

Adapting Speaking Etiquette in Digital Intercultural Communication: A Bibliometric Analysis

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ABSTRACT

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This research explores the evolving role of *speaking etiquette* in intercultural communication within the digital age. With the increasing shift from face-to-face communication to virtual platforms, traditional norms of communication etiquette are undergoing significant changes. The study addresses the challenge of adapting these norms, traditionally rooted in non-verbal cues and in-person interactions, to digital environments where communication is primarily text-based or mediated through video conferencing. Using a bibliometric approach, this research analyzes trends in the literature on *speaking etiquette* and intercultural communication, mapping the intersection of key concepts such as digital literacy, emotional intelligence, and cultural adaptation. The findings highlight a clear shift toward incorporating technological and emotional intelligence skills into traditional communication practices. Additionally, the research identifies a gap in the literature regarding the adaptation of *speaking etiquette* to digital platforms, suggesting that future research should explore these interactions in greater depth. The study's implications underscore the need for updated communication strategies that integrate digital competencies to improve intercultural interactions in an increasingly digital world. These insights provide a foundation for enhancing global communication practices, particularly in multicultural and virtual settings.

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INTRODUCTION

In a world that is increasingly connected through digital technology, cross-cultural communication is increasingly a complex challenge (DeWitt et al., 2022; Mangkhong & Kaewpanya, 2021; Zhussupova & Shadiev, 2023). Even

though we have a variety of platforms to interact with people from different cultural backgrounds, misunderstandings in communication persist. Are the existing speaking etiquette enough to meet these challenges, or do we need to reformulate communication norms for the digital world? This research focuses on how *speaking etiquette* in cross-cultural communication is transforming in the digital age, using bibliometric analysis through the VOSviewer software to explore research patterns and trends related to this topic. Are the norms of speaking etiquette that apply in face-to-face communication still relevant when digital communication is increasingly dominant? This research aims to answer these questions and provide insight into how research on speaking etiquette develops in the context of technology and virtual communication.

Cross-cultural communication plays a vital role in an increasingly globalized world (Boussebaa, 2020; Caligiuri & Caprar, 2023; Xia et al., 2024). One of the most critical aspects of this communication is speaking etiquette, which includes the norms and habits of speaking that are expected in intercultural interactions (Braslauskas, 2021; Deale & Lee, 2021; Heitmayer & Schimmelpfennig, 2024). Over the years, speaking etiquette has been closely intertwined with face-to-face communication, where non-verbal factors, such as body language and intonation, greatly influence comprehension between individuals (Kristiansen, 2021; Menggo et al., 2023; Note et al., 2021). However, with the development of digital technology, most interactions now take place through mediums such as email, instant messaging, and video calls. Although the importance of speaking etiquette in cross-cultural communication has been widely discussed, few have examined how this etiquette is translated and applied in the digital world (Karimova et al., 2024; Shadiev et al., 2024; Xia et al., 2024). This research aims to fill this gap by using a bibliometric approach to analyze how *speaking etiquette* develops in cross-cultural communication in the digital era.

Previous research has highlighted the importance of speaking etiquette in face-to-face communication between cultures. One related study examined the etiquette of speaking in the Belarusian-speaking community and how language norms shape social interactions (Grusiecki, 2022; Vasilyeva, 2021; Vazyana, 2023). In addition, other research has also examined the impact of different speaking etiquette on cross-cultural communication, especially in the context of conflict resolution (Ayoko et al., 2022; Eko & Putranto, 2021; Zakaria & Ab Rahman Mutton, 2022). However, research examining how speaking etiquette is applied in the digital space is still limited. Some studies, however, have begun to highlight the importance of etiquette in email communication but have not delved into how broader digital technologies affect such norms (Abubakari, 2024; Dwivedi et al., 2022; Tkalac Verčič et al., 2024).

Although the etiquette of speaking in the face-to-face world has been extensively researched, the adaptation of these norms in digital communication has received little attention. With the rapid development of technology, cross-cultural communication is now more frequent through digital platforms such as email, social media, and video conferencing. The question is whether the speaking etiquette applied in face-to-face communication can be used in the same way in digital communication, where non-verbal cues are minimal. Additionally, how can cultural differences still affect digital communication in terms of speaking etiquette? This study identifies an essential gap in the literature, namely the lack of understanding of how speaking etiquette translates into digital communication between cultures. This study aims to fill this gap by analyzing the existing literature using the VOSviewer software to understand patterns in the topic of speaking etiquette in digital and cross-cultural contexts.

This research offers a new contribution by using a bibliometric approach through VOSviewer to analyze the development of speaking etiquette in cross-cultural communication in the digital age. Most previous research has focused on face-to-face communication and the norms that apply in face-to-face interactions. This research focuses on how the speaking etiquette that has been formed in traditional communication transforms when applied in the digital space. Using VOSviewer, this study explores how the literature on *speaking etiquette* relates to topics such as digital literacy, emotional intelligence, and human-robot interaction in cross-cultural communication. In addition, this study introduces a new perspective on the importance of digital understanding as part of speaking etiquette in the digital age, which has not been widely discussed in cross-cultural communication studies. Through this approach, this research enriches the literature by linking the development of digital communication with the norms of etiquette of intercultural speaking.

This study aims to explore how speaking etiquette in cross-cultural communication adapts to the development of digital technologies, using bibliometric analysis with VOSviewer to map existing research trends. By analyzing data from various articles related to *speaking etiquette* and intercultural communication, this study will identify patterns of interconnectedness between essential topics, such as digital literacy, emotional intelligence, and changing norms of speaking etiquette in virtual contexts. The main objective of this study is to understand how existing norms of spoken communication are translated in an increasingly evolving digital platform. By analyzing citation trends and network visualizations, this study will provide new insights into how speech etiquette is developing in the digital age, as well as provide recommendations for the development of more effective cross-cultural communication strategies in an increasingly automated and digital world.

METHOD

This study uses a mixed methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative methods to identify trends, patterns of interconnectedness, and contributions in the topics of "speaking etiquette" and "intercultural communication" (Amadi, 2023; Paoletti et al., 2021; Zhu et al., 2021). This study was designed to identify citation trends by using quantitative data to analyze the citation distribution by time, geographic region, and institution. In addition, this study also explores the interconnectedness of topics using network visualization analysis to understand the relationship between issues in the field of intercultural communication. Data interpretation is carried out to provide insight into academic and professional developments in this field.

The source of research data includes primary and secondary data. Primary data include research articles relevant to "speaking etiquette" and "intercultural communication" obtained from academic databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, or Google Scholar. This data includes citation and keyword information. Secondary data is in the form of supporting literature, such as books and relevant research reports. The collected articles were selected based on several criteria, namely, they were published in indexed journals, appropriate to the research topic, and have complete metadata. The bibliometric workflow and science mapping are shown in Chart 1.

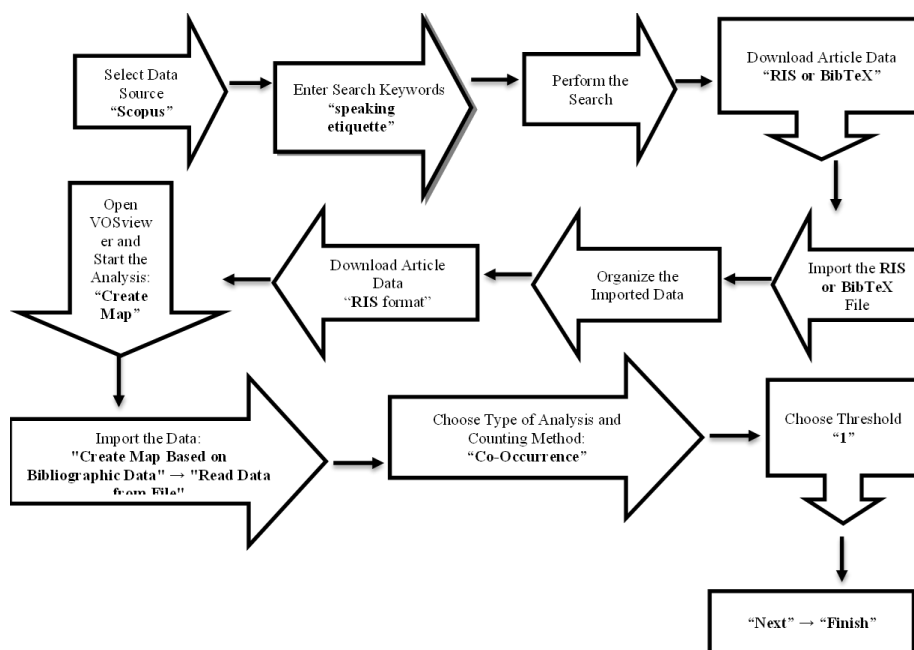


Chart 1. Publish or Perish Up to Import and Vosviewer Data Settings and Downloads

The data collection process includes article identification, citation data collection, and network visualization. Articles were identified using keywords such as "speaking etiquette," "intercultural communication," "sociolinguistics," "digital literacy," and "emotional intelligence." The VOSviewer and R bibliometric software were chosen for their ease of network visualization and flexibility in bibliometric data analysis, each supporting co-citation and co-authorship analysis, which is very useful for viewing relationships between publications. VOSviewer allows for intuitive relationship visualization, while R bibliometrics is superior at handling big data and more in-depth analysis using customized scripts. The accuracy of the data is verified by validating data sources, confirming consistency between platforms, and ensuring that the results of analysis and visualization truly reflect trends in the literature. Network visualization is created with the VOSviewer software to form a cluster of topics based on frequently recurring keywords and determine the frequency and intensity of relationships between topics.

Data analysis techniques include quantitative and qualitative analysis. Quantitative analysis was conducted to illustrate citation trends through a distribution graph per year and a map of geographic distribution. The distribution of institutional contributions is analyzed using a doughnut diagram. Qualitative analysis involves the interpretation of network visualization with a focus on topic clusters, relationships between keywords, and theme development based on visualization overlays (Zhu et al., 2021). Topic density is analyzed through density visualization to identify topics with the highest relevance or concentration (Paoletti et al., 2021; Paul et al., 2021; van Dinter et al., 2021).

Data validation is carried out through data triangulation by comparing the results of quantitative and qualitative analysis with those of previous research to ensure consistency. Discussions with experts in linguistics, communication, and technology are also conducted to gain additional perspectives. This study has several limitations, including the fact that the citation data only includes articles that are available in specific databases and depends on the quality of the article's metadata, which can affect the interpretation results.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Citation Trends and the Development of Academic Interest in "Speaking Etiquette"

The fluctuation in the number of citations from 2016 to 2024 can be influenced by changes in research interests on Figure 1, where relevant topics in one period can lose attention as new issues emerge. The number of publications published each year also has an effect, with more publications increasing the chances of citation, while a decreasing volume can reduce citations.

Additionally, external factors such as global events, research policies, and technological accessibility also affect citation fluctuations, with articles that are more accessible or of higher relevance likely to get more attention. These trends provide insight into how a work or research gains attention and relevance in the academic or professional community over time.

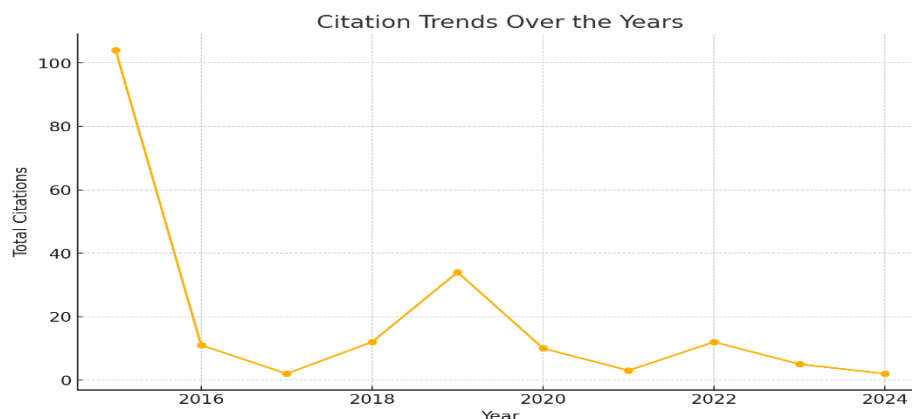


Figure 1. Citation Trends Over the Years

In 2016 (Ivantsova & Chernykh, 2016), the graph showed a peak in the number of citations, reaching a high of around 100. This reflects that the work received enormous attention in the early years after its publication. This phenomenon often occurs in newly published works, especially if the work presents innovative ideas or high relevance to the emerging issues of the time. However, after 2016, there was a very significant sharp decline. In 2017, the number of citations dropped drastically to close to zero. This sharp decline may be due to several factors, such as the reduced relevance of the topic of the work, the emergence of new, more up-to-date research, or limited readership. This decline indicates that the influence or appeal of the work did not last long after the initial period of its popularity.

In the following years, the chart shows a fluctuating pattern, although the number of citations remains at a relatively low level compared to the initial peak. In 2018, there was a slight increase in the number of citations under 20, indicating a resurgence of interest, although not significant. A second minor peak appeared in 2020, where the number of citations reached around 30, suggesting that the work may be gaining new attention due to its momentary relevance to certain developments in the field. However, after 2020, the trend returned to a gradual decline. The years 2021 to 2023 recorded a low number of citations, ranging from 10 or even less (Markova, 2022). By 2024, the number of citations dropped back to near zero, which could be an indication that the work is hardly ever referenced in professional research or discussion.

Departing from this, this graph depicts a pattern that is common to specific works: They reach the peak of popularity in the early days of publication, but that popularity cannot be maintained in the long term. Although there have been some minor resurgences in certain years, the number of citations in general shows a downward trend. This underscores the importance of relevance, innovation, and renewal factors in maintaining the attention of the academic or professional community to work.

Visualization of *Intercultural Communication* Topic Network with VOSviewer

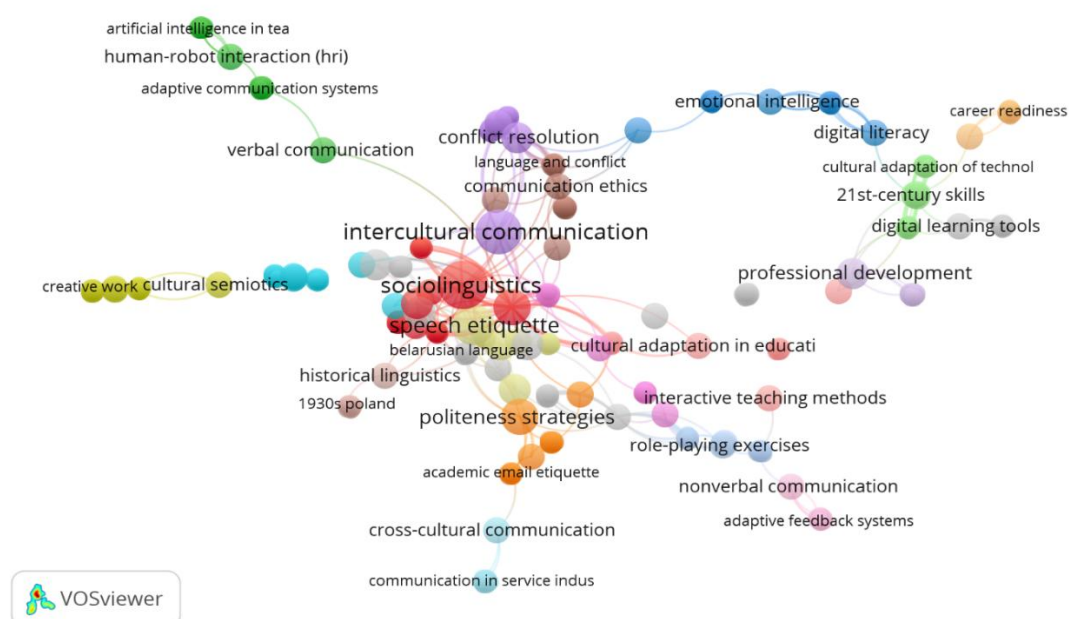


Figure 2. Network Visualization of Intercultural Communication and Related Research Themes

The image above is a visualization of a topic network or co-occurrence network related to intercultural communication using the VOSviewer software (Boyko et al., 2020). The topic of intercultural communication is at the centre of the central theme, and it is very relevant to other keywords. Keywords that often appear together are grouped by colour to form specific clusters. For example, the "red" cluster focuses on topics such as sociolinguistics (Sładkiewicz, 2021), speech etiquette, cultural adaptation in education (Tominec, 2021), and politeness strategies (Palić et al., 2023). The blue cluster includes emotional intelligence, digital literacy, role-playing exercises, and nonverbal communication, which shows a link with the development of emotional skills and learning (Issakova et al., 2020).

Furthermore, the green cluster contains topics such as human-robot interaction, verbal communication, and 21st-century skills, signalling the role of technology and 21st-century skills in intercultural communication. Meanwhile, the yellow cluster highlights the topics of cultural semiotics and creative work, which focuses more on the semiotic aspects of culture and creativity (Hristova, 2018; Kamal, 2020). There is also a purple cluster that includes conflict resolution, communication ethics, and language and conflict (Goncharova & Khaleeva, 2021), which are related to conflict resolution in communication. Topics such as professional development and academic email etiquette appear in grey or orange clusters, indicating a focus on education and professional development (Alemi & Maleknia, 2023).

The text size in this visualization reflects the frequency with which keywords appear more frequently, whereas keywords with larger text sizes appear more regularly in the study. The connecting lines between topics show the close relationships and interconnectedness between the themes. Thus, this visualization illustrates the complexity and breadth of the field of intercultural communication and its relationship to technology, linguistics, education, and professional skills development (Guillemain, 2019).

Global Research Trends and Contributions in Speaking Etiquette Research by Country

The world map in this visualization uses colour gradation to represent the distribution of specific values based on geographic area. Colour intensity provides information about data level differences, where dark blue indicates the highest value, light blue indicates the intermediate value, and grey indicates the lowest value or region that has no data recorded. The legend on the right side of the map describes the range of values from 1 to 8, which helps in understanding the distribution.

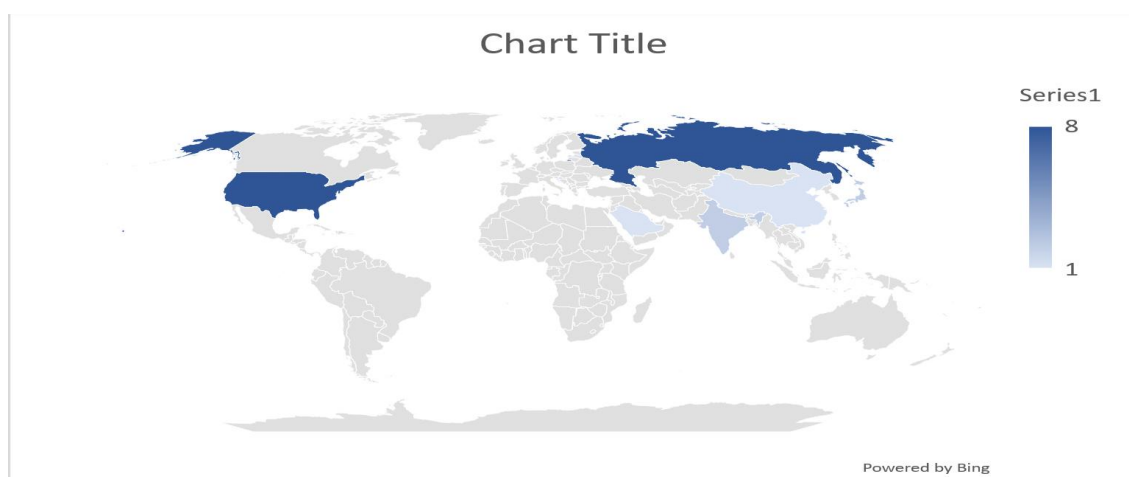


Figure 3. Global Distribution of Research Contributions by Country

Departing from Figure 3, countries such as the United States and Russia are dark blue, indicating that these regions have the highest scores in the data measured. This can indicate their dominance in a particular category, such as economic, technological, research, or other metrics relevant to the context of the data. This dominance places the two countries as the centre of activity in the analyzed data (Ivantsova, 2016).

On the other hand, countries such as India and China are at the intermediate level, characterized by light blue. Although not as strong as the United States or Russia, they still have a significant role in this data (Markova, 2022). This distribution suggests that these countries may be growing or have considerable involvement, although they are not at the top of the list. Most other regions, including many countries in Africa, South America, and parts of Asia, are grey. This indicates very low values or no data recorded in these regions. This condition can reflect limited resources, low engagement rates, or even no contribution in the measured data category (Ivantsova, 2016). In addition, the Distribution of the Number of *Speaking Etiquette* Research Articles by Country is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Number of *Speaking Etiquette* Research Articles by Country

No	Country	Article
1	Russia	8
2	USA	8
3	Russia	3
4	India	2
5	Japan	2
6	Middle East	1
7	Saudi Arabia	1
8	China	1
9	Latvia	1
10	Croatia	1

Based on the table, the distribution of the number of research articles on sociolinguistics by country; Russia and the United States were major contributors, with 8 articles each. Russia, as one of the countries with great linguistic diversity, shows significant attention to linguistic and cultural studies. This study may include the relationship between regional languages, the influence of culture on language, or the dynamics of language in multiethnic societies. On the other hand, the United States, with its multicultural society, stands out in sociolinguistics research, particularly in topics such as bilingualism, cross-cultural communication, and social influence on language (Ivantsova, 2016).

India and Japan recorded intermediate contributions with 2 articles each. In India, which has an incredible diversity of languages, sociolinguistics research is likely to focus on the relationship between language, religion, caste, and regional identity. Japan, with its unique communication culture, may be interested in studies such as formality in language, differences between generations, or the influence of modern technology on language (Śladkiewicz, 2021).

Meanwhile, some other countries showed smaller contributions. The Middle East and Saudi Arabia each recorded only 1 article, although the region has very rich linguistic and cultural uniqueness. Research in these two regions may face challenges in access to international platforms or limitations in research resources. Similarly, China, despite having a large population and rich linguistic diversity, recorded only 1 article. The focus of research there may be more on minority languages or the impact of globalization on the Chinese language (Harrison et al., 2015).

Small countries such as Latvia and Croatia also show minimal contributions, with 1 article each. Latvia is likely to focus on language as a national identity or historical impact on local languages. At the same time, Croatia may include linguistic studies related to Eastern European national identity and culture. These countries' small contributions remain essential because they highlight perspectives that may not be reached by research from large countries (Markova, 2022).

Discussion

This study identifies several significant findings that provide insights into speaking etiquette in the context of cross-cultural communication in the digital age. Based on citation trend analysis, topic network visualization, and research distribution by country, these findings provide a comprehensive overview of the dynamics of these topics in the existing literature.

One of the key findings identified was significant fluctuations in research citation trends on speaking etiquette. The peak in citations that occurred in 2016, followed by a sharp decline in 2017, shows how this topic gained high attention at the beginning of its publication but lost relevance over time. This phenomenon is in line with the theory of knowledge obsolescence, which states that the relevance of topics in the academic community can decrease as new issues emerge and research trends shift (Markova, 2022). This decline is also in line with findings from Goncharova (2021), who show that attention to cross-cultural communication often depends on external factors such as policy changes or global events that affect the dynamics of research.

These findings show the importance of the relationship between speaking etiquette and various other topics in cross-cultural communication, such as sociolinguistics, emotional intelligence, and digital literacy. The mapping of this topic network shows that while classic issues such as speaking courtesy remain essential, there is a clear shift towards modern themes that are more relevant to the digital age. This visualization indicates that researchers are increasingly paying attention to the role of technology in intercultural communication, which was previously not a significant concern in speaking etiquette research (Hristova, 2018; Younes et al., 2024). Emotional intelligence and human-robot interaction are two themes that emerge in this visualization, illustrating a shift in communication influenced by 21st-century technology and skills (Boyko, 2020).

From a geographical distribution, these findings highlight the dominance of countries such as the United States and Russia in speaking etiquette research, reflecting the stronger research infrastructure in those countries. The findings also point to a global imbalance in research contributions, where most countries in Africa, South America, and some parts of Asia show very low or even no contributions. This inequality is in line with the global theory of knowledge production, which states that research contributions are often concentrated in countries with more excellent research resources and access to international publication platforms (Markova, 2022). These findings highlight the need for increased global collaboration and greater access for countries that have limited contributions to the study.

The decline in the number of citations in research on speaking etiquette supports the theory of ephemeral knowledge, which states that knowledge and research topics can lose relevance over time, primarily when they do not address more contemporary and dynamic issues (Boyko et al., 2020). This is evident with the shift in attention from traditional topics, such as polite speaking, to topics that are more focused on technology and 21st-century interpersonal skills, which are more relevant to the challenges of communication in the digital age.

This research offers broader new insights into the relationship between speaking etiquette and digital literacy, as well as emotional intelligence, which was previously underexplored in the existing literature. Previously, research focused more on traditional aspects of speaking etiquette, such as verbal politeness strategies (Palić, 2023). However, the results of this study show that digital interaction and the influence of emotional intelligence are becoming increasingly important in intercultural communication. It expands our understanding of the importance of digital and emotional skills in communicating in an increasingly automated world (Guillemain, 2019).

These findings also provide new insights into global inequalities in the contribution of speaking etiquette research, suggesting the need for a greater focus on research development in countries with limited donations. Increasing international collaboration will enrich perspectives and help address gaps in cross-cultural research (Ivantsova, 2016). In addition, the shift towards topics such as human-robot interaction also indicates that cross-cultural communication research needs to pay more attention to technological developments that affect communication between individuals in different cultures.

CONCLUSION

The conclusions of this study suggest that *speaking etiquette* remains an essential element in cross-cultural communication, with an increasing emphasis on digital literacy skills and emotional intelligence, especially in the context of virtual communication. These findings indicate that individuals who have high emotional intelligence and good digital skills are more effective at communicating in cross-cultural environments, especially in interactions that increasingly occur on digital platforms. However, the study has some limitations, such as a limited sample size and reliance on self-reported data, which can lead to bias in interpretation. In addition, the methodologies used are primarily interviews and case studies limited to individual views that may not fully describe the dynamics of cross-cultural communication globally.

Despite these limitations, these findings make a significant contribution to understanding changing communication norms in the digital age, as well as providing important implications for research and professional practice. This research enriches the literature by introducing the relationship between *speaking etiquette*, emotional intelligence, and digital literacy, which has not been extensively researched before. These findings could also serve as a basis for further research, especially in exploring how new technologies, such as artificial intelligence and virtual reality, are impacting cross-cultural communication. Future research may also expand the sample to cover a broader range of cultural and technological contexts to test the relevance of these findings at a global level.

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