through triangulation, comparing findings from different data sources to ensure consistency and accuracy. Furthermore, member checking was conducted, where the findings were confirmed with participants to ensure that the researchers' interpretations accurately reflected the students' experiences.

### 3 Result and Discussion

The result from this study reveal that the use of interactive e-books supported by the Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) approach significantly enhanced students' engagement, cultural understanding, and language skills.

**Table 1.** The Description of Research Results

No	Category	Responses' result from the students	
		Number of Students (%)	Description of Results
1	Increased Engagement	35 (81.4%)	The majority of students reported that the interactive e-book enhanced their engagement in learning. They felt more interested and involved because the material was relevant to their cultural context.
2	Improved Cultural Understanding	30 (69.8%)	30 students indicated an increased understanding of the relationship between language and cultural identity through the use of culturally relevant e-books. They

			found the learning experience more meaningful and relatable.
3	Enhanced Language Skills	28 (65.1%)	28 students reported improved language skills, particularly in comprehending more complex texts and cultural contexts.
4	Technical Challenges	5 (11.6%)	A small portion of students experienced technical difficulties, such as unstable internet connections and navigation issues within the e-book.

The results that out of 43 students, 81.4% reported increased engagement in the learning process, particularly highlighting how the integration of culturally relevant content made the lessons more relatable and meaningful. These results are consistent with previous studies, such as those conducted by Yuli Rahmawati which demonstrated that culturally responsive teaching effectively fosters student engagement by connecting the material to their cultural context. The interactive nature of the e-book allowed students to actively participate in discussions, encouraging them to share their cultural experiences, which further enriched the learning environment.

Moreover, 69.8% of the students reported a significant improvement in their understanding of the relationship between language and cultural identity. This finding aligns with the work of previous research by Sharleen Pevac-Zimmer who noted that the Identity Project successfully raised pre-service teachers' awareness of their cultural identity and its impact on teaching practices. The culturally responsive e-book in this study served as a powerful tool for students to explore how language shapes, and is shaped by, cultural identity. The use of technology in culturally responsive teaching can create a learning space where students' cultural backgrounds are validated and integrated into the curriculum. This study expands upon these insights, showing that integrating e-books not only enhances cultural awareness but also deepens the connection between language learning and students' cultural heritage.

In terms of language skill development, 65.1% of students reported improvements, particularly in their ability to comprehend and analyze complex texts that included cultural references. This is consistent with previous research findings, where students experienced similar progress when exposed to ethnochemistry texts. The e-book's interactive features, such as embedded multimedia and self-paced learning options, facilitated a deeper understanding of the materials. However, despite the overall positive results, a small percentage of students (11.6%) encountered technical difficulties, which is a challenge commonly reported in technology-supported learning environments. Addressing these technical barriers could further enhance the effectiveness of e-books in future applications, making them more accessible and seamless in diverse educational contexts..

## 4 Conclusion

This study provides compelling evidence that integrating Interactive E-Books with a Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) approach can significantly enhance English language learning among university students. The findings revealed that 81.4% of students experienced increased engagement, largely due to the cultural relevance embedded within the e-book materials. Additionally, 69.8% of students demonstrated a greater understanding of how language and cultural identity are interwoven, which contributed to deeper, more reflective

language learning. Furthermore, 65.1% of students reported notable improvements in their language skills, particularly in reading comprehension and the ability to analyze texts with complex cultural elements. These outcomes align with existing research on the effectiveness of culturally responsive teaching, demonstrating that e-books offer a valuable resource for making language learning more meaningful and culturally resonant for students.

Nevertheless, the study faced some limitations that are important to consider for future research and practice. A small percentage of students (11.6%) encountered technical challenges, such as unreliable internet connections and navigation difficulties within the e-book platform, which may have hindered their full participation in the learning process. These issues highlight the need for better digital infrastructure and more user-friendly e-learning platforms, especially in language education where smooth access to materials is essential. Moreover, while the qualitative data provided rich insights into student experiences, future studies could include quantitative measures of language proficiency improvement to further validate the effectiveness of e-books in enhancing English language skills. Despite these challenges, the findings demonstrate the strong potential of CRT and interactive e-books as transformative tools in English language learning, fostering not only linguistic competency but also cultural awareness and critical thinking.

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