



## Integration of Technology into Foreign Language Instruction: The impact of Virtual Events on German Language Learning

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In a globalizing world technology is a vital factor, which requires its universal presence. In this context, language learning should not be limited to the traditional classroom. In addition to overall language skills, cultural awareness towards the target country is pivotal. The present study aims on the potential of involving virtual language related events, conferences, guest lectures, projects, workshops and virtual tours as unconventional avenues to improve the German language acquisition and cultural awareness of learners of German as a Foreign Language at University of Kelaniya. Thus, how virtual language sessions can influence the German language and cultural competences among participants is addressed throughout the research. The sample group consists of 40 undergraduates from 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> year at the university offering German as a Foreign Language for the Bachelor of Arts Honours Degree. The study employs a mixed method approach. The data were collected through pre and post test results of the students, classroom observations and student reflections on virtual events. The quantitative data show an enhancement of four language competencies along with an immense development of cultural awareness. The qualitative data illustrate a significant preference of the students towards virtual events. The analysis of data reveals that virtual sessions in a foreign language classroom offers a dynamic platform for language learners to enrich their linguistic, cultural and motivational skills. The study contributes to comprehend, how technology is integrated to overcome geographical confines and offer an effective experience for language learning by exploring the culture in an unconventional way.

**Key words:** Cultural Competency, Foreign Language Teaching, German as a Foreign Language, Technology in the language classroom, Virtual events

