



## Intercultural Experiences in Virtual Reality – the role of the virtual setting

Virtual Reality (VR) offers new and promising learning experience formats with significant potential for both intercultural and language learning. Initial studies are exploring how VR can facilitate intercultural encounters and are investigating the challenges and affordances that emerge when students from diverse global locations meet within the Metaverse. However, a critical gap remains in understanding how the visual and environmental cues of a VR setting specifically shape the dynamics of intercultural interaction. The core objective of this project is to investigate how the virtual context impacts intercultural interactions. Specifically, the research will compare the characteristics of intercultural interactions conducted in a neutral setting (such as the example shown in Figure 1) versus a culturally representative environment (e.g., Chinatown). The analysis will focus on differences in discussion topics and perceived socio-cultural comfort. The project will employ a mixed-methods design.



Figure 1: Student (avatar) interaction on a plane in VR

### Scope of the internship

The main tasks will involve the execution and analysis of the research study:

Recruit and manage study participants, conduct the VR sessions, administer surveys and conduct interviews; analyse quantitative and qualitative data using appropriate statistical methods.

Prof. Alice Gruber, [alice.gruber@tha.de](mailto:alice.gruber@tha.de), Professor of Business English

**Special requirements**

Ability in applying technology and proficiency in statistical analysis. Hands-on experience with VR headsets, preferably in an educational or research context. An interest in the field of intercultural communication.

**Qualification level:** Advanced Bachelor or Master level