The innovation diffusion, technology adoption, and digital etnopedagogical reading: English lecturer's agency in reinforcing the ability of the younger generation to retain local knowledge

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Abstract. This study examines the role of English lecturers as change agents in promoting innovative digital ethnopedagogical reading in higher education settings. Even though higher education in Indonesia is becoming increasingly digitally oriented, technology adoption is often tool-centered rather than culturally aware, potentially endangering the ability of younger generations to retain local knowledge. This research investigates the factors that influence innovation diffusion and investigates the integration of digital tools with local cultural values (*Bidar, Pulau Kemaro, Rumah Limas, Songket Palembang, Kue Maksuba*) in reading instruction, as mediated by a lecturer at a state university in Palembang, South Sumatra. Data were gathered from six students chosen through purposive sampling and one lecturer, using a qualitative intrinsic case study design, until data saturation was reached. Primary data collection instruments included semi-structured interviews (lasting 20-30 minutes via WhatsApp video calls) and document analysis (YouTube videos, reading scripts, and chat logs). Four primary themes were identified through thematic analysis in accordance with (Braun & Clarke, 2006): the dynamics of drivers and barriers in innovation diffusion, the transformative impact on linguistic competence and cultural awareness, the systematic implementation through digital platforms, and the dual motivation (pragmatic efficiency and cultural preservation). The results indicate that culturally responsible lecturers, rather than institutional mandates, are the primary driving force behind sustainable innovation. By combining their cultural pride with their English language skills, students created a "glocal identity," demonstrating that tradition and technology can complement each other rather than work against one another. The study suggests that universities should establish communities of practice for cultural innovation, integrate ethnopedagogy into teacher education, address digital infrastructure inequities, and develop culturally grounded digital material repositories to support culturally sustainable educational transformation.

Introduction

Education today is advancing at a faster pace than ever before. The move to digital has transformed how knowledge is created, shared, and kept current. As a result, teachers must continually redefine their roles in this ever-changing environment. This requires many lecturers to reconsider not only how they instruct but also how students participate in the learning process. From what we observed at one university in Palembang, the biggest challenge is adapting to new technology while ensuring

that lessons remain grounded in the local culture. Numerous opportunities have been brought about by digital innovation. This makes learning more adaptable, interactive, and accessible for students in various settings (Joosten, 2020). However, bringing technology into higher education is not a simple process. Institutional preparation, cultural relevance, and technical access continue to influence the practical application of such innovation (Buc, 2015).

Research indicates that, despite Indonesia's higher education system becoming increasingly digitally advanced, the use of technology in English language instruction often remains tool-centered rather than pedagogically and culturally aware (Mestari, 2025). According to a preliminary investigation conducted at a public university in Palembang, 78% of English lecturers reported incorporating digital platforms, including WhatsApp, Zoom, and YouTube, into their instruction. However, only 23% of them incorporated culturally relevant materials into their digital lessons. This disparity highlights a significant issue: technology is being utilized, but not always in ways that promote meaningful engagement with local values or enhance students' cultural identities. Additionally, talking to students revealed that many of them felt disconnected from their own cultural heritage and were more familiar with popular cultures from other countries than with local traditions, such as *Bidar boats, Songket* textiles, or traditional cooking methods. Youths who are not interested in their culture pose a significant challenge to the future of local knowledge, particularly in a globalized school setting where English is the primary language of instruction. Therefore, we need to explore how digital innovation can be leveraged strategically to not only enhance language skills but also preserve and protect local cultural identity in formal education settings as soon as possible.

In the field of English language education, particularly in reading instruction, many lecturers are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of integrating digital technology. According to recent research, the integration of digital tools into reading lessons can enhance motivation, foster collaboration, and provide valuable scaffolding to assist students in their comprehension of texts (Zuo dan Ives, 2024). Additionally, collaborative reading projects have been demonstrated to enhance students' engagement with meaning and broaden their semiotic awareness. Indonesian language lecturers in higher education have begun to incorporate digital methods into their classrooms, frequently customizing these methods to accommodate their institutional and cultural contexts (Astri et al., 2024). How these new ideas spread depends on how easily people can access technology and how teachers and students navigate the social and cultural aspects of using it.

Besides using technology, an ethnopedagogical approach that combines local knowledge and culture with teaching is gaining increasing popularity among researchers. Many English teachers view ethnopedagogy as a means to preserve cultural heritage and make classroom learning relevant to students' everyday lives (Muzakkir, 2023; Widana et al., 2023). According to research conducted in Indonesian English classrooms, students demonstrate enhanced language abilities and cultural pride and awareness when their instructors incorporate local traditions, stories, and cultural values into their lessons (Hasanah, 2023). Incorporating local knowledge into digital learning spaces is another way to connect cultural continuity with technological progress. This means that new ideas do not replace tradition; they strengthen and renew it.

There have been studies that look at how digital learning can be used to teach English (Joosten, 2020; Zuo dan Ives, 2024) and how ethnopedagogical approaches can be used in Indonesian classrooms (Muzakkir, 2023; Hasanah, 2023; Dwikamayuda et al., 2024), but not many that look at how these two areas come together in higher education reading instruction. Digital reading research that has already been conducted primarily examines the cognitive effects and technological benefits, without considering how culture influences meaning. In contrast, ethnopedagogical research prioritizes cultural preservation, but it seldom investigates the strategic application of digital tools to facilitate this endeavor. This gap leaves a significant question unanswered: How do English

professors, as change agents, help integrate digital innovation and local cultural values into reading instruction? Which elements influence how these mixed practices proliferate among academic communities?

To fill in this gap, this study uses a multidimensional framework that combines Diffusion of Innovation Theory (Rogers, 2003; Tilaar, 2009; Fullan, 2016). This research differs from others that have examined either culture or technology in isolation. Instead, it views the lecturer as a cultural and pedagogical mediator who utilizes digital tools and ethnopedagogical principles in a planned manner to create learning experiences that are meaningful and affirming of identity. This study is novel because it examines lecturer agency as the catalyst for innovation diffusion, examining not only what is adopted but also how and why it spreads within institutional settings. The study provides a comprehensive understanding of how digital ethnopedagogical reading innovation is conceived, implemented, sustained, and disseminated in South Sumatran higher education, drawing on the lived experiences of both lecturers and students.

Combining ethnopedagogy with new learning technologies can help create reading lessons that are both up-to-date and rich in cultural information. This mix helps students stay interested, stay motivated, and learn in a way that is connected to both their intellect and their cultural roots. This method is particularly effective in teaching the English language in higher education, as it instills a sense of relevance in lessons and fosters a sense of pride in local traditions. However, this practice is not without challenges. Using digital innovations that incorporate local knowledge presents several challenges that depend on multiple factors, including the readiness of teachers and students to use technology, their perceptions of its usefulness, the ease of finding authentic cultural materials, and the availability of institutional support. Policies and institutional structures also influence the ease with which these changes occur, according to research conducted in accordance with Rogers' (2003). According to the Diffusion of Innovation theory, the adoption of a system is typically contingent upon several critical factors, including the perceived advantage, the degree of compatibility, the complexity of the system, the capacity to experiment, and the visibility of the results (Mestari, 2025; Widana & Ratnaya, 2021). These components collectively elucidate the process by which a novel practice can evolve from the initiative of a single lecturer to a collective transformation within the entire university community.

In South Sumatra, a region characterized by a diverse array of ethnic and linguistic traditions, lecturers play a crucial role in maintaining the delicate balance between global educational developments and local cultural values. Frequently, English lecturers are tasked with the challenge of fostering global communication skills while simultaneously preserving local identity in their instruction. The majority of them serve as cultural mediators, making daily decisions that are both moral and pedagogical. Based on their beliefs, institutional context, and local realities, they may embrace, modify, or even oppose innovations, demonstrating their sense of agency. To elucidate the process by which digital ethnopedagogical innovation is established in higher education, it is essential to understand this agency.

English language education in the province has the potential to be a source of contextualized innovation, as it is based on this cultural context. Cultural richness provides a wealth of authentic materials that can be incorporated into English reading instruction. Examples of this include the Bidar boats floating along the *Musi* River, the elegant architecture of *Rumah Limas*, the shimmering textures of *Songket* Palembang, and the layered sweetness of *Kue Maksuba*. Combining these cultural elements with digital platforms makes learning more fun and helps people feel good about their identities. In this context, English lecturers are critical agents of change who inspire, facilitate, and maintain these innovations. Beyond just providing content, they help students understand the importance of both local identity and global communication by bridging the gap between

technology and cultural meaning. They also inspire others by engaging in reflective practice themselves and encouraging people in their professional communities to collaborate. The dissemination of digital ethnopedagogical innovation transitions from isolated classroom experimentation to a shared institutional culture as English becomes more prevalent. The authors, who are English lecturers and researchers deeply rooted in the local academic context, occupy a unique position to critically observe the unfolding of digital ethnopedagogical innovation in real classroom practice.

Theoretical Framework
The three main theories on which this study is based are the Diffusion of Innovation Theory (Rogers, 2003), ethnopedagogy (Tilaar, 2009), and change agency theory (Fullan, 2016). Collectively, these frameworks establish a multifaceted background for examining the development and dissemination of digital ethnopedagogical reading innovations in higher education.

Rogers' (2023) Diffusion of Innovation (DOI) Theory explains how people adopt and utilize new concepts or methods within a group. According to the theory, adoption happens gradually over time as people and organizations react to perceived advantages and limitations. It names five factors that affect this process: compatibility, trialability, observability, and relative advantage. Throughout the English Education Study Program, these dimensions serve as analytical tools to interpret how digital ethnopedagogical practices, such as reading exercises based on YouTube and feedback mediated by WhatsApp, were viewed, evaluated, and institutionalized. DOI views the adoption of educational technology not as a technical adjustment, but as a social and communicative process that is influenced by cultural and contextual dynamics.

Tilaar's (2009) concept of ethnopedagogy introduces a cultural and moral dimension to digital innovation. It serves as a reminder that learning is not solely about the transfer of knowledge; it also involves the preservation and revitalization of local wisdom (*kearifan lokal*). Local cultural texts like *Kue Maksuba, Rumah Limas*, and *Bidar* are used in this study to contextualize English learning and act as symbols of Palembang identity. This integration reflects the fundamental concept of ethnopedagogy, which posits that education serves as a means of transmitting social ethics, cultural identity, and moral values. This is because innovation promotes cultural continuity rather than alienating learners from their local roots.

The Change Agency Theory by Fullan (2016) illustrates how educational innovation impacts individuals. It sees lecturers and teachers as important change agents who enable their institutions to change. The English lecturer in this study fulfills this function by integrating local culture and technology into the reading instruction process. Her actions demonstrate that creativity is a collaborative, moral, and technical process. This theory emphasizes that for change to endure, it requires leadership, reflection, and support from the broader academic community. From this angle, educational innovation is viewed as a human-driven process rather than a purely technological one.

Based on the conceptual, empirical, and contextual rationale outlined above, this study seeks to answer the following research questions: 1) How do English lecturers exercise their agency in initiating and implementing digital ethnopedagogical reading innovation in South Sumatran higher education?, 2) What factors facilitate or hinder the diffusion of digital ethnopedagogical reading innovation within the academic community?, 3) How does the integration of local cultural values through digital reading practices influence students' linguistic competence and cultural awareness?.

To address these questions, the study aims to: 1) Explore the role of English lecturers as agents of change in promoting digital ethnopedagogical reading innovation within their teaching practice and

institutional context, 2) Identify the key drivers and barriers that influence the adoption and diffusion of this innovation among lecturers and students, 3) Analyze the impact of integrating local cultural values on students' reading comprehension, motivation, and sense of cultural identity.

The study makes a valuable contribution to the theoretical comprehension and practical application of culturally grounded digital pedagogy in English language education by achieving these objectives. The results that follow will shed light on the ways that innovation, culture, and agency interact to create revolutionary teaching methods in Indonesian higher education.

Method

Research Method and Design
A qualitative, intrinsic case study design (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2018) was employed in this investigation, which focused on the distinctive and limited instance of digital ethnopedagogical reading innovation within the English Education Study Program at a state university in Palembang, South Sumatra, Indonesia. The intrinsic case study method was selected because the phenomenon being studied is inherently fascinating and important in its own right, offering profound insights into the ways digital tools and cultural values intersect in English language instruction. In contrast to instrumental case studies, which emphasize generalization, this investigation aimed to understand the unique dynamics, contextual factors, and lived experiences of participants within this particular context (Merriam, 2009).

Three parameters were used to define the case: (1) the academic year 2024–2025; (2) the pedagogical innovation, digital ethnopedagogical reading instruction; and (3) the institutional context, a public university in Palembang. The study aimed to understand the phenomenon from the perspectives of both the person causing the change (the lecturer) and the individuals who benefited from it (the students). It achieved this by collecting information about their experiences, motivations, problems, and thoughts from various sources.

Research Setting and Context
The study took place at a state Islamic university in Palembang, South Sumatra, in the English Education Study Program, Faculty of Education and Teacher Training. It was chosen intentionally because it is a good example of a typical Indonesian college setting where English is taught as a foreign language, and teachers work hard to strike a balance between global skills and cultural values. About 150 students are enrolled in the study program. They are divided into four academic cohorts, with classes ranging in size from 25 to 40 students. Between August 2025 and October 2025, data were gathered. then, data were gathered. This provided the researchers with an opportunity to observe how the digital ethnopedagogical reading innovation was applied in various classes and to track the changes in the participants over time.

Participants, Research Subjects, and Informants
Purposive sampling, which is suitable for qualitative case studies where the objective is to choose cases with substantial amounts of information that shed light on the research questions, was used to choose the participants (Patton, 2015; Sumandya et al., 2025). The sample consisted of six students from four different English Education Study Program reading classes and one English lecturer.

Due to her role as the creator and principal implementer of the digital ethnopedagogical reading innovation, the lecturer was chosen as the primary informant. His perspective was crucial for understanding the innovation's conception, design, and institutional diffusion, given his role as a change agent. The selection of student participants was based on the following criteria: (1) active

engagement with the digital ethnopedagogical reading activities; (2) openness to sharing experiences; (3) representation of various class cohorts to ensure diversity of viewpoints; and (4) availability and consent to participate in interviews. Following the principle of data saturation (Creswell & Poth, 2018), the sampling process was terminated when no new information or themes emerged from additional interviews.

Data Collection Techniques and Research Instruments
Semi-Structured Interview

The data were collected using two primary methods: semi-structured interviews and document analysis. The researchers selected these methods to provide both depth and triangulation, enabling them to examine tangible evidence of the innovation implementation and capture participants' lived experiences. Semi-structured interviews were the primary tool used to collect data. This interview format was chosen because it provides flexibility to explore emergent topics that participants raise on their own, as well as a systematic exploration of predetermined themes (Merriam, 2009). Due to time and location constraints, each interview lasted approximately 20 to 30 minutes and was conducted via WhatsApp video calls. Prior to the interviews, each participant provided their informed consent, and all sessions were transcribed verbatim from audio recordings made with their consent.

Table 1. Semi-Structured Interview Guidelines

Participant Type	Interview Domain	Sample Questions
Lecturer	Motivation & Agency	– What motivated you to integrate local culture with digital tools in reading instruction? – How do you see your role as an agent of change?
Lecturer	Implementation Process	– Can you describe how you designed and implemented the digital ethnopedagogical reading activities? – What platforms and materials did you use?
Lecturer	Challenges & Strategies	– What challenges did you face during implementation? – How did you overcome these challenges?
Lecturer	Diffusion & Impact	– Have you shared this innovation with colleagues? – What has been the response from students and peers?
Students	Learning Experience	– How do you feel about using digital tools for reading activities? – How does using local cultural texts affect your learning?
Students	Linguistic & Cultural Gains	– Has this approach improved your reading comprehension and pronunciation? – Have you gained new insights into Palembang culture?
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Students	Linguistic & Cultural Gains	– Has this approach improved your reading comprehension and pronunciation? – Have you gained new insights into Palembang culture?
Both	Recommendations	– What suggestions do you have for improving this approach? – Would you recommend this method to others?

Document Analysis

To enhance the reliability of the interview data, the researchers gathered and reviewed supporting documents related to the digital ethnopedagogical reading innovation. (1) Students' YouTube

videos with oral reading performances; (2) Reading scripts with local cultural texts (Bidar, Rumah Limas, Songket Palembang, and Kue Maksuba); (3) WhatsApp group chat logs with peer interactions and feedback; and (4) a flash drive with archived video material were among these documents. These documents were used as secondary evidence to confirm and enhance the findings from the interviews, offering concrete examples of how the innovation was implemented in practice.

Instrument Validity and Reliability Tests

Several steps were taken to guarantee the validity and reliability of the interview tool. Before the interviews, the interview guidelines were developed using the study's theoretical framework (Rogers, 2003; Tilaar, 2009; Fullan, 2016) and reviewed by two experts in English language teaching and qualitative research. To assess the appropriateness and clarity of the questions, a pilot interview was conducted with a single student who was not included in the final sample. Minor adjustments were made to enhance the wording and flow of the question in response to feedback. Finally, the researchers employed probing techniques during interviews to elucidate ambiguous responses and guarantee a comprehensive understanding. To confirm the accuracy and interpretation of the preliminary findings, member checking was employed.

Data Analysis Techniques and Criteria

The data were analyzed using the thematic analysis approach developed by Braun and Clarke (2006). This method was chosen because it is flexible and suitable for interpreting qualitative data from interviews. The analysis consisted of six steps: familiarizing oneself with the data, generating initial codes, identifying themes, reviewing the themes, assigning names to the themes, and producing the report. These steps helped the researcher move from raw transcripts to meaningful patterns that reflected participants' experiences. The process was conducted inductively and iteratively. This means that the researcher moved back and forth between data and reflection, allowing themes to emerge naturally. The analysis was guided by the triadic theoretical framework, which connected the data with the ideas of Rogers (2003), Tilaar (2009), and Fullan (2016).

Ensuring Trustworthiness

To ensure trustworthiness, the researchers ensured that this qualitative study was rigorous and reliable by following the four criteria set forth by Lincoln & Guba (1985): credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility was achieved through member checking and peer debriefing. Transferability was ensured by providing rich contextual descriptions. Dependability was maintained by keeping an audit trail and carefully recording the analysis process. Confirmability was strengthened by reflective journaling to minimize researcher bias. These efforts helped make the findings more reliable and transparent.

Table 2. Trustworthiness Criteria and Strategies

Criterion	Definition	Strategies Applied
Credibility	Internal validity: truthfulness of findings	• Prolonged engagement with participants • Member checking to verify interpretations • Peer debriefing with colleagues • Triangulation through multiple data sources
Transferability	External validity: applicability to other contexts	• Thick description of context, participants, and processes • Detailed documentation of the research setting • Clear description of sampling criteria
Dependability	Reliability: consistency of findings	• Audit trail documenting all research decisions • Detailed recording of the analysis process • Systematic coding procedures • Use of NVivo for data management
Confirmability	Objectivity; findings grounded in data	• Reflective journaling to track researcher bias • Direct quotations to support interpretations

Criterion	Definition	Strategies Applied
		• Clear linkage between data and conclusions
		• Document analysis to corroborate interviews
Credibility	Internal validity: truthfulness of findings	• Prolonged engagement with participants
		• Member checking to verify interpretations
		• Peer debriefing with colleagues
		• Triangulation through multiple data sources

As both academic researchers and cultural insiders, the writers remained reflexive throughout the entire research process. Insider knowledge was beneficial for comprehending the deeper meanings of cultural symbols and local contexts, but it also necessitated ongoing self-awareness to prevent biases from being imposed on data. Throughout the data collection and analysis process, the researchers maintained reflective journaling to monitor their evolving thoughts, assumptions, and interpretations. This procedure helped ensure that results were based on participants' voices rather than the researchers' assumptions.

Supporting documents, such as YouTube video submissions and reading scripts, were used to cross-check participants' statements. These materials added depth to the interpretation and confirmed the consistency of the findings. Maintaining a reflective journal also allowed the authors to track their evolving thoughts and clarify how meanings developed during analysis. This practice ensured that interpretations were grounded in data rather than assumptions.

Such transparency strengthened the overall credibility and trustworthiness of the study. It also aligned the research process with Lincoln & Guba's (1985) four criteria for qualitative rigor: credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability.

Results and Discussion

This study examined the adoption and implementation of digital ethnopedagogical innovation in Reading classes within an English education program at a public university in Palembang, South Sumatra. The research specifically examined the factors influencing adoption, the integration of local cultural values, and the impact on students' linguistic and cultural awareness. Data were gathered from one lecturer and six students through in-depth semi-structured interviews. Using Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), four overarching themes were identified: 1) dual motivation in adopting digital ethnopedagogical innovation, 2) systematic implementation of local-value-based digital learning, 3) transformative impact on linguistic competence and cultural awareness, and 4) dynamics of drivers and barriers in innovation diffusion.

These findings are presented thematically, supported by verbatim quotations from participants to highlight authentic voices and contextual meaning (*thick description*).

Table 3. Themes, Sub-Themes, and Codes of Digital Ethnopedagogical Innovation Diffusion

Theme	Sub-theme	Codes	Source
Dual Motivation in Adopting Digital Ethnopedagogical Innovation	1. Pragmatic–Pedagogical Motivation	Time & space efficiency; monitoring understanding; real-time feedback; following digital trend	Lecturer A (Q1)
	2. Cultural Preservation Motivation	Concern over cultural erosion; foreign cultural influence (K-Pop, Japan);	Lecturer A (Q2, Q3)

Theme	Sub-theme	Codes	Source
		identity loss among Gen Z/Alpha; intergenerational value transmission	
	3. Lecturer as Agent of Change	Tech-literate & culturally conscious; initiator of pedagogical change; peer dissemination; cultural stewardship	Lecturer A (Q8, Q14, Q15)
	4. Students' Response to Innovation	Enthusiasm; novelty of learning; appreciation of own culture; early adaptation (confusion, shyness)	Students (Q1, Q4, Q5); Lecturer A (Q9)
Systematic Implementation of Local-Value-Based Digital Learning	1. Integrated Pedagogical Design	Oral Reading & Review with Connections; contextual learning; cultural alignment	Lecturer A (Q4, Q7)
	2. YouTube as Digital Repository	Uploading videos; public visibility; accountability; accessibility	Lecturer A (Q5, Q7)
	3. Peer Learning Mechanisms	WhatsApp group link-sharing; collective feedback; *community of practice*	Lecturer A (Q7)
	4. Authentic Local Materials	Culinary texts; traditional customs; heritage sites; multiple digital sources (Google, journals, AI)	Lecturer A (Q6)
	5. WhatsApp Video Call Evaluation	Oral comprehension tests; "three connections" explanation; no reading allowed; real-time feedback	Lecturer A (Q5)
	6. Students' Digital Literacy	Familiar with technology; easy access to articles; challenging yet feasible tasks; digital natives	Students (Q3, Q6)
Transformative Impact on Linguistic Competence and Cultural Awareness	1. Improved Reading & Pronunciation	Better comprehension; repetitive pronunciation practice; self-correction via Google Translate, SayHi, Bing, U Dictionary, iTranslate	Lecturer A (Q20); Students (Q10, Q11)
	2. Internalization of Local Values	Social (respect, cooperation); moral (patience, honesty); ecological & spiritual values; historical awareness	Lecturer A (Q17, Q18); Students (Q17)
	3. Cultural Impact on Learning	Contextual relevance; increased engagement; character building; local pride; language-culture link	Lecturer A (Q18, Q19); Students (Q18, Q19)
	4. Mindset Transformation (Glocal Perspective)	Local–global identity; English as global medium; digital internationalization of culture	Lecturer A (Q21); Students (Q19, Q20)

Theme	Sub-theme	Codes	Source
	5. Motivation & Confidence Boost	Fun learning; reduced boredom; growing self-confidence	Lecturer A (Q9, Q19); Students (Q9, Q12)
Dynamics of Drivers and Barriers in Innovation Diffusion	1. Driving Factors	High digital literacy; institutional support; Wi-Fi access; hybrid policy	Lecturer A (Q8, Q10)
	2. Scaffolding & Peer Support	Guidance from lecturer; modelling; peer help; joint editing & review	Lecturer A (Q9); Students (Q15, Q16)
	3. Digital Infrastructure Barriers	Unstable internet; personal data costs; audio disturbance; device damage	Lecturer A (Q11, Q12); Students (Q13)
	4. Coping Strategies	Using mobile data; borrowing devices; seeking signal areas; peer resource sharing	Lecturer A (Q13); Students (Q14)
	5. Adaptation & Horizontal Diffusion	Initial confusion; engagement shift; informal sharing among lecturers	Lecturer A (Q9, Q15); Students (Q1, Q4)
	6. Lecturer as Cultural Change Agent	Integrating tech & local wisdom; sharing practices; preserving local identity	Lecturer A (Q8, Q14, Q15, Q16)

The following section elaborates on each theme presented in Table 3, providing detailed descriptions and supporting evidence from the participants' narratives.

Dual Motivation in Adopting Digital Ethnopedagogical Innovation
The lecturer's decision to implement digital ethnopedagogical reading stemmed from two intertwined motivations: practical efficiency and cultural preservation.

Pragmatic–pedagogical motivation:
"During the pandemic, I became used to using Zoom, YouTube, and WhatsApp Video Call for my classes. It makes teaching more efficient and flexible." (Lecturer A).

This finding illustrates the relative advantage described in Rogers' (2003) Diffusion of Innovation Theory. The lecturer saw digital tools as helpful in creating flexible lessons, monitoring students' understanding, and providing timely feedback. Students were able to access learning materials anytime and anywhere, which made the learning process more inclusive and efficient.

Cultural preservation motivation:
"I'm afraid my students know more about K-pop and Japanese culture than their own Palembang traditions." (Lecturer A).

This concern illustrates (Tilaar, 2009) the concept of Ethnopedagogy, which highlights the importance of cultural education grounded in local wisdom (*kearifan lokal*), by using cultural texts such as *Bidar*, *Rumah Limas*, and *Kue Maksuba*, the lecturer aimed to prevent cultural loss and strengthen students' sense of local identity through reading activities.

Lecturer as Agent of Change:
"As lecturers, we should not only be technologically competent but also act as agents of change who integrate technology with local wisdom." (Lecturer A).

This finding aligns with Fullan's (2016) Change Agency Theory, which views English lecturers as catalysts who connect technological innovation with cultural sustainability. In this case, the lecturer acted as a bridge between digital tools and local wisdom, showing how personal commitment can drive meaningful change in teaching. Her decision to integrate and later share this approach with colleagues reflects a shift from individual innovation to collective practice within the institution. This stage corresponds to Rogers' (2003) idea of the confirmation phase in the Diffusion of Innovation Theory, where new practices become validated and adopted by others.

A significant innovation in this investigation is the lecturer's conceptualization as an active moral agent who consciously balances competing demands: global competency (English proficiency) and local identity (cultural preservation), rather than as a passive recipient of institutional mandates or technological trends. A deeper layer of agency rooted in cultural responsibility is revealed by this study, in contrast to Fullan (2016) and other change agency scholars who concentrate on leadership and professional learning communities. Becoming a "cultural guardian" who uses technology to preserve rather than replace culture is a novel approach that is lacking in the majority of educational technology literature, which favors scalability and efficiency over cultural continuity.

Students' responses illustrate both enthusiasm and adaptation challenges.
"It was fun and refreshing because we used our own culture for reading texts." (Student 2), *"At first, I was nervous recording myself speaking."* (Student 5). These responses indicate that the innovation was well-suited to the learners' experiences. Over time, the students moved from hesitation to active participation, marking the first signs of acceptance in the diffusion process.

Systematic Implementation of Local-Value-Based Digital Learning
The lecturer organized the innovation in a clear and systematic manner. It was implemented through two primary assignments: Oral Reading and Review with Connections.
"Students had to read a local text aloud in a video, then make another video where they connect the text to three perspectives: factual, religious, and lifestyle." (Lecturer A).

This structured design shows a clear pedagogical purpose that links language learning with cultural and reflective understanding. It also illustrates the principles of compatibility and trialability, as described by Rogers (2003) in the context of the Diffusion of Innovation Theory.

Students uploaded both videos to their personal YouTube channels:
"We shared our YouTube links in the WhatsApp group so that everyone could watch and comment." (Student 3). This sharing practice represents the creation of a community of practice (Wenger, 1998) where knowledge and skills are developed collaboratively through peer learning and feedback.

YouTube's use as a peer-mediated learning platform aligns with Astri et al.'s (2024) research, which found that authentic digital materials enhance engagement in EFL contexts in Indonesia. Nevertheless, this study builds upon Astri et al.'s (2024) research by demonstrating that YouTube serves as more than just a content delivery platform; it also functions as a social environment for cultural performance and identity negotiation. By watching videos that showcased local culture, they were doing more than just honing their pronunciation or understanding; they were creating and presenting cultural identities to a group of peers, turning language acquisition into a cultural representation. Most research on digital reading, which focuses on comprehension outcomes rather than performance, overlooks this performative dimension. Additionally, this study demonstrates how digital platforms can expedite the development of competence and belonging through asynchronous collaboration, in contrast to Wenger's (1998) theory of community of practice, which emphasizes legitimate peripheral participation. Students can watch, rewatch, comment on, and

learn from their peers' videos across time and space, thereby establishing a more democratized learning environment than traditional classroom settings allow.

"We learned pronunciation from each other's videos. Sometimes I rewatched a friend's video to check how they said difficult words." (Student 4).

Peer learning and repeated exposure to local texts simultaneously supported cultural awareness and linguistic accuracy. The lecturer also ensured comprehension through synchronous assessments: *"In WhatsApp video calls, I asked them to explain the text without reading. I want to see if they truly understand the meaning."* (Lecturer A)

This hybrid approach combined asynchronous digital activities with synchronous oral evaluation to maintain both authenticity and accountability. It also reflects Joosten's (2020) idea of digital learning as a form of pedagogical transformation. Meaningful digital pedagogy, as emphasized by Joosten (2020), relies on thoughtful design, reflection, and dialogue rather than solely relying on technology.

Transformative Impact on Linguistic Competence and Cultural Awareness
The integration of technology and culture significantly enhanced both linguistic and cultural competencies.

Improved reading and pronunciation:
"I practice pronunciation using Google Translate or U Dictionary until I can pronounce it right." (Student 5).
The students' independent use of free translation tools shows their growing autonomy in learning, as noted by Joosten (2020). This practice also illustrates the relative advantage in Rogers' (2003) Diffusion of Innovation Theory, where technology supports learner confidence and self-directed growth.

By demonstrating that technology use in this context was not instructor-mandated but rather student-initiated and self-regulated, this discovery expands research on technology-assisted reading (Zuo dan Ives, 2024). The fact that students sought out digital tools (such as Google Translate, DeepL, and U Dictionary) independently to assist them with pronunciation problems demonstrates that they are acquiring both language skills and digital literacy. According to Deci and Ryan (2000), Self-Determination Theory, particularly the concept of competence, enables students to feel a sense of mastery not through external rewards, but through clear improvements in their pronunciation, which they can observe by repeatedly watching video recordings. What made this study different from others that used technology to help people learn languages is the connection between culture and language. Students were motivated to say words correctly, not only to improve their language skills but also to honor the cultural content they were representing. Students who were motivated by both linguistic accuracy and cultural fidelity worked together in a powerful way that does not happen when they read texts that have been taken out of their context or are culturally neutral.

Internalization of local values:
"From the Bidar tradition, I learned teamwork and perseverance." (Student 6), "Kue Maksuba" teaches patience because it takes a long process to make. (Student 3).

Through cultural texts, students absorbed moral and social values while developing their language skills. This process shows that learning a language can also shape character and cultural awareness. It reflects Tilaar's (2009) idea that ethnopedagogy nurtures identity and moral growth through active cultural engagement.

These results support Tilaar's (2009) theoretical claim that ethnopedagogy is more than just teaching facts; it also encompasses teaching morals and character. Although previous research (Muzakkir, 2023; Hasanah, 2023) has demonstrated an increase in cultural awareness, this study unveils a more profound process: the internalization of values through narrative engagement. Students did more than learn about Palembang culture when they heard stories about *Bidar* (which means "teamwork" and "perseverance") and *Kue Maksuba* (which means "patience" and "craftsmanship"). They internalized the moral lessons that were embedded in these cultural practices. This signifies a transition from cultural literacy (the acquisition of knowledge about culture) to cultural competence (the embodiment of cultural values and perspectives). Practically, this finding contradicts the notion that teaching English as a second language should focus on Western or global content to achieve language goals. In contrast, local cultural narratives can serve two functions: they can both facilitate language acquisition and provide a source of moral education, thereby generating more comprehensive and meaningful educational experiences.

Cultural impact on learning:
"Learning becomes more meaningful because the texts are from our own culture." (Student 2)
These reflections show strong cultural relevance and emotional engagement. The students became active co-creators of meaning, connecting cultural understanding with the improvement of their reading skills.

Glocal mindset and motivation:
"Now I feel proud to introduce Palembang culture in English." (Student 6), *"At first, I was shy, but after practicing and watching others, I became confident speaking in front of the camera."* (Student 1).

These reflections reveal the growth of a *glocal* identity, a blend of local pride and global competence. The students' increased confidence and motivation reflect (Deci & Ryan, 2000) Self-Determination Theory, showing how autonomy, competence, and connection can flourish within a culturally grounded digital environment.

These findings corroborate Tilaar's (2009) theoretical assertion that ethnopedagogy encompasses more than the mere transmission of information; it also involves the development of morality and character. While prior research (Muzakkir, 2023; Hasanah, 2023) has shown an increase in cultural awareness, this study reveals a more profound process: the internalization of values through narrative engagement. Students gained a deeper understanding of Palembang culture by listening to narratives about *Bidar* (which translates to "perseverance" and "teamwork") and *Kue Maksuba* (which conveys the concepts of "patience" and "craftsmanship"). The moral lessons that were ingrained in these cultural practices were internalized by them. This represents a shift from cultural literacy (the acquisition of knowledge about culture) to cultural competence (the embodiment of cultural values). In practical terms, this result contradicts the notion that teaching English as a second language should emphasize Western or global content in order to meet language proficiency requirements. On the other hand, local cultural stories can serve two purposes: they can help people learn a language while also teaching them morals, making the learning experience more comprehensive and meaningful.

Dynamics of Drivers and Barriers in Innovation Diffusion
The diffusion process was shaped by both enabling and constraining factors.

Driving factors:
"Students are now digital natives, so they adapt quickly." (Lecturer A), *"Campus Wi-Fi helps us upload videos."* (Student 4). The students' digital familiarity and the university's support created favorable

conditions for innovation to grow. These factors reflect Rogers' (2003) persuasion and decision stages, where positive attitudes and strong infrastructure help accelerate the diffusion process.

Scaffolding and peer support:

"Lecturers give us video examples and guide us step by step." (Student 5), *"We help each other edit videos and understand the text."* (Student 3). This collaboration highlights the importance of social learning which plays a key role in sustaining innovation. It demonstrates how collective interaction and shared reflection help sustain new practices over time.

Barriers and coping strategies:

"Sometimes the signal is lost or the sound breaks up." (Student 2), *"If the signal is weak, I move or borrow a friend's phone."* (Student 4). Although digital infrastructure was limited, the students showed strong resilience and adaptability. They continued to participate actively by using creative strategies to overcome technical challenges (Zuo dan Ives, 2024).

Buc (2015) and Mestari (2025) have also observed that the infrastructure barriers documented in this study persist as a significant challenge in Indonesian higher education contexts. What is new in this study, though, is the finding that, despite being annoying, technological obstacles did not seriously hinder the adoption of the invention. Students' adaptive strategies such as shifting to areas with stronger signals, borrowing devices, and assisting one another in troubleshooting exemplify what could be referred to as "innovation resilience.'" This strength was maintained not by institutional support (which remained limited), but by intrinsic motivation that stemmed from being important in the culture. Students tolerated technical difficulties due to the personal and cultural significance of the learning content. This discovery calls into question the theory of technology determinism in educational innovation research, which holds that poor infrastructure will always result in unsuccessful implementation. Instead, this study shows that innovations can thrive in spite of technological limitations when they are in line with learners' cultural identities and values. This finding has significant ramifications for educational contexts with limited resources across the Global South.

Lecturer as diffusion agent:

"I have shared my experiences with other lecturers, and some have started trying this method." (Lecturer A). This finding supports Fullan's (2016) view that lasting educational change grows from reflective leadership and professional collaboration. Technology plays a role, but it cannot replace human insight and shared commitment.

Overall, the discussion demonstrates that digital ethnopedagogical learning serves as an integrated framework that connects technology, pedagogy, and culture. It reflects Rogers' (2003) *Diffusion of Innovation Theory*, where the innovation's clear advantages, compatibility, trial opportunities, and visibility help promote acceptance and spread within academic contexts. It also embodies (Tilaar, 2009) the idea of *Ethnopedagogy*, in which language learning is closely linked with moral and cultural education. Through this connection, students strengthen both their cultural identity and linguistic ability. Finally, the model's sustainability aligns with Fullan's (2016) Change Agency Theory, which views lecturers not only as practitioners but also as catalysts for pedagogical transformation, who sustain cultural values through innovation.

In addition, this study supports Wenger's (1998) idea of a *community of practice*, where students and lecturers learn together through collaboration and shared reflection. Such interaction helps sustain innovation by fostering trust, promoting dialogue, and encouraging continuous engagement. It also echoes Deci and Ryan's (2000) *Self-Determination Theory*, illustrating how intrinsic motivation, autonomy, and competence can develop within a supportive academic environment.

To summarize, this model fosters a learning ecosystem that integrates digital literacy, cultural identity, and pedagogical innovation. It provides a balanced and responsive framework for higher education in the digital era, where technology and culture evolve in tandem.

Building on the previous discussion, this study offers several theoretical, practical, and institutional implications. Theoretically, it extends Rogers' (2003) *Diffusion of Innovation Theory* by integrating moral and cultural perspectives into the process of adopting educational innovations. The findings show that the spread of educational technology cannot be separated from its socio-cultural setting. When innovations align with local values, they become more compatible and sustainable. From an ethnopedagogical standpoint, the study highlights how technology can support culturally relevant teaching practices. At the same time, Fullan (2016) *Change Agency Theory* reframes the lecturer's role, not as a passive adopter, but as an active leader who drives pedagogical transformation while preserving cultural values.

Practically, this study offers insights for English lecturers seeking to integrate digital tools with culturally rich materials. It suggests that local culture can function not only as learning content but also as a pedagogical framework that nurtures motivation, identity, and engagement. Lecturers can apply a similar approach by designing digital reading tasks based on local stories, traditions, and heritage. This method supports both language development and cultural pride, turning the classroom into a space for cultural preservation and creative innovation. The findings also emphasize the value of peer collaboration and reflective learning communities in maintaining digital innovations across academic departments.

At the institutional level, the findings highlight the importance of higher education policies that support the sustainable integration of digital innovation and cultural values. Universities should provide adequate infrastructure, digital literacy programs, and incentive systems that motivate lecturers to explore culturally grounded digital pedagogies. Strong institutional support not only speeds up innovation adoption but also ensures its long-term diffusion through continuous professional collaboration.

Within this environment, the lecturer's agency operates as part of a supportive ecosystem that values cultural identity as a crucial element of educational innovation. Ultimately, this study promotes an inclusive vision of digital transformation in higher education, one that humanizes technology while technologizing culture, positioning local wisdom as a driving force for innovation rather than a barrier to modernization.

Conclusion

This study concludes that the diffusion of digital ethnopedagogical reading innovation in higher education is driven by lecturers' agency, which bridges technology and culture to create meaningful, value-based learning experiences. The integration of local wisdom with digital tools enhances students' language competence while nurturing cultural awareness and the development of a *glocal* identity. The lecturer's role as a change agent, supported by institutional infrastructure and student collaboration, shows that educational transformation relies as much on human commitment as on technological progress. For this reason, universities should strengthen lecturers' professional capacity and build supportive ecosystems that promote sustainable integration between digital learning and cultural values. This reflection underscores that sustainable educational innovation is inseparable from the lecturer's moral commitment to cultural continuity. In doing so, higher education can humanize technology while technologizing culture, positioning local wisdom not as a barrier to modernization but as a vital force that drives innovation.

While this study offers valuable qualitative insights, further research is needed to deepen the understanding of how digital ethnopedagogical innovation develops over time and in different contexts. Future studies could explore several directions. First, quantitative research may be conducted to measure students' linguistic progress and intercultural competence through longitudinal observation. Second, comparative studies across universities or regions can reveal how contextual and institutional factors shape the diffusion of innovation. Third, long-term investigations are recommended to assess the sustainability and scalability of digital ethnopedagogical practices beyond a single case. Finally, policy-oriented studies could focus on designing institutional frameworks that integrate cultural education into digital learning systems, ensuring that technology and culture continue to grow in tandem.

The implementation of digital ethnopedagogical learning in reading instruction shows that educational innovation in Indonesia can be both globally adaptive and locally grounded. When digital literacy, cultural identity, and pedagogical creativity intersect, learning transforms into more than just the mastery of language—it becomes a process of character formation and cultural appreciation. In this light, the future of education relies on maintaining harmony between technology and culture, where innovation serves not to mechanize learning but to humanize it. This balance captures the transformative power of culturally grounded digital pedagogy in shaping learners who are both technologically competent and deeply connected to their cultural roots.

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