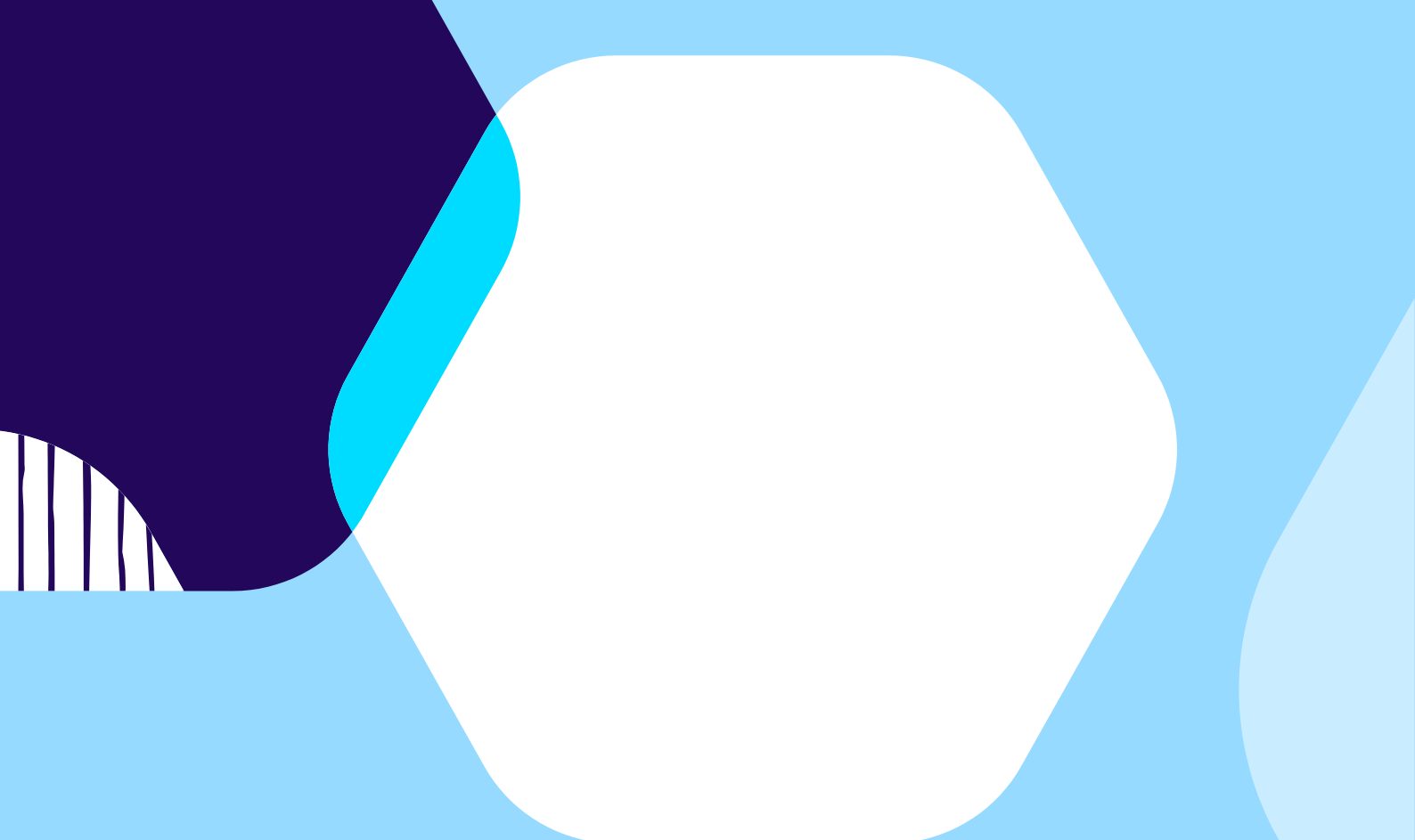


# How can we use virtual reality to teach English?

Show notes





**In this podcast series from the British Council, we try and provide solutions to some of the key questions being asked by English teachers around the world.**

**Each episode explores a specific topic through interviews, a focus on recent developments or reports on British Council initiatives in English language teaching. Practical show notes, classroom activities and transcripts are available to download for each episode.**

## Episode overview

In recent times, the influence of virtual reality, artificial intelligence and the metaverse in our daily lives has increased. This influence has also been very noticeable in English language teaching in many parts of the world. In this episode, we talk to Nergiz Kern, a leading expert in this field, who talks to us about the past, present and future of these educational technologies. She shares with us advice about how we can get the most out of VR in the classroom with whatever resources we have, wherever in the world we may be. In our field report, we are invited into a VR lesson to see for ourselves how they work, and how they can make our teaching even more effective.

### In this episode



**This is a gap in online teaching that virtual reality can actually close because you can have the socialising element meeting in a place, in a space and doing things together.**

**You can't learn a language in isolation. You need other people, you need to interact with other people.**

**There is again research that proves that VR reduces anxiety because you're represented by avatars – you're not really 'yourself'.**

**The way technology is going, we will have a big shift, in particularly in online teaching or online learning because of the development of the internet from flat 2D Internet to Web3.**

**The research suggests that one of the real benefits of VR is this idea of transferring contextualization, that language transfer is much stronger from VR to real life than from the classroom to real life.**



## Detailed notes

Additional information about particularly interesting, relevant, or challenging terms are given in the table below.

Phrase used	Explanation and further information
<b>Field report</b>	
Virtual reality	Virtual reality – commonly known as VR – refers to a computer-generated environment with scenes and objects that appear to be real, making the user feel they are immersed in their surroundings.
360-degree videos	A 360-degree video is a spherical video format which, when viewed on a virtual reality headset, gives viewers the illusion of 'being there'.
A very recent report from EDUCAUSE	The report which Nergiz refers to can be downloaded <a href="#">here</a> .
There is again research that proves that VR reduces anxiety	<a href="#">This academic article</a> , for example, argues that “VR has been shown to be an effective and affordable way to treat anxiety disorders, including posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), phobias, and other specific anxieties that negatively affect participation.”
A2 in the classroom and B1 in VR	A2 and B1 are levels on the <a href="#">CEFR</a> (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages). A2 (elementary) users can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance. B1 (intermediate) users can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure etc.
Safe language	Safe language is language which the student has already acquired and knows well. To develop their English language ability, students need to be pushed to go beyond safe language, to experiment with new and unfamiliar language.
Avatar	An avatar is an icon or figure representing a particular person in a video game or internet forum.
Hardware	Computer hardware is the physical components that a computer system requires to function.
Global South	As outlined <a href="#">here</a> , the concept of Global North and Global

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South is used to describe a grouping of countries along socio-economic and political characteristics. The Global South is a term often used to identify regions within Latin America, Asia, Africa, and Oceania. It is one of a family of terms, including "Third World" and "Periphery", that denote regions outside Europe and North America. Most, though not all, of these countries are low-income and often politically or culturally marginalised on one side of the divide, while on the other side are the countries of the Global North (often equated with 'developed' countries).

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One arrow in our quiver of options

This slightly odd phrase, used by Chris, means to have one option from several that are available. A 'quiver' is a bag which is used to keep arrows in.

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Web3

Web3 (also known as Web 3.0) is an idea for a new 'version' of the World Wide Web which incorporates concepts such as decentralisation and blockchain. Proponents argue that Web3 will increase data security, scalability and privacy for users, and that it will combat the influence of large technology companies.

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Metaverse

The general meaning of 'metaverse' is a digital platform that provides experiences as an alternative to or a replica of the real world, along with key civilisational aspects like social interactions, currency, trade, economy, and property ownership. Specifically, the term is often associated with Facebook's attempts to create such a space.

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They can follow me or follow my website

You can visit Nergiz's website at <https://nergizkern.com/>.

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## Discussion

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Gaza

According to [UNRWA](#), the UN agency that supports the relief and human development of Palestinian refugees, Gaza: "has a population of approximately 2.1 million people, including some 1.4 million Palestine refugees. For at least the last decade and a half, the socioeconomic situation in Gaza has been in steady decline. A blockade on land, air and sea was imposed by Israel following the Hamas takeover of the Gaza Strip in 2007. The blockade continues to have a devastating effect as people's movement to and from the Gaza Strip, as well as access to markets, remains severely restricted."

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Yamaguchi University in Japan

Find out more [here](#).

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## Field report

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English Language Teaching Centre, University of

The [English Language Teaching Centre](#) (ELTC) is part of The University of Sheffield and one of the largest

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Sheffield	university language centres in the UK. With over 100 teachers and 20 administrative and support staff, the ELTC teaches and supports several thousand students a year on a range of general, pre-sessional and in-sessional programmes.
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Tooltip	A tooltip, also known as infotip or hint, is a common graphical user interface (GUI) element in which, when hovering over a screen element or component, a text box displays information about that element, such as a description of a button's function.
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Placeables	A placeable is something that can be 'picked up' in a virtual reality, and put or used somewhere.
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Headset	A virtual reality headset (or VR headset) is a head-mounted device that provides virtual reality for the wearer. VR headsets are widely used with VR video games but they are also used in other applications, including simulators and trainers.
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## **Discussion**

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Script	A script, in this context, means knowing the type of language which you are likely to use in this particular situation. For example, the script for going to the doctors would generally begin with a welcome, and then asking what the problem is.
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Second digital lives	You second digital is that which you live online – whether in the way in which you share and interact on social media, or the 'alter ego' life you might lead as an avatar in an online space.
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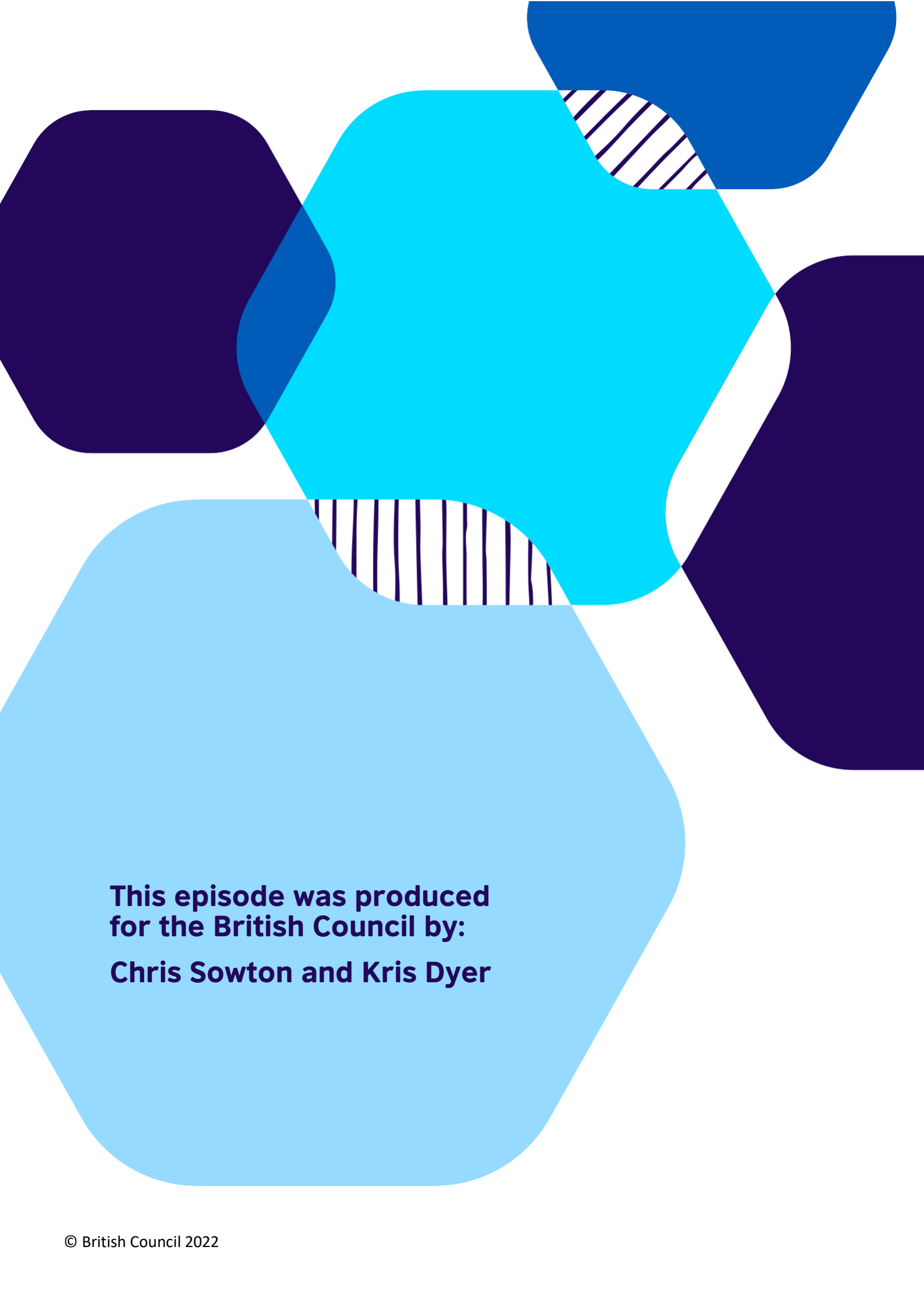
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## Using this podcast for lessons or training

- You can download a transcript of the episode from the podcast homepage. To help you and your learners with preparation and language analysis, all words at the B2, C1 and C2 CEFR level have been highlighted.
- The British Council have produced an 'activity pack' for this episode, which contains activities which you can use in your classroom. The activities focus on speaking, listening, grammar and language. They are available in both pdf and in editable PowerPoint format, in case you wish to edit them to make them more relevant for your specific classroom.







**This episode was produced  
for the British Council by:  
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