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Phygital Practices and Policy Gaps: Future-Proofing English Language Teaching in the Philippines

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Abstract: The field of English Language Teaching (ELT) is currently undergoing a significant shift driven by post-pandemic requirements and the rapid evolution of generative Artificial Intelligence. This qualitative case study explored the transformative teaching practices of eight secondary English teachers in the Davao Region, Philippines, focusing on how these methods contribute to future-proofing language education. Data were gathered through in-depth interviews and analyzed using the dual lenses of the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) and the Cambridge Sustainability Framework. The findings reveal that educators have adopted ELT teaching strategies, including "phygital" techniques like AI-augmented scaffolding, flipped classrooms via accessible social media, and collaborative digital projects. These practices effectively address human-centered challenges such as student disengagement and teacher workload. However, the study identifies a critical "policy-practice gap," where individual innovation is hindered by infrastructure deficits, shared bandwidth crises, and an absence of clear national guidelines on AI ethics. The research concludes that while teachers demonstrate high pedagogical intent, the long-term sustainability of these practices depends on institutional "administrative flexibility," ethical AI policies, and a shift toward prioritizing teacher wellbeing. Ultimately, technology serves as the infrastructure for modern ELT, but its successful output is measured by the development of resilient, global citizens.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Future-Proofing English Language Teaching, Phygital learning, Post-Pandemic Language Teaching, TPACK Framework

A. Introduction

The field of English Language Teaching (ELT) stands at a pivotal moment, shaped by global crises and rapid technological evolution. The necessity for swift adaptation during the pandemic accelerated the use of digital tools, turning online and blended learning into the new normal in pursuit to the continuity of learning. Concurrently, the explosion of generative Artificial Intelligence (AI), exemplified by tools like ChatGPT, has fundamentally challenged how teaching is conducted, allowing

educators globally to personalize materials and provide feedback in ways previously unimaginable (Bonner et al., 2023). This technological wave constitutes global imperatives.

Educational systems worldwide are now tasked with "*future-proofing*" instruction in equipping learners with the critical thinking and language skills needed to navigate a constantly changing, unpredictable world (Herodotou et al., 2019). The future-focused vision requires ELT to consciously integrate global challenges, such as climate change and social equity, turning the language classrooms into a space where students become responsible global citizens. Moreover, this aligns with the global requirements for the incorporation of Sustainability Framework in ELT curriculum design (Yu et al., 2024).

In the Philippines, the drive toward digital transformation in education is significant, yet it faces unique national challenges in implementation. While there is enthusiasm for new methods such as blending learning and utilizing AI for personalized practice, the successful adoption of these transformative practices is difficult to achieve consistently across diverse regions (Motlagh et al., 2025). According to Sukmalasari & Tarihoran (2025), this difficulty often stems from human-centered challenges: teachers frequently require better, specialized training in *Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge* (TPACK) to move beyond simply using a tool to truly redefine their instruction. Furthermore, the emotional toll of adapting to continuous technological change is substantial. High levels of stress and workload threaten teacher retention, necessitating that institutional strategies prioritize Teacher Resilience and Wellbeing (TR/TWB) to ensure that innovative practices are truly sustainable for teaching profession in the long run (Ončevska Ager & Mercer, 2019). The study calls the national system must thus navigate the complex balance between adopting world-class technologies and ensuring that the human element, the teacher's expertise and well-being, is robustly supported.

With so many students dropping out of school, growing marginalization of people experiencing poverty in society, psychological and physical well-being in danger, and many modern jobs requiring advanced digital skills, there has never been a more critical time to figure out new pedagogical paths. The post-Covid era calls for innovative and resourceful ways to promote inclusiveness, social learning and digital skills working harmoniously together to empower students as lifelong learners caring for their peers. With that, this study will be exploring the lived realities and professional shifts of teachers on the ground. Understanding the international pressures and necessary adaptations within the Philippine educational system requires a deep dive into the practical realities of the educators within Davao Region. The research will focus on describing transformative teaching practices that have emerged in English language education as teachers adapt to post-pandemic and technology-driven learning environments and, crucially, how transformative

practices contribute to the development of sustainable and future-proof approaches in English language teaching. By focusing the inquiry at the local level and using the TPACK and Sustainability Frameworks as the theoretical lens, the outcome of this research is to provide actionable, context-rich insights that empower ELT practitioners and curriculum developers within the region.

This study aims to present findings that will provide a comprehensive analysis and evaluation of emergent ELT practices within the context of sustainable and resilient pedagogical design, thereby generating actionable insights for educators, policy makers, and curriculum developers. The specific objectives guiding this study are: (a) to identify and comprehensively describe the spectrum of emergent, transformative teaching practices adopted by English Language teachers in the Davao Region post-pandemic; and (b) to analyze how transformative practices contribute to the development of sustainable and future-proof approaches in ELT.

The analytical foundation for this research employs a synthesized theoretical lens, combining the Sustainability Framework in ELT (Yu et al., 2024) with the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) Framework (Koehler & Mishra, 2009). This dual approach is essential for comprehensive study, as it allows for a robust examination of emergent pedagogical shifts by focusing equally on the long-term value of the practices and the teacher capacity required to sustain them. The combination ensures the research critically evaluates both the content's global relevance and the effective integration of technology in instruction.

The study is primarily anchored in the Cambridge Sustainability Framework in ELT, which serves as the evaluative lens for the study's impact, fulfilling Specific Objective 2. This framework moves beyond simple environmental concerns to define a holistic educational approach that equips learners with the skills, values, and knowledge to be resilient global citizens in an unpredictable world. It integrates global imperatives into the language classroom and is structured around four essential dimensions that will serve as the evaluative criteria: Knowledge, Values, Innovation, and Transformation. This framework provides the necessary standard against which the identified transformative practices will be measured in terms of their contribution to a future-proof ELT.

Complementing this, the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) Framework serves as the diagnostic and explanatory lens for analyzing teacher rationale and implementation. TPACK is a critical model that describes effective technology integration as a complex interplay of Content Knowledge (CK), Pedagogical Knowledge (PK), and Technological Knowledge (TK). The intersections of these three core domains, such as Technological Pedagogical Knowledge (TPK), are crucial for unpacking the specific expertise required for the new teaching methods. TPACK will be applied to analyze the pedagogical rationale behind the teachers' choices in the Davao Region, helping to diagnose whether implementation challenges

stem from deficits in technological skill, pedagogical strategy, or the ability to link the tool specifically to the ELT content, thereby addressing the "human-centered challenges" identified in the introduction (Sukmalasari & Tarihoran, 2025).

In synthesis, the two frameworks work together to provide a robust analytical structure. TPACK acts as the diagnostic tool, explaining *why* certain practices are successfully adopted or why they fail to be sustained due to issues with teacher expertise. Simultaneously, the Sustainability Framework acts as the evaluative tool, measuring the *impact* and *future-proofing potential* of these practices. This integrated approach ensures the research is balanced, moving from describing pedagogical action to analyzing the capacity to perform that action and evaluating the quality of the resulting education in the context of the Philippine educational system.

B. Methods

This study will use Qualitative Research Design employing a Case Study Approach. This design is essential because it allows for an in-depth look at a specific, real-life phenomenon, the adoption of transformative practices within its real-world context, which are the secondary schools of the Davao Region (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The Case Study approach provides the necessary framework to maintain a holistic and meaningful perspective on the experiences of the English Language Teachers (ELTs) (Yin, 2018).

The research was designed qualitatively to understand underlying matters, particularly in the experiences of the teachers within the context of digital transformation. It focused on scrutinizing the standard terms and practices happening in the specific context experienced by this social group (ELTs in the Davao Region). The case under investigation is the collection of Transformative Practices in ELT in response to post-pandemic and technology-driven shifts within this specific educational locale. This method is the ideal fit for collecting rich, descriptive data through interviews to answer the practical "how" and "why" questions posed by your objectives.

The exploration of the study acknowledged two methods of analysis. First, the method involves collecting rich, descriptive data through interviews to answer the practical "how" and "why" questions posed by your objectives. Second, the themes generated will use the TPACK framework to identify implementation challenges and the Sustainability Framework to guide the evaluation of the practices' long-term value. The insights gathered from this deep exploration will be unique to the Davao Region's challenges and opportunities, offering a comprehensive understanding of how theory translates into practice within the Philippine educational environment.

The study took place in schools within the Davao Region, Philippines. This location was chosen deliberately to capture the varying real situations in the field of education.

The region includes both city centers and surrounding areas, which means it has different levels of technology and resources. This combination helps show the full range of challenges and benefits in adopting new practices. The teachers chosen will come from both public and private secondary schools in the region to ensure the results reflect the diverse issues faced in different types of institutions. Focusing on this specific region means the data gathered will be directly relevant to local challenges and will provide insights for policymakers and curriculum developers working there.

In this study, the participants for this qualitative study will consist of eight (8) English Language teachers teaching at the secondary level (Grades 7-12) within the Davao Region. Moreover, they will be selected according to the following criteria needed for this study: (a) They must be currently teaching English Language subjects at the secondary level; (b) They must have a minimum of two years of teaching experience to allow for rich reflection on pedagogical shifts; (c) They must have demonstrably implemented at least one transformative practice (e.g., integrating AI tools or employing blended learning); (d) The selection will ensure representation from both public and private secondary schools in the Davao Region to capture diverse institutional contexts and challenges. Each participant will undergo an In-Depth Interview (IDI) conducted either face-to-face or via a secure online platform (such as Google Meet or Zoom), based entirely on the teacher's preference. All interviews will be audio-recorded with the participant's explicit consent to ensure accurate and complete transcription for subsequent thematic analysis. The profile of the participants, designed to maintain anonymity while providing essential context, will be structured as follows: T-ELT 01, T-ELT 02, T-ELT 03, T-ELT 04, T-ELT 05, T-ELT 06, T-ELT 07, T-ELT 08.

In the conduct of this study, data gathering will be done through interviews (IDI), open-ended questions will be applied based on the research questions stated above. Each session lasted approximately 30 to 45 minutes and was conducted either in person or via secure online platforms such as Google Meet or Zoom. Before each session, all selected participants will be required to provide Detailed Informed Consent affirming their understanding of the study's purpose, their right to anonymity, and their absolute right to withdraw at any time without penalty. This careful preparation ensures the research is grounded in ethical practice before any interaction begins. Interviews were audio-recorded with the participants' permission to ensure accurate transcription and analysis, and the researcher will maintain detailed reflective field notes immediately following each interview to capture contextual details and non-verbal cues.

The process involved several key steps. First, all interview transcripts were transcribed verbatim and read thoroughly to facilitate data familiarization. Next, initial codes were generated by highlighting significant statements and segments pertaining to the research questions. These codes were then collated into potential

themes that captured transformative pedagogical practices in future-proofing English Language Teaching (ELT). The themes were reviewed and refined to ensure they accurately represented the data, then defined and named to convey the essence of each category. Finally, these themes were synthesized into a cohesive narrative that illuminated insights from the participants' shared thoughts, supporting post-pandemic ELT practices and their contribution to education sustainability.

The primary research instrument for this phenomenological study will be a Semi-Structured Interview Protocol. Developed by the researcher, this protocol serves as a flexible guide containing core, open-ended questions designed to elicit rich, in-depth narratives concerning the teachers' lived experiences with transformative English teaching practices. The questions were specially designed to match the study's two objectives and its main theoretical ideas. Specifically, the questions will first focus on describing the new teaching methods used (Objective 1), and then they will explore the reasons for using those methods, linking to the TPACK framework and the four dimensions of the Sustainability Framework (Objective 2). This interview guide first went through an important pilot testing phase with 2-3 English teachers who are *not* part of the final study group. This testing is necessary to check that the questions are clear, appropriate for the culture, and flow in a logical order. This step ensures the instrument is strong and reliable enough to capture the necessary qualitative data before it is used with the final group of eight participants.

The analysis of the rich narrative data will be executed using Thematic Analysis as articulated by (Braun & Clarke, 2019) following an approach that is both inductive and deductive. After becoming familiar with the data by reading the transcripts multiple times, the researcher will generate initial codes by highlighting significant phrases and expressions that reflected the participants' transformative English teaching practices and its contribution to sustainable and future-proof education. These codes were then organized into themes that represented broader meanings across responses.

Final themes will directly address the study's two (2) specific research objectives: first, describing the spectrum of emergent practices (Objective 1), and second, analyzing how these practices contribute to the development of sustainable and future-proof approaches in ELT (Objective 2). This structure allows the analysis to be presented through detailed, synthesized narratives supported by direct, illustrative quotes from the participants, ensuring the interpretation remains sharply focused on the core purpose of the study.

The study adheres strictly to the highest ethical standards for humans as research subject to ensure the protection and well-being of all participants. Prior to any interview, participants will receive, review, and sign a Detailed Informed Consent Form, which explicitly outlines the study's purpose, data collection procedures, and their absolute right to decline any question or withdraw from the study at any point

without penalty. Furthermore, confidentiality and anonymity are guaranteed by assigning pseudonyms (e.g., T-ELT 01) to all eight participants in all transcripts, analyses, and reports, with all identifying data removed during transcription.

To uphold the trustworthiness and credibility of the findings, the researcher will implement Member Checking. This process allows participants to review their own interview transcripts and the derived thematic interpretations to ensure the results accurately reflect their intended meaning and lived experience. Additionally, all audio recordings and digital transcripts will be stored securely on a password-protected device, and raw data will be retained only for the academic period mandated by institutional guidelines before being permanently destroyed.

C. Results and Discussion

This chapter presents the findings from the thematic analysis of in-depth interviews with eight English Language Teachers (T-ELT 01–08) in the Davao Region. The discussion integrates participant verbatims with the dual theoretical lenses of TPACK and the Cambridge Sustainability Framework.

1. Transformative Teaching Practices in the Post-Pandemic Context

This section presents the findings regarding the emergent pedagogical shifts within the Davao Region. The data highlights how English Language Teachers (ELTs) have moved beyond emergency remote teaching to redefine instruction through a complex interplay of Content, Pedagogical, and Technological Knowledge. Using **TPACK** as a diagnostic and explanatory lens, these results unpack the specific expertise required for new methods and diagnose whether implementation challenges stem from technical deficits or pedagogical strategy.

1.1 Diversification of Digital Pedagogies

This theme explores the specific new teaching practices adopted by educators following the pandemic. It highlights the move toward a "phygital" – comes from a combination of the word "physical" and "digital" (Vivian M, 2023) learning environment where artificial intelligence and blended learning strategies are utilized to maintain the continuity of learning. Participant responses further illuminate these experiences:

> *"I've really stuck with blended learning using localized digital modules... I created 'Digital Reading Nooks' on a Google Site for Mindanao stories."*
> ***– Excerpt from T-ELT 01***

"I've started using Generative AI like ChatGPT for 'Drafting Partnerships.' We use it to generate opening sentences and then we critique them."
– Excerpt from T-ELT 02

"I adopted a Flipped Classroom model. I send short video lectures through Messenger – since everyone has 'Free FB' – and then we do debates in class."
– Excerpt from T-ELT 03

"I've introduced Collaborative Digital Projects using Canva where kids work in groups to create infographics about social equity in Davao."
– Excerpt from T-ELT 04

"I started using Gamified Assessment tools like Quizizz. It's a mix – I display it on the board, and they use their phones to answer."
– Excerpt from T-ELT 05

"I've moved toward Virtual Exchange. We use Zoom to have 'Coffee Chats' with a sister school in another province for spontaneous communication."
– Excerpt from T-ELT 06

"I've integrated AI-assisted Peer Feedback. Students run first drafts through a grammar checker, and then we discuss why the AI made those changes.
– Excerpt from T-ELT 07

"I started Digital Portfolios via social media groups. They post their spoken poetry or essays there for their peers to see and critique."
– Excerpt from T-ELT 08

The participants' responses reveal a strategic shift from passive technology use to active digital integration, characterized by three core pillars: contextual adaptation, AI-augmented scaffolding, and social learning. T-ELT 01 and 03 exemplify contextual adaptation; by leveraging localized "Mindanao stories" and utilizing "Free FB" for flipped lectures, these educators ensure that digital pedagogy remains accessible and culturally relevant despite the digital divide. The move toward AI-augmented scaffolding (T-ELT 02 and 07) marks a significant evolution in writing instruction, where Generative AI is used not for automated output, but as a "partnership" tool to develop students' critical thinking and editing skills. Furthermore, the emphasis on social and collaborative learning—seen in the use of Zoom "Coffee Chats," Canva infographics, and social media portfolios (T-ELT 04, 06, and 08) demonstrates a move away from isolated computer-aided instruction toward a "phygital" environment that prioritizes peer feedback and global connectivity. Collectively, these practices illustrate a transition from emergency remote teaching to a sustainable, innovative framework that blends high-tech tools with high-touch, localized pedagogy. These

practices represent the *innovation* dimension of the Sustainability Framework. Diagnostically, the shift toward AI and blended learning highlights the development of Technological Pedagogical Knowledge (TPK). In addition, these tools allow educators globally to personalize materials and provide feedback in ways previously unimaginable (Bonner et al., 2023).

1.2. Solving Human-Centered Challenges

The participants reveal that digital transformation is primarily a response to **pedagogical exhaustion and student disengagement**. The "human element" is addressed through three specific resolutions: (a) Operational Efficiency (Workload & Time); (b) Cognitive and Affective Engagement; and (3) Differentiated and Longitudinal Growth.

> *"The biggest thing for me was student engagement. After being home so long, they forgot how to enjoy reading."*
> ***– Excerpt from T-ELT 01***

> *"The issue was differentiated instruction... I used AI to quickly simplify complex grammar rules into 'easy' and 'advanced' versions."*
> ***– Excerpt from T-ELT 02***

> *"It was definitely time constraints. Our curriculum is so packed... this way, I don't have to lecture for 40 minutes in class."*
> ***– Excerpt from T-ELT 03***

> *"The problem was making English feel 'real.' Students used to ask, 'Why are we learning this?' This project showed them English is a tool for advocacy."*
> ***– Excerpt from T-ELT 04***

> *"I was really struggling with attendance and motivation... Making the lessons feel like a game actually made them excited to come to class."*
> ***– Excerpt from T-ELT 05***

> *"It was the lack of authentic social learning. In a textbook, English is dead. In a Zoom call with a stranger, it's alive."*
> ***– Excerpt from T-ELT 06***

> *"The biggest issue was my workload. Correcting 200 essays for basic spelling is exhausting... AI let me focus on teaching strong arguments."*
> ***– Excerpt from T-ELT 07***

> *"It solved the problem of long-term retention. Usually, students throw worksheets away, but with the portfolio, they see their growth over years."*
> ***– Excerpt from T-ELT 08***

Operational Efficiency (Workload & Time). T-ELT 03 and 07 highlight how digital tools mitigate the "packed curriculum" and "exhausting" administrative burdens. By offloading lectures to video and basic proofreading to AI, teachers reclaim time for high-value instruction like argumentation and debate.

Cognitive and Affective Engagement. T-ELT 01, 05, and 06 focus on reviving student interest. Gamification and "authentic social learning" (Zoom calls) transform English from a "dead" textbook subject into a "live" tool for connection, addressing the motivational slump caused by prolonged home isolation.

Differentiated and Longitudinal Growth. T-ELT 02 and 08 demonstrate how technology enables inclusive education. AI allows for instant simplification of rules for struggling learners, while digital portfolios ensure learning is not ephemeral, allowing students to track their growth over years rather than discarding physical worksheets.

These interventions fulfill the *transformation* dimension of the Sustainability Framework by turning the language classroom into a space for inclusiveness and social learning. This addresses the "human-centered challenges" where teachers require specialized TPACK training to move beyond tool usage to truly redefining instruction (Sukmalasari & Tarihoran, 2025).

1.3. Institutional Barriers and Resource Disparity

This theme analyzes how existing school resources and national policies impact the consistent maintenance of innovative teaching methods. It highlights the gap between the drive for digital transformation and the practical realities in the Davao Region.

> *"The lack of stable Wi-Fi is a struggle. I usually have to use my own mobile data to show them how to navigate the site."*
> ***– Excerpt from T-ELT 01***

> *"The school is supportive... but the policy on student AI use is still a bit of a gray area, which makes me hesitant."*
> ***– Excerpt from T-ELT 02***

> *"Resources are scarce. We only have one computer lab... and no policy for 'BYOD,' so some kids can't participate fully."*
> ***– Excerpt from T-ELT 03***

> *"We have high-speed internet, but the policy on 'Screen Time' is very strict, so I have to really balance when they can be on laptops."*
> ***– Excerpt from T-ELT 04***

> *"The lack of technical support is my biggest hurdle. If the projector breaks, I'm on my own... the whole transformative lesson falls apart."*
> ***– Excerpt from T-ELT 05***

> *"We have resources, but the schedule is so rigid. My ability to do exchanges is limited by the 'Time-on-Task' policy."*
> ***– Excerpt from T-ELT 06***

> *"Without a clear national policy on AI in ELT, I feel like I have to hide what I'm doing sometimes, even though it helps the kids."*
> ***– Excerpt from T-ELT 07***

> *"The internet bandwidth is shared... it's painfully slow. It makes it really hard to stay consistent with digital uploads."*
> ***– Excerpt from T-ELT 08***

While teachers demonstrate high pedagogical intent, their responses reveal a significant decoupling between individual innovation and institutional support.

Infrastructure Deficits. T-ELT 01, 03, and 08 identify a "bandwidth crisis" where slow internet and shared resources force teachers to rely on personal mobile data. This creates an equity gap (BYOD—Bring Your Own Device) where students without personal hardware are sidelined, contradicting the goal of inclusiveness.

Policy Ambiguity and Rigidity. T-ELT 02, 06, and 07 highlight a "policy-practice gap." The lack of clear national guidelines on AI creates a culture of hesitation or "hidden" innovation. Furthermore, rigid "Time-on-Task" or "Screen Time" policies act as administrative barriers that stifle the flexibility required for virtual exchanges.

The Fragility of Innovation. T-ELT 05 underscores that without Technical Knowledge (TK) support staff, innovative lessons are highly vulnerable to hardware failure. A broken projector can effectively "collapse" a transformative lesson, illustrating that sustainability requires a support ecosystem, not just a skilled teacher.

The data illustrates a tension between teacher agency and systemic constraints in the Davao Region. Educators are successfully utilizing "phygital" tools to solve human-centered challenges—such as excessive workloads, lack of student motivation, and the need for differentiated instruction—thereby moving toward the *transformation* dimension of the Sustainability Framework. However, these innovations remain fragile due to a "gray area" in institutional policy and chronic resource disparities. As noted by Motlagh et al. (2025), the successful adoption of digital pedagogy is hindered when national policy and infrastructure fail to keep pace with the technological pedagogical knowledge (TPK) of the teaching force.

2. Contribution to Sustainable and Future-Proof ELT

This section evaluates the long-term impact of identified practices through the Cambridge Sustainability Framework. It assesses how these transformative methods equip learners with the values and critical thinking needed for global challenges while analyzing the teacher capacity and institutional support systems required to sustain them.

2.1. Synthesis of Knowledge for Pedagogical Shifts

This theme explores the specific intersections of teacher knowledge—Content (CK), Pedagogical (PK), and Technological (TK)—required to operationalize innovative actions. As defined by Koehler & Mishra (2009), effective technology integration is not about isolated skills but a complex interplay of these domains (TPACK). The study diagnoses that when teacher expertise is robust, they can link digital tools specifically to ELT content to overcome local constraints (Koehler & Mishra, 2009).

> *"I had to combine my Pedagogical Knowledge, knowing how kids learn to read with the tech. I had to see how a digital interface impacts focus."*
> ***– Excerpt from T-ELT 01***

> *"I had to merge my Content Knowledge of linguistics with AI 'prompt engineering' to ensure I tell the AI how to simplify it correctly."*
> ***– Excerpt from T-ELT 02***

> *"I had to combine my Content Knowledge of literature with new ways to deliver it without a constant internet connection."*
> ***– Excerpt from T-ELT 03***

> *"I knew the English content, but I had to gain the 'Technological Knowledge' of graphic design to help them present their ideas effectively."*
> ***– Excerpt from T-ELT 04***

> *"I had to gain a lot of Technological Knowledge very fast... it's about making the tool help them learn English specifically."*
> ***– Excerpt from T-ELT 05***

> *"It's that intersection of TK and PK that made it work... managing international calls while ensuring communicative language teaching."*
> ***– Excerpt from T-ELT 06***

> *"I had to learn how to use audio tech to enhance Pedagogical Knowledge regarding student-teacher rapport."*
> ***– Excerpt from T-ELT 07***

> *"I had to bridge my Content Knowledge of English syntax with Technological Knowledge of how AI algorithms work."*
> ***– Excerpt from T-ELT 08***

The findings from T-ELT 01–08 illustrate that digital transformation in ELT is driven by a deliberate synthesis of the TPACK domains rather than the mere adoption of gadgets. T-ELT 01, 06, and 07 emphasize the intersection of pedagogy and technology, showing how digital tools are used to manage cognitive focus, communicative interaction, and teacher-student rapport. Conversely, T-ELT 02, 03, 04, and 08 highlight the evolution of content delivery, where linguistic expertise in syntax and literature is merged with AI prompt engineering and graphic design to ensure academic accuracy in digital spaces. Finally, T-ELT 05 serves as the thematic anchor, asserting that technological skill is only valuable when it is filtered through ELT-specific goals.

The transition from T-ELT 01 to T-ELT 08 suggested that as tools become more complex (moving from basic audio to AI algorithms), the teacher's Content Knowledge becomes the primary safeguard against "automated" errors; this implies that effective AI integration in the classroom is more dependent on the teacher's mastery of linguistics than on their technical proficiency alone. Moreover, the participants' reflections confirm that TPACK is the primary driver of digital transformation. Rather than using technology as a "add-on," teachers are re-engineering their pedagogical approaches (PK) and linguistic expertise (CK) to fit digital mediums. This synthesis allows for a more targeted application of technology that directly addresses ELT-specific goals, such as reading comprehension and syntax analysis.

2.2. Equipping Students for Global Challenges

This theme analyzes how current practices prepare students for long-term global challenges, measuring them against the standards of future-proof ELT. Evaluated through the **Sustainability Framework** (Yu et al., 2024), these practices move beyond simple literacy toward a holistic approach that equips learners as resilient global citizens.

> *"It builds Knowledge and Values, showing them that their Davaoeno identity has a place in the digital world."*
> ***– Excerpt from T-ELT 01***

> *"This teaches critical thinking. They have to evaluate AI output... that's a future-proof skill for their future jobs.*
> ***– Excerpt from T-ELT 02***

> *"This teaches them resilience-learning even when the environment is tough, which is core to sustainability."*
> ***– Excerpt from T-ELT 03***

> *"They aren't just learning verbs…uhm...they are learning to communicate about climate change and social equity."*
> ***– Excerpt from T-ELT 04***

> *This equips students with Knowledge of how to be self-directed learners, which is vital for lifelong learning."*
> ***– Excerpt from T-ELT 05***

> *"This equips them with communication skills for a globalized world... learning to bridge cultural gaps."*
> ***– Excerpt from T-ELT 06***

> *"Focusing on the human element and rapport makes the learning environment more resilient."*
> ***– Excerpt from T-ELT 07***

> *"We're giving them the Knowledge and Innovation skills to survive in an AI-driven world."*
> ***– Excerpt from T-ELT 08***

The integration of digital tools within the ELT classroom, as evidenced by T-ELT 01–08, represents a shift from mechanical technology use to a sophisticated TPACK-Sustainability synthesis. In this model, the teachers' "Technological Knowledge" is not an end in itself; rather, it is the bridge that allows for the delivery of "future-proof" values. For instance, the technical mastery of AI prompt engineering (T-ELT 02 & 08) directly enables the pedagogical goal of critical thinking, while the ability to manage offline digital delivery (T-ELT 03) fosters the core sustainability value of resilience. Ultimately, these findings suggest that a robust TPACK allows teachers to move beyond teaching "verbs" (T-ELT 04) toward equipping students with the self-direction and cultural identity (T-ELT 01 & 05) necessary to navigate a globalized, unpredictable future.

The findings imply that TPACK is the infrastructure of modern ELT, but Sustainability is its output. If a teacher possesses the technical and pedagogical skills (TPK) but fails to link them to global challenges or critical AI literacy, the "future-proofing" objective remains unfulfilled. This suggests that teacher training programs must move away from general "ICT skills" and toward a model where technology is taught as a medium for global citizenship and cognitive resilience.

2.3. Systemic Sustainability and Teacher Well-being

The final theme discusses the longevity of these innovations and the institutional support required for sustainability. Ončevska Ager & Mercer (2019) highlight that high stress and workload threaten teacher retention; thus, for transformative practices to last, institutional strategies must prioritize Teacher Resilience and Wellbeing (TR/TWB) (Ončevska Ager & Mercer, 2019).

> *"For this to stay, we need regular TPACK coaching, not just one-time webinars."*
> ***– Excerpt from T-ELT 01***

> *"For it to be sustainable, the school needs a clear policy on AI ethics. We can't just 'wing it' forever."*
> ***– Excerpt from T-ELT 02***

> *"I think it is lasting, but without a 'gadget-for-all' policy, it limits how often I can do this fairly."*
> ***– Excerpt from T-ELT 03***

> *"The emotional toll is high. We need support that prioritizes Teacher Wellbeing so we don't burn out."*
> ***– Excerpt from T-ELT 04***

> *"If there is no official 'Tech Support' policy for us teachers, the innovation just falls apart when tech fails."*
> ***– Excerpt from T-ELT 05***

> *"We need 'administrative flexibility'. If the school doesn't adjust the schedule, it won't last."*
> ***– Excerpt from T-ELT 06***

> *"It's a genuine transformation... but we need pioneers to not be walking in the dark without official guidelines."*
> ***– Excerpt from T-ELT 07***

> *"We need policies that define ethical use so we don't feel like we're breaking rules when we innovate."*
> ***– Excerpt from T-ELT 08***

The findings from T-ELT 01–08 indicate that individual teacher expertise is insufficient for long-term transformation without a corresponding shift in institutional infrastructure. T-ELT 04 and 06 identify teacher well-being and "administrative flexibility" as the emotional and structural bedrock of sustainability, echoing the warnings of burnout found in the literature. Meanwhile, T-ELT 02, 05, and 08 highlight a critical need for formalization specifically regarding AI ethics and

technical support to move innovation away from "winging it" toward a secure, rule-based environment. Finally, T-ELT 01, 03, and 07 argue that for these practices to be systemic rather than isolated, the school must provide continuous TPACK coaching and equitable hardware access, ensuring that pioneers are not left "walking in the dark." While individual innovation is high, systemic barriers such as the lack of ethical AI policies, rigid schedules, and inadequate technical support threaten the longevity of these shifts. The research concludes that sustainability is not merely a matter of hardware but of policy and well-being. Without institutional "administrative flexibility" and ethical guidelines, even the most innovative teachers risk burnout.

D. Conclusions

The research concludes that English Language Teachers (ELTs) in the Davao Region have successfully transitioned from emergency remote teaching into a deliberate "phygital" pedagogical landscape. By synthesizing Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK), these educators are utilizing transformative tools such as Generative AI, blended learning, and gamification to solve critical human-centered challenges, including student disengagement, pedagogical exhaustion, and the need for differentiated instruction. These practices move beyond mere tool usage toward a sophisticated synthesis where technology acts as a bridge to deliver future-proof values such as critical thinking, global citizenship, and resilience. However, a significant gap remains between teacher innovation and institutional support; systemic barriers like unreliable internet bandwidth, rigid administrative schedules, and a lack of clear national policies on AI ethics threaten the long-term sustainability of these shifts. Ultimately, the study finds that while individual teacher agency is high, the futureproofing of ELT depends on a supportive ecosystem that prioritizes teacher well-being and provides a secure, rule-based environment for innovation.

Additionally, it is recommended that future studies employ a longitudinal approach to quantitatively measure the impact of AI-augmented scaffolding and digital portfolios on student learning outcomes and long-term language proficiency. There is also a critical need for research focused on the development of ethical frameworks and national policy guidelines for AI integration specifically within the Philippine ELT context to address current pedagogical hesitation and the "policy-practice gap" identified in the Davao Region. Furthermore, future inquiries should investigate the specific institutional interventions that best support teacher resilience and well-being, such as consistent TPACK coaching versus one-time webinars, to prevent burnout and ensure the longevity of transformative practices. Finally, a comparative study across different Philippine regions or a deep dive into student perspectives particularly those marginalized by the digital divide and resource disparities would provide a more holistic understanding of how to make future-proofed instruction equitable and inclusive for all learners.

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