Language Dimensions of Digital Communication in the Context of Global Integration

Dimensiones lingüísticas de la comunicación digital en el contexto de la integración global

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Abstract

The communication processes are being significantly transformed by digitalization and globalization, making it essential to study English digital genres as key factors shaping the modern linguistic landscape. Given English's dominance as a medium in academic, educational, and professional settings, this topic is particularly relevant. The study aims to analyze the features of English digital communication forms and understand how they contribute to new modes of language interaction. The research methodology involved direct observation and content analysis of communication practices among English-speaking students in virtual learning environments like Moodle, Microsoft Teams, and Zoom. The findings demonstrate that digital genres combine textual, visual, and audio elements, creating a multimodal communication space where text remains central but is enhanced with voice messages, video comments, emojis, and hyperlinks. It was also observed that communication preferences differ by field of study: linguistics students tend to use multimodal attachments, digital media students prefer oral forms, and business students combine textual and non-verbal resources. The practical significance of the study lies in its potential to improve educational programs, promote digital literacy, and incorporate multimodal genres into learning. It also emphasizes the need to balance globalization with the preservation of local linguistic traditions.

Keywords: English digital discourse genres, linguistic globalization, computer-mediated communication (CMC), English digital rhetoric, English multimodal discourse analysis, academic communication, digital literacy, intercultural communication, educational digital practices.

Resumen

Los procesos de comunicación están siendo profundamente transformados por la digitalización y la globalización, por lo que resulta esencial estudiar los géneros digitales en inglés como factores clave del espacio lingüístico moderno. Dada la prevalencia global del inglés como medio en contextos académicos, educativos y profesionales, este tema adquiere una relevancia particular. El objetivo del estudio es explorar las características de las formas digitales de comunicación en inglés e identificar cómo contribuyen al desarrollo de nuevos modos de interacción lingüística. La metodología de investigación incluyó la observación directa y el análisis de contenido de las prácticas comunicativas entre estudiantes angloparlantes en entornos virtuales de aprendizaje como Moodle, Microsoft Teams y Zoom. Los resultados revelan que los géneros digitales integran códigos textuales, visuales y auditivos, creando un espacio comunicativo multimodal en el que el texto sigue siendo primario, pero se enriquece con mensajes de voz, comentarios en video, emojis e hipervínculos. Se constató que las preferencias comunicativas varían según el campo de estudio: los estudiantes de lingüística tienden a usar recursos multimodales, los de medios digitales prefieren las formas orales y los de negocios integran recursos textuales y no verbales. La importancia práctica del estudio radica en su potencial para mejorar los programas educativos, fomentar la alfabetización digital e incorporar géneros multimodales en el aprendizaje, y, además, en destacar la necesidad de equilibrar la globalización con la preservación de las tradiciones lingüísticas locales.

Palabras clave: géneros del discurso digital en inglés, globalización lingüística, comunicación mediada por computadora (CMC), retórica digital en inglés, análisis del discurso multimodal en inglés, comunicación académica, alfabetización digital, comunicación intercultural, prácticas digitales educativas.

1. INTRODUCTION

In today's era of digital globalization, language communication is undergoing significant changes that impact all aspects of human activity—ranging from daily interactions to professional and academic exchanges. New genres are emerging that combine textual, visual, and audio elements, creating a distinctly different communication space driven by the rise of digital technologies, social media, and multimodality. In this context, English functions both as a tool for communication and as a universal language, while also serving as a means of power that influences not only content but also the form of modern digital speech. The challenge is that digital genres not only expand opportunities for integration, knowledge sharing, and intercultural dialogue but also raise concerns about replacing local language cultures and making communication more uniform. Belcher (2022) and Pérez-Llantada (2024, 2025) argue that digital genres are important tools for academic and professional discussions, and researchers like Grzenkowicz and Wildfeuer (2025), Nav and Link (2025) explore their multimodality and the development of new communication forms. Scholars emphasize that digital English-language communication fosters new identities and changes methods of argumentation and persuasion (Zappavigna and Logi, 2021; Kessler and Marino, 2023). At the same time, other authors caution about the risks of English dominance, which, as a global language, could diminish local cultural traits (Boliqulova & Oblokulova, 2025; Rahmani & Karimi, 2025; Nafees, 2025). This contradiction highlights the need for more research into balancing globalization with the preservation of cultural diversity.Despite numerous publications, several "white spots"

still remain. The challenges of integrating multimodal genres into education systems are not yet well developed, and there is no organized data on how digital English-language rhetoric affects the development of new argumentation models. Additionally, there is a lack of empirical research showing how students use different communication strategies in digital educational environments. These knowledge gaps emphasize the importance of this work.

The purpose of the study is to identify the specifics of English digital communication genres within the context of globalization, characterize their structural and functional features, and examine their impact on the development of new practices in education and intercultural interaction. To achieve this goal, the following tasks were set: to organize the main approaches to analyzing digital genres, to conduct a content analysis of their role in the student environment, to compare the data obtained with current research findings, and to outline prospects for their practical application in education and global communication.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Recent studies explore the nature and functions of digital genres, their influence on educational practices, and the globalized language environment (Belcher, 2022; Kuteeva, 2025; Pérez-Llantada, 2024, 2025). Specifically, multimodality and digital communication are viewed as vital elements in developing academic and professional discourse (Grzenkowicz & Wildfeuer, 2025; Nav & Link, 2025; Ruiz-Garrido & Palmer-Silveira, 2025). An important concern is how English as a global language affects local cultures, especially in social media and digital environments (Boliqulova & Oblokulova, 2025; Huseynova *et al*., 2024; Nafees, 2025; Rahmani & Karimi, 2025). Research confirms that digital technologies influence new language practices and reshape users' linguistic identities (Gu *et al*., 2024; Svider, 2025; Lorés & Diani, 2021; Izotova *et al*., 2021). In teaching English and specialized genres, emphasis is placed on using multimodal resources and digital learning tools (Hafner *et al*., 2023; Hellwig *et al*., 2022; Kessler & Marino, 2023; Obojska & Vaiouli, 2025). Studies also highlight the role of multimodal writing and digital mediation in creating innovative pedagogical approaches (Wang, 2022; Du & Cheong, 2025; Ehret & Taboada, 2021; Zappavigna & Logi, 2021).

Particular attention is given to the development of English-language media discourse, which encompasses social, pragmatic, and linguistic aspects (Mialkovska *et al*., 2023, 2024; Hellwig *et al*., 2022; Hafner *et al*., 2023). Furthermore, the bibliometric analysis shows that multimodal discourses are attracting growing interest within the international academic community (Liu *et al*., 2024). Current research mainly examines the nature of digital genres and their role in education and the globalized language environment (Belcher, 2022; Kuteeva, 2025; Pérez-Llantada, 2024, 2025). It is particularly believed that multimodality and digital communication significantly contribute to the development of academic and professional discourse (Grzenkowicz and Wildfeuer, 2025; Nav and Link, 2025; Ruiz-Garrido and Palmer-Silveira, 2025). Another critical issue is the influence of English as a global language on local cultural contexts, especially in social media and digital spaces (Boliqulova and Oblokulova, 2025; Huseynova *et al*., 2024; Nafees, 2025; Rahmani and Karimi, 2025). Research indicates that digital technologies shape new language use trends and impact users' language identities (Gu *et al*., 2024; Svider, 2025; Lorés and Diani, 2021; Izotova *et al*., 2021).

When teaching English and specialized genres, the focus is on using multimodal resources and digital learning tools (Hafner *et al*., 2023; Hellwig *et al*., 2022; Kessler and Marino, 2023; Obojska and Vaiouli, 2025). It is also found that multimodal writing and digital mediation are part of new directions in pedagogy (Wang, 2022; Du and Cheong, 2025; Ehret and Taboada, 2021; Zappavigna and Logi, 2021). Special attention is given to developing English-language media discourse, which includes social, pragmatic, and linguistic aspects (Mialkovska *et al*., 2023, 2024; Hellwig *et al*., 2022; Hafner *et al*., 2023). Moreover, bibliometric analysis highlights the growing international scientific interest in multimodal discourse (Liu *et al*., 2024). There is also evidence that digital media play a key role in multilingual families, with digital platforms more frequently used to shape language identity and improve literacy (Obojska & Vaiouli, 2025). Research on how knowledge spreads within digital academic discourse examines how genre features evolve and how digitalization influences author identity (Lorés and Diani, 2021). Additionally, new forms of academic multimodal writing are recognized as drivers of innovative practices in scholarly communication (Pérez-Llantada, 2025; Liu *et al*., 2024).

Although progress has been made, some issues still need attention. Specifically, there is a lack of systematic research summarizing the impact of digital genres on language policy and intercultural communication, as well as a shortage of empirical data on how multimodal genres are practically integrated into curricula.

3. METHODS

The study was conducted by the author through direct observation and content analysis of digital communication practices among students at two higher education institutions— University College London (UK) and the University of Toronto (Canada). The sample included 62 English-speaking students from the fields of Applied Linguistics and Communication (26 students), Computer Science and Digital Media (21 students), and International Business and Communication (15 students). The research took place over two semesters: fall-winter (October 2023 – January 2024) and spring (February – May 2024), totaling 32 academic weeks. During this period, 4,326 communication instances were recorded on digital learning platforms Moodle, Microsoft Teams, and Zoom. The focus was mainly on comparing types of synchronous (online seminars, video conferences, live chats) and asynchronous (forum discussions, assignment comments, email) communication. Three parameters were used in the quantitative analysis to measure the proportion of each strategy (as a percentage), the average number of examples per student, and the data dispersion (standard deviation). This approach not only identified the percentage of written and oral strategies used in computer-mediated communication but also revealed how digital genres are implemented differently across disciplines in the educational process.

4. RESULTS

The uniqueness of the English digital discourse genre lies in its blend of traditional rhetorical models and new multidimensional communication forms shaped by digital technologies and globalization. Unlike classical written genres, which are mostly limited to text, digital genres include visual, auditory, and hypertextual elements, creating a layered space for communication. For example, in social media and online learning settings, English-speaking users combine text, images, videos, emojis, and hyperlinks,

which shifts the traditional view of the genre and makes it more dynamic and hybrid (Grzenkowicz and Wildfeuer, 2025; Zappavigna and Logi, 2021).

In the realm of global communication, English digital discourse serves as a tool for language integration and unity. English acts as a mediator that connects cultural representatives worldwide, especially in digital genres like educational or academic discourse. At the same time, the sharing of knowledge through English in genres such as video abstracts, multimodal presentations, blogs, or interactive learning materials, along with the standardization of language practices, introduces new methods of sharing knowledge (Nav & Link, 2025; Perez-Llantada, 2025). This promotes the development of overall communication structures but may also threaten the existence of local language varieties, raising concerns about maintaining cultural diversity.

One key area is the role of English digital discourse genres in shaping new ways of interaction among English speakers. These genres enable the blending of personal and group communication, covering areas such as self-representation, intercultural communication, and career development. For example, in bilingual families and schools, digital media serve as tools to teach children and their parents literacy, supporting the development of a new linguistic identity where English becomes a means of socialization and integration (Obojska *et al.*, 2025; Gu *et al.*, 2024). At the same time, researchers highlight that digital genres expand opportunities for academic writing, allowing the integration of multimodal resources into the learning process and making communication more adaptable and responsive to user needs (Hafner *et al.*, 2023; Kessler and Marino, 2023).

Therefore, examining the unique features of English digital discourse genres shows that they not only reflect current globalization trends but also have the potential to influence them. They act as a platform for creating new norms and techniques for English communication, where technological advances, linguistic changes, and socio-cultural issues come together (Belcher, 2022; Svier, 2025; Rahmani and Karimi, 2025). In this way, digital genres can be understood as a key mechanism for shaping new communicative practices that will impact the future of English in the globalized digital world.

English plays a key role in digital communication as a universal language in the process of linguistic globalization. It is prominent not only in academic and professional settings but also in everyday online interactions. Online genres shared on social media, in educational environments, and across multimodal spaces serve as tools for spreading language practices worldwide. They incorporate English into local cultural contexts, building a superstructure over national languages and creating a new layered identity for users (Boliqulova & Oblokulova, 2025; Huseynova *et al.*, 2024; Nafees, 2025). Therefore, Table 1 highlights the main trends of how English as a global language impacts local and international spaces through digital genres.

Table 1. The impact of English through digital genres on local and international language environments

Direction of influence	Local level	International level	Examples of digital genres
Educational integration	The use of English in school and university online courses	English dominance in MOOC platforms and global educational environments	Video lectures, interactive platforms (Coursera, EdX)
Social media	Borrowing English words and memes in local social networks	Formation of universal memes and global trends	TikTok, Instagram stories, YouTube shorts
Professional discourse	Use of English terms in business and academic environment	Unification of international communication in business and science	Video abstracts, corporate blogs, CEO statements
Linguistic identity	Combining national language with English in digital discourse	Formation of hybrid practices of multilingual communication	Multimodal posts, hybrid academic genres

Source: created by the author based on (Boliqulova & Oblokulova, 2025; Huseynova *et al*., 2024; Nafees, 2025; Rahmani & Karimi, 2025)

Therefore, linguistic globalization in digital genres can be described in two ways: first, the integration of English into local educational, social, and professional life; and second, the development of a global communication space where English functions as the language mediator. This encourages the standardization of communication norms but also raises worries about the potential displacement of traditional language practices.

English computer-mediated communication (CMC) combines written and spoken communication methods more than ever before. It acts as a fusion of the spontaneity and dialogue found in oral speech with the structure and formality of writing. The trend to blend oral and written discourse is evident in genres like chats, video and audio comments, multimodal posts, and hybrid educational resources. This positively impacts the development of new communication practices, where English serves as a unifying language across different cultures and professional communities (Hafner *et al*., 2023; Kessler and Marino, 2023; Gu *et al*., 2024).

The study employed direct observation and content analysis to investigate students' digital communication habits. The sample consisted of 62 English-speaking higher education students from two institutions: University College London and the University of Toronto. Participants represented various fields: *Applied Linguistics and*

Communication (26), *Computer Science and Digital Media* (21), and *International Business and Communication* (15). The research took place over two semesters: from October 2023 to January 2024 (fall-winter) and from February to May 2024 (spring). Observations spanned 32 academic weeks. During this period, 4,326 communication units in digital learning environments such as Moodle, Microsoft Teams, and Zoom were documented.

Particular attention was given to comparing different communication formats: synchronous (online seminars, video conferences, real-time chat messages) and asynchronous (forum discussions, comments on assignments, e-mails). Three parameters were selected for quantitative analysis: the percentage of strategy use (%), the average number of examples per student, and the variability of indicators (standard deviation). The study revealed that students majoring in *Applied Linguistics and Communication* more frequently used multimodal attachments (images, hyperlinks, presentations), while students in *Computer Science and Digital Media* favored voice notes and video comments. Students of *International Business and Communication* demonstrated a balanced mix of text messages and non-verbal elements (emojis, reactions). Thus, the methodology not only allowed tracking the quantitative distribution of written and oral strategies within *computer-mediated communication* but also helped identify disciplinary characteristics in integrating digital genres into the English-language educational environment. Figure 1 shows the distribution of different communication strategies within CMC.
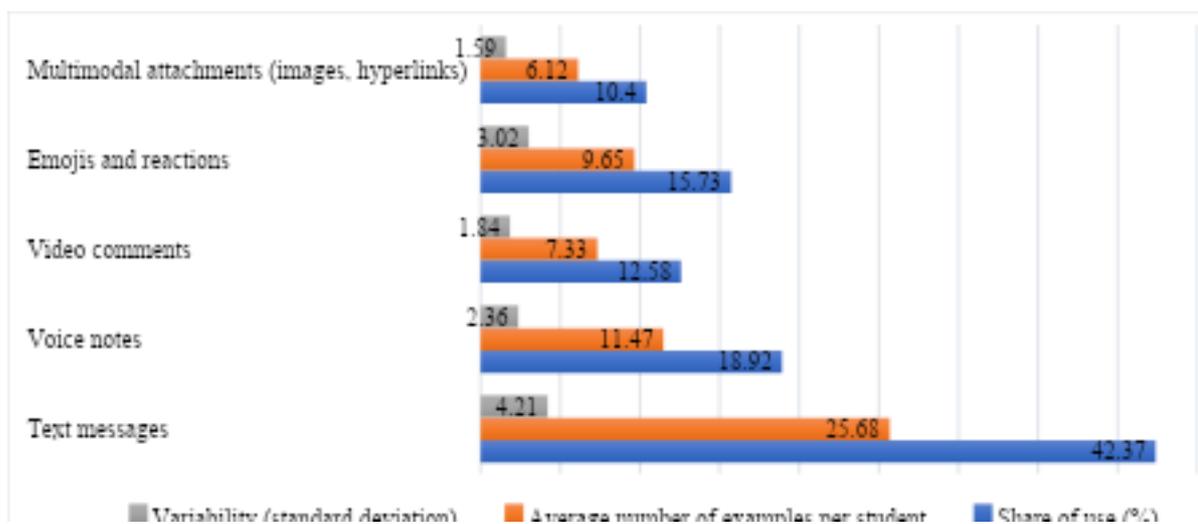

Figure 1. The use of written and oral strategies in CMC by English-speaking students
Source: created by the author

The analysis of the data shown in the graph highlights a clear dominance of text messages, which make up 42.37%. The average number of examples per student is 25.68. This is nearly twice as high as the next most common strategy, voice notes (18.92% and 11.47 respectively). The gap between these two categories is over 23 percentage points, indicating that written strategies remain the leading form of communication in a *computer-mediated* environment. Video comments occupy an intermediate position with a share of 12.58% and an average score of 7.33, which is almost twice as low as voice notes but still higher than multimodal attachments. Emojis and reactions (15.73%)

highlight the importance of non-verbal elements, although they are used less frequently than voice notes in terms of the average number of examples (9.65). Multimodal attachments are the least used (10.40% and 6.12), but their presence shows students' interest in adding extra visual and hypertext resources to their communication. Variability across all strategies remains fairly low (from 1.59 to 4.21), suggesting stability in how these tools are used within the study sample. Overall, the data confirm a trend toward blending written and oral strategies, with text messages leading, while multimodal and oral formats are gradually increasing in use.

The characteristics of English digital rhetoric include several features in the digital environment that set it apart from traditional forms of argumentation and persuasion. It combines verbal, visual, and auditory tools to create multi-layered channels of influence on the audience. Unlike classical rhetoric, which mainly relies on logical arguments and organized language strategies, digital rhetoric emphasizes emotional appeal, interactivity, and fast communication (Kessler and Marino, 2023; Zappavigna and Logi, 2021). It introduces new ways of argumentation since evidence is supported by visual symbols, emojis, memes, and multimodal tools to produce a more dynamic and flexible influence. Table 2 outlines the main features of English digital rhetoric and their role in shaping models of argumentation and persuasion.

Table 2. Features of English digital rhetoric and their impact on argumentation models

Feature of digital rhetoric	Characteristic	Influence on models of argumentation and persuasion	Examples of genres
Multimodality	Combination of text, images, video, hyperlinks	Strengthens arguments with visual and emotional support	Video abstracts, interactive presentations
Interactivity	Enables direct audience participation (comments, reactions, reposts)	Turns argumentation into a dialogic process, engages the user in co-creation of content	Social networks, forums
Emotionality	Use of emojis, memes, short emotional phrases	Creates a quick emotional response, increases the effectiveness of persuasion	TikTok, Instagram stories
Transience	High dynamics and short duration of messages	Forms argumentation strategies focused on instant persuasion	Twitter/X, stories in social networks

Hybridity of genres	Combination of academic, professional and everyday discursive practices	Creates new formats of argumentation that take into account several communicative contexts simultaneously	Blogs, corporate reports in multimedia format

Source: created by the author based on (Kessler & Marino, 2023; Ruiz-Garrido & Palmer-Silveira, 2025; Zappavigna & Logi, 2021; Grzenkowicz & Wildfeuer, 2025)

The emerging communication practices rely on digital rhetoric in English, thus playing a vital role. They transform argumentation from its traditional linear and text-based form into a multimodal one that is not only integrated but also vibrant. Consequently, new models of persuasion and influence are being developed in the digital sphere, which can be more effective not only due to logic but also because of interactivity, visualization, and emotional appeal.

English multimodal discourse analysis helps us understand how text, visuals, and sounds work together to create new ways of communication in digital genres. Multimodality has become an essential part of the modern English-speaking digital world, as it combines different codes to improve argumentation, emotional appeal, and intercultural exchange. The text provides the logical and conceptual foundation of the message, visual resources add emotional and imaginative support, while audio elements (such as intonation, music, and sound effects) introduce an additional layer of meaning that traditional written discourse lacks (Hafner *et al*., 2023; Wang, 2022; Du & Cheong, 2025). Table 3 organizes the key components of multimodal analysis of English-language digital discourse and their roles in shaping meaning.

Table 3. Components of English multimodal discourse and their role in digital genres

Component	Characteristics	Role in the formation of meanings	Examples of genres
Textual	Words, phrases, hashtags, hyperlinks	Provides a logical structure, a conceptual basis for the message	Academic blogs, forum discussions
Visual	Images, emojis, memes, infographics	Creates emotional resonance, enhances persuasiveness and attracts attention	Instagram stories, video presentations
Audio	Voice, music, sound effects	Adds expressiveness, creates intonation and emotional background	Podcasts, video abstracts

Integrated	Combination of text, visual and audio resources	Forms a complex semantic space, provides flexibility of communication	TikTok, multimodal learning platforms
Interactive	Comments, reactions, multimedia responses	Creates dialogic nature, expands the meaning of the message in the community	Social networks, online discussions

Source: created by the author based on (Hafner *et al*., 2023; Wang, 2022; Du & Cheong, 2025; Grzenkowicz & Wildfeuer, 2025)

Therefore, the results of the multimodal analysis indicate that digital genres in the English language function as multicode structures, with each component serving a specific role, but they are most powerful when combined. It is the integration of textual, visual, and audio elements that creates the conditions for developing new communicative meanings that are both universal and adaptable to specific cultural contexts.

5. DISCUSSION

The research findings emphasize the dominant role of English digital genres in global communication and the rise of new interaction practices. However, analyzing these data reveals several controversial issues. Some scholars view English as a universal tool for digital integration, which promotes genre standardization and the expansion of global educational and professional practices (Belcher, 2022; Pérez-Llantada, 2025; Nav & Link, 2025). Others highlight the risks of marginalizing local languages and threatening cultural diversity, concerns that may worsen with English dominance in digital genres (Boliqulova & Oblakulova, 2025; Nafees, 2025; Rahmani & Karimi, 2025). Our own findings show that written strategies remain the primary methods in computer-mediated communication, aligning with earlier research on the stability of text genres despite multimodal competition (Ehret & Taboada, 2021; Lorés & Diani, 2021). Meanwhile, the increasing use of voice notes and video comments indicates a gradual shift toward oral formats, reflecting recent trends in hybrid communication styles (Hafner *et al*., 2023; Kessler & Marino, 2023). Therefore, our data do not dismiss the importance of multimodal elements but underline the continued dominance of text as the core component of communication.

There is ongoing debate about whether to integrate or preserve local linguistic traditions. Research on multimodal practices in multilingual families shows that using English as a socialization and literacy tool does not necessarily lead to the complete replacement of national languages (Obojska and Vaiouli, 2025; Gu *et al*., 2024). Instead, some scholars note that globalization in digital communication encourages the merging of genres, especially in professional and academic fields where English is dominant (Ruiz-Garrido and Palmer-Silveira, 2025; Liu *et al*., 2024). It is also important to recognize that English digital rhetoric shapes new forms of argumentation that may lack logical grounding but focus on emotion, interactivity, and speed. Some researchers argue that this enhances persuasive power through multimodality, while others believe these forms are unstable because of their impermanence and limited ability to influence deep thinking (Hellwig *et al*., 2022; Mialkovska *et al*., 2023, 2024; Dost, 2025).

This discussion indicates that English digital genres are a powerful force in globalization, but they also lead to conflicts related to local linguistic identities, genre format consistency, and teaching challenges. Future research should focus on balancing globalization trends with the preservation of cultural diversity, along with practical suggestions for integrating multimodal genres into education.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The paper discusses various digital communication genres in English that are adaptable multimodal structures combining text, visuals, and audio, creating new patterns of language interaction in a globalized context. It shows that the actual results generally match expectations: text remains the main component of digital discourse, while multimodal elements expand its reach and open new opportunities for argumentation and intercultural communication. The scientific novelty lies in the fact that written strategies are maintained, even as the roles of oral and integrated forms become more prominent, indicating a shift in the genre system within the English-speaking digital sphere. The practical significance of the findings is their potential application in developing educational programs aimed at improving digital literacy, integrating multimodal resources into teaching, and enhancing students' communication skills. However, the study was limited by the sample size and observation period, so the results may not fully represent broader educational and cultural realities. Further research is needed to explore how to implement digital genres in intercultural education, their impact on linguistic identity formation, and their role in preserving cultural diversity. Additionally, exploring the digital transformation of pedagogical frameworks and the use of new multimodal communication forms to foster interdisciplinary connections in global education appears promising.

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