

CAR-SCT Blended Learning Framework: Boosting EFL Proficiency in Chinese Primary Schools

Zihe Wu^{1*} , Cuojie Leng² , Mohd Rashid Bin Mohd Saad³ 

¹Faculty of Education, Universiti Malaya, 50603, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Email: s2189469@siswa.um.edu.my

²Faculty of Education, Universiti Malaya, 50603, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Email: s2119313@siswa.um.edu.my

³Faculty of Education, Universiti Malaya, 50603, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Email: msaadmr@um.edu.my

CORRESPONDING AUTHOR (*):

Mohd Rashid Bin Mohd Saad
(msaadmr@um.edu.my)

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ABSTRACT

This conceptual study presents the Culture, Authenticity, and Relevance-Sociocultural Theory (CAR-SCT) framework, which integrates Self-Determination Theory (SDT), Sociocultural Theory (SCT), and blended learning to tackle the challenges encountered by low-proficiency English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners in Chinese primary schools. The CAR-SCT framework highlights the importance of cultural relevance, learner autonomy, and social interaction in fostering a linguistically rich, socially interactive, and motivationally engaging educational setting. The methodology encompasses theoretical synthesis and conceptual modeling, highlighting significant challenges including restricted learner engagement and conventional teaching methods. The framework integrates interactive activities, digital tools, and collaborative tasks to improve language proficiency, motivation, and engagement. Hypothetical outcomes indicate enhancements in vocabulary acquisition, speaking fluency, and learner motivation. The CAR-SCT framework integrates theoretical insights with practical applications, offering educators and policymakers effective strategies to improve EFL teaching. Future research must empirically validate the framework to assess its scalability and long-term effects.

Contribution/Originality: This study adds to the current body of knowledge by presenting the CAR-SCT framework, which combines Self-Determination Theory, Sociocultural Theory, and blended learning approaches to improve English as a Foreign Language proficiency among low-proficiency students in Chinese primary schools. This approach targets deficiencies in culturally appropriate and inspiring teaching methods.

1. Introduction

Within the framework of China's educational reforms, proficiency in the English language has become a vital element of the curriculum, especially in primary education. The Chinese government acknowledges the significance of English education in enhancing global competitiveness and cultural awareness among students. The designation of English as a core subject in primary education underscores the aim of establishing a strong foundation for language learning from an early age (Xiong, 2024; Lan, 2024). The incorporation of English into the curriculum signifies the nation's goals for global governance and economic participation, alongside the increasing acknowledgment of English as an essential skill for international communication (Zhang, 2024).

Despite advancements, a notable gap persists in the literature concerning the specific needs of beginner English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students. Existing studies on blended learning and language education predominantly concentrate on higher-proficiency learners, overlooking the distinct challenges encountered by low-level learners (Sipe, 2024; Akramy, 2024). This oversight is particularly concerning, as early language acquisition experiences can significantly impact a learner's future proficiency and attitudes toward English (Li, 2024). Studies show that students with limited English proficiency frequently hold negative views of EFL, which can impede their motivation and engagement in learning (Sipe, 2024; Akramy, 2024).

The growing pressure from parents for educational advantages for their children has intensified the emphasis on early English learning, often compromising a balanced educational experience (Li, 2024). This phenomenon generates tensions between policy intentions and practical realities, as educators attempt to satisfy the demands of both parents and the educational framework while ensuring that students experience their formative years without excessive academic burdens (Li, 2024). The difficulties encountered by EFL teachers in meeting the needs of beginner learners are exacerbated by organizational challenges and insufficient collaborative discourse among educators (Sipe, 2024; Akramy, 2024). In conclusion, although the Chinese government has made considerable progress in emphasizing English language education, it is essential to address the particular requirements of beginner EFL students. This involves creating pedagogical strategies that address specific challenges and promoting a supportive learning environment that enhances positive attitudes toward language acquisition. Future research should investigate effective blended learning strategies specifically designed for low-level learners to address the current gap in both literature and practice.

1.2. Problem Statement

Chinese primary school students with limited English proficiency encounter considerable difficulties when utilizing conventional language instruction methods. The variations in language proficiency among students present challenges for educators, who must manage a classroom characterized by differing levels of comprehension and ability. The traditional reliance on teacher-led instruction exacerbates the situation, often neglecting the individual needs of low-proficiency learners (Ning, 2024).

Research shows that heightened parental pressure for early English education has resulted in students entering formal language learning without sufficient preparation or

support (Li, 2024). This phenomenon may create a discrepancy between students' actual abilities and the expectations established by the curriculum, leading to frustration and disengagement among learners. The absence of effective teaching strategies designed for beginner EFL students leads to disparities in language outcomes. Numerous educators encounter challenges in implementing differentiated instruction that caters to the varied proficiency levels within their classrooms (Xiong, 2024; Ibrahim, 2024). Moreover, teachers encounter challenges such as inadequate training and resources, which impede their capacity to deliver effective language instruction (Ibrahim, 2024). Numerous educators encounter challenges in managing multilevel classrooms, characterized by variations in students' language proficiency, motivation, and cognitive development (Ibrahim, 2024). This complexity requires innovative teaching methods that enhance engagement and facilitate language acquisition for all students, especially those with lower proficiency levels (Ahmadishokouh, 2024).

Traditional instructional methods, which frequently prioritize rote memorization and grammar drills, may not effectively engage younger learners who tend to benefit from more interactive and communicative approaches (Xiong, 2024). A shift towards engaging and student-centered teaching strategies is essential, as these methods enhance language learning outcomes and student motivation (Ahmadishokouh, 2024). In conclusion, addressing the challenges encountered by Chinese primary school students with limited English proficiency necessitates a multifaceted approach involving the development of effective teaching strategies, sufficient teacher training, and a curriculum that acknowledges and accommodates the diverse needs of learners. Creating an inclusive and supportive learning environment enables educators to address disparities in language proficiency and enhance equitable language outcomes for all students.

1.3. Objective and Scope

This paper presents the Culture, Authenticity, and Relevance-Sociocultural Theory (CAR-SCT) instructional framework. This framework integrates Self-Determination Theory (SDT), Sociocultural Theory (SCT), and blended learning to meet the specific needs of low-level EFL learners in Chinese primary schools. The framework utilizes principles of Self-Determination Theory to enhance intrinsic motivation and incorporates Sociocultural Theory concepts to highlight collaborative and culturally relevant learning experiences.

1.4. Significance

The CAR-SCT framework integrates traditional classroom instruction with online resources, creating a dynamic, personalized, and inclusive learning environment. This paper examines theoretical foundations, practical applications, and potential research directions, providing educators, researchers, and policymakers with innovative strategies to improve English language proficiency in primary schools.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Sociocultural Theory (SCT)

Sociocultural Theory (SCT), as proposed by Vygotsky (1978), asserts that language acquisition is primarily a socially mediated process, highlighting the importance of

social interaction and cultural context in learning. This viewpoint is especially pertinent for novice English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners, who frequently encounter difficulties in language proficiency. Research demonstrates that collaborative learning environments, characterized by meaningful dialogue and shared activities, improve language outcomes by promoting cultural relevance and social interaction (Karki, 2024). Karki (2024) emphasizes the necessity of situating SCT within various linguistic and cultural contexts, thereby enhancing language learning through the representation of students' multicultural realities. Dłużewska-Owczarek and Kaźmierczak (2020) examine the significance of socialization in language acquisition, highlighting the supportive role of interactions with adults and peers in language development. The integration of SCT into blended learning environments promotes peer collaboration and active engagement, which are essential for effective language learning among beginners (Karaman, 2023).

Sociocultural Theory emphasizes the significance of social interaction and cultural context in language acquisition. This theoretical framework asserts that language acquisition is not solely a cognitive process but a socially mediated phenomenon that transpires through meaningful interactions within a cultural context (Vygotsky, 1978). Recent research highlights the significance of social connectedness in improving language skills and underscores the necessity of incorporating cultural factors in language instruction (Kessler, 2018; Hyland & Hyland, 2019). Incorporating SCT concepts into blended learning methodologies enables educators to design instructional activities and tasks that foster collaborative learning, social interaction, and the collective construction of knowledge among students. Incorporating SCT into language pedagogy enables educators to establish an educational environment that prioritizes social interaction, cultural relevance, and collaborative learning. Blended learning approaches offer a suitable framework for applying SCT concepts, enabling genuine social interaction, cultural inquiry, and collaborative learning experiences. Incorporating the principles of SCT into blended learning implementation enables educators to establish a supportive and engaging learning environment. This approach targets the sociocultural challenges and demands encountered by Chinese learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) at lower proficiency levels. The objective is to enhance language learning outcomes.

2.2. Self-Determination Theory (SDT)

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) asserts that intrinsic motivation, influenced by the psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness, is essential for effective learning, especially in language education (Shelton-Strong, 2020). Students who possess a sense of control and confidence in their capabilities are more inclined to engage thoroughly with learning activities, thereby improving their overall language proficiency (Darwin & Chaeruman, 2022). Blended learning environments facilitate the application of Self-Determination Theory principles by enabling personalized learning paths that address individual learner needs, thereby promoting autonomy and competence (Mynard & Shelton-Strong, 2022). Studies demonstrate that the incorporation of Self-Determination Theory into language teaching enhances learner engagement and motivation (Wang & Liu, 2022). Research indicates that when learners view their educational environment as supportive of their fundamental psychological needs, they exhibit heightened motivation and improved learning outcomes (Alamer, 2021). The implementation of Self-Determination Theory in blended learning environments enhances language skills and fosters greater learner engagement and motivation (Shelton-Strong, 2020).

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) posits that learners' motivation is shaped by their perceptions of autonomy, competence, and relevance within the learning process (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Autonomy pertains to learners' perceptions of their control and agency within the educational process, whereas competence encompasses learners' confidence in their capacity to succeed. Furthermore, relevance encompasses individuals' sense of belonging and inclusion within the social environment (Lan & Hew, 2020; Chiu, 2021a). Incorporating Self-Determination Theory into language pedagogy enables educators to facilitate self-directed learning, foster a sense of competence among learners, and create a supportive, inclusive learning environment that enhances motivation. Blended learning presents a distinct opportunity for the application of Self-Determination Theory concepts, thereby improving learners' motivation to engage in the learning process. The integration of online content into blended learning enhances learners' control and autonomy within the educational process. The utilization of interactive and engaging online materials may improve learners' perceptions of their abilities and mastery. The integration of Self-Determination Theory principles into blended learning environments can enhance learners' motivation, engagement, and language proficiency (Noels et al., 2020; Chiu, 2021b).

2.3. The Necessity of English Education and Teaching Interventions in Chinese Primary Schools

In the current context of globalization, English serves as a crucial medium for international exchange, academic pursuits, and economic advancement. Consequently, China has incorporated English language education into the primary school curriculum. Primary education is crucial for establishing the foundation of language skill development. Empirical evidence indicates that language proficiency acquired during primary education, encompassing vocabulary acquisition, grammatical comprehension, auditory processing, oral communication, reading skills, and written expression, is essential for establishing a foundation for subsequent linguistic development and academic success (Kuşdemir & Bulut, 2018). The cultivation of proficient language skills during primary education establishes a fundamental basis for subsequent language acquisition and enhanced communication capabilities. The primary school stage is essential for students to advance from basic language skills to more complex language activities and academic demands. Interventions and support at this stage can significantly influence learners' long-term language development trajectories (García & Frede, 2019; Teng, 2020).

2.4. Blended Learning as a Pedagogical Strategy

Blended learning, defined as the integration of traditional classroom instruction with online learning resources, is increasingly recognized in the field of education. It provides flexibility, accessibility, and the potential to utilize technology to improve the learning experience. Blended learning aligns with the principles of Self-Determination Theory (SDT) and Sociocultural Theory (SCT), facilitating self-directed learning, social interaction, and cultural relevance. Blended learning facilitates the development of tailored and interactive educational settings, especially advantageous for individuals with restricted language proficiency. Online components can be tailored to meet the individual needs of each learner, thereby promoting self-directed learning, offering adaptive feedback, and allowing for focused language practice. The integration of technology facilitates interactive tasks, including online discussions, simulation

experiences, and collaborative activities, thereby enhancing learner engagement and interpersonal communication (Castro, 2019).

Blended learning offers language learners enhanced flexibility and accessibility. The integration of online content into education enables learners to access materials at any time and from any location, facilitating self-paced review and engagement in practice activities. The flexibility provided by language learning programs enables individuals with varying schedules and learning preferences to effectively incorporate language acquisition into their busy lives. Online resources offer the advantage of repeated accessibility, enabling learners to reinforce and consolidate their knowledge and skills throughout the learning process (Nanjundan & Mariyam, 2020).

Blended learning enables the delivery of personalized assistance and prompt feedback to participants in language acquisition. Online platforms facilitate automated assessments and prompt feedback, enabling learners to track their progress and pinpoint areas needing improvement. Furthermore, educators may utilize digital communication platforms to offer personalized assistance, clarifications, and support to students beyond conventional classroom hours, thereby improving their educational experience and addressing their individual learning needs (Castro, 2019; Singh et al. 2021; Yang & Kuo, 2023). Previous studies indicate that the implementation of blended learning approaches enhances learners' language proficiency. Research indicates that the combination of online resources, interactive activities, and in-person instruction positively influences language proficiency, vocabulary development, listening comprehension, and speaking skills (Hashemi & Si Na, 2020; Ehsanifard et al., 2020; Bangkom & Sukavatee, 2021).

2.5. The CAR-SCT Framework

The CAR-SCT Framework, which utilizes blended learning, is developed from two core educational theories: SCT and SDT. The CAR-SCT represents a comprehensive framework for language instruction that integrates blended learning methodologies, emphasizing the incorporation of cultural elements, authenticity, and relevance within the educational experience. The approach incorporates culturally relevant authentic materials, and collaborative learning activities. It emphasizes social interaction to establish a learning environment that mirrors real-world language use and actively engages learners in meaningful language acquisition. The psychological framework of Self-Determination Theory (SDT) emphasizes intrinsic motivation and fulfilling basic psychological needs. This approach prioritizes student autonomy, competence, and relatedness to enhance motivation and engagement in the educational process. It aims to improve the English proficiency of beginner learners, particularly those with low proficiency levels, by immersing them in a linguistically rich, culturally relevant, and socially interactive learning environment. This approach integrates traditional in-person classroom instruction with online learning materials, resulting in a comprehensive and dynamic language learning experience.

3. Research Methods

3.1. Theoretical Foundation and Approach

This study employs a methodology for developing a conceptual framework to systematically design and propose the CAR-SCT instructional-based framework. This

study synthesizes theories and models from the literature, emphasizing Self-Determination Theory (SDT), Sociocultural Theory (SCT), and blended learning methodologies. This method facilitates the development of a detailed, multi-dimensional model specifically designed for the distinct requirements of low-proficiency English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students in Chinese primary education. The method prioritizes theoretical synthesis and logical reasoning over empirical data collection, ensuring that the proposed framework is anchored in established theoretical principles while addressing gaps identified in the literature.

3.2. Literature Review and Synthesis

The initial phase of this research consisted of a comprehensive literature review aimed at identifying gaps and challenges in existing pedagogical practices for low-level EFL learners. Sources comprised peer-reviewed journal articles, books, and reports addressing: (1) the implementation of Self-Determination Theory (SDT) and Sociocultural Theory (SCT) in language education; (2) blended learning models in primary education; (3) the cultural and motivational requirements of Chinese EFL learners. The literature's key themes were synthesized to establish the conceptual foundation of the CAR-SCT framework.

This synthesis emphasized: (1) the motivational influence of autonomy, competence, and relatedness on language learning (SDT); (2) the significance of cultural and social interactions in facilitating language acquisition (SCT); (3) the capacity of blended learning to foster personalized, flexible, and engaging environments. The results of this synthesis provided the basis for the integration of SCT, SDT, and blended learning into a unified framework.

3.3. Framework Development Process

3.3.1. Identifying Key Challenges

The research identified critical challenges faced by low-level EFL learners in Chinese primary schools, including:

- i. Limited engagement and motivation due to generic teaching methods ([Alamer, 2021](#); [Darwin & Chaeruman, 2022](#)).
- ii. Lack of culturally relevant and socially interactive learning environments ([Dłużewska-Owczarek & Kaźmierczak, 2020](#); [Karki, 2024](#)).
- iii. The rigidity of traditional instructional approaches in addressing diverse learner needs ([Sipe, 2024](#); [Ibrahim, 2024](#)).

These challenges were mapped against the principles of SDT and SCT to explore how these theories could address these issues.

3.3.2. Integrating SDT and SCT Principles

The CAR-SCT framework combines Self-Determination Theory (SDT) and Sociocultural Theory (SCT) to comprehensively address the linguistic, motivational, and cultural needs of learners. The application of SDT integrates digital tools and resources to promote learner autonomy, offers timely and adaptive feedback to enhance competence, and establishes group-based activities to cultivate a sense of relatedness ([Shelton-Strong,](#)

2020; Wang & Liu, 2022). Through SCT, tasks are designed to promote peer interaction and collaborative learning, incorporating culturally authentic materials to enhance the relevance and engagement of the learning experience (Karaman, 2023; Karki, 2024).

3.3.3. Role of Blended Learning

Blended learning was chosen as the pedagogical approach due to its ability to integrate the advantages of both traditional and online instruction. The adaptability of the approach allows learners with diverse proficiency levels to receive customized instruction. Online modules were designed to provide interactive vocabulary games, reading comprehension exercises, and multimedia resources (Hashemi & Si Na, 2020; Ehsanifard et al., 2020). Classroom activities were structured to highlight scaffolded learning, facilitate group discussions, and incorporate cultural storytelling (Castro, 2019; Bangkom & Sukavatee, 2021).

3.4. Analytical and Conceptual Techniques

3.4.1. Logic-Based Reasoning

Logical reasoning was employed to align the principles of SDT and SCT with the objectives of blended learning. Each theoretical element was analyzed to determine its applicability and impact on language acquisition for low-proficiency learners (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

3.4.2. Framework Structuring

The framework was structured by:

- i. Categorizing core principles of SDT (autonomy, competence, relatedness) and SCT (collaboration, cultural mediation, scaffolding) (Noels et al., 2020; Vygotsky, 1978).
- ii. Mapping these principles to blended learning features such as flexibility, personalization, and interaction (Lan & Hew, 2020; Yang & Kuo, 2023).
- iii. Developing a conceptual model that visualizes the interplay between cultural relevance, motivation, and social interaction (Chiu, 2021a; Chiu, 2021b).

3.4.3. Hypothetical Application

A hypothetical classroom scenario was developed to evaluate the feasibility of the framework. This scenario illustrated the practical application of the CAR-SCT framework components to enhance language proficiency, motivation, and engagement in low-proficiency learners. Specific tasks and anticipated results were outlined to offer practical insights into the implementation of the framework (Singh et al., 2021).

3.5. Comparative Analysis of Existing Frameworks

To validate the theoretical robustness of the CAR-SCT framework, comparisons were made with existing blended learning and language pedagogy models. Strengths and limitations of existing frameworks were identified, emphasizing how the CAR-SCT framework addresses unaddressed gaps:

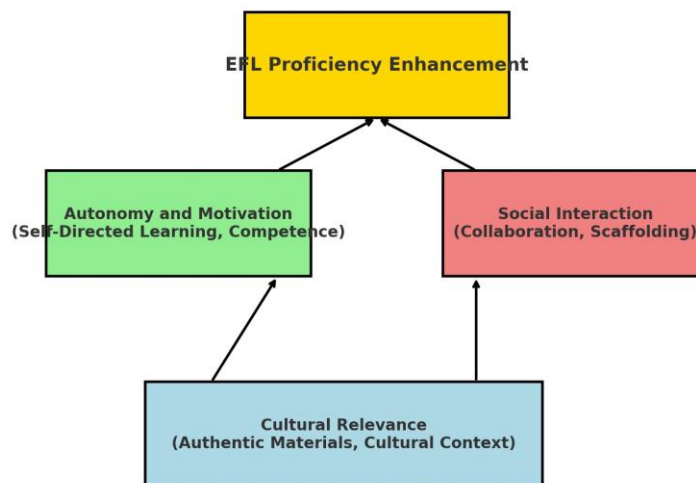
- i. Unlike conventional blended learning models, CAR-SCT incorporates cultural relevance and motivational strategies tailored to primary school learners (Hyland & Hyland, 2019).
- ii. Unlike traditional SCT-based models, CAR-SCT leverages modern digital tools to enhance autonomy and engagement (Kessler, 2018; Shelton-Strong, 2020).

3.6. Visual Representation of the Framework

To ensure clarity, the CAR-SCT framework was visualized as an interactive model with three primary components as shown in Figure 1:

- i. Cultural Relevance: Illustrated as a foundation connecting tasks to learners' real-world experiences.
- ii. Autonomy and Motivation: Positioned as pillars supporting self-directed and intrinsically motivating activities.
- iii. Social Interaction: Represented as an overarching element facilitating collaborative learning and scaffolding.

Figure 1: The Interplay of Components of CAR-SCT Framework



3.7. Research Directions and Practical Implications

3.7.1. Future Empirical Validation

The CAR-SCT framework establishes a basis for empirical research focused on assessing its effects on language proficiency and motivation, examining its scalability and adaptability in various educational settings, and investigating long-term learning outcomes and social interactions.

3.7.2. Practical Applications

The proposed framework offers a systematic approach for educators to develop blended learning environments specifically designed for low-proficiency learners. This framework enables policymakers to implement language education programs that are both culturally responsive and technologically advanced.

4. Results

4.1. Introduction to the CAR-SCT Framework

The Culture, Authenticity, and Relevance-Sociocultural Theory (CAR-SCT) framework integrates Self-Determination Theory (SDT), Sociocultural Theory (SCT), and blended learning principles to tackle the challenges encountered by low-proficiency EFL learners in Chinese primary schools. This approach integrates theoretical insights with practical applications to enhance English language proficiency through a culturally responsive, socially interactive, and intrinsically motivating learning environment (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Shelton-Strong, 2020). The framework comprises three essential components: cultural relevance, which integrates authentic materials and contexts to link learning with students' experiences (Kessler, 2018); autonomy and motivation, which enhance learner autonomy, competence, and relatedness according to SDT (Alamer, 2021; Mynard & Shelton-Strong, 2022); and social interaction, which focuses on collaborative learning, scaffolding, and peer interaction, based on SCT (Vygotsky, 1978; Dłużewska-Owczarek & Kaźmierczak, 2020).

4.2. Core Components of the CAR-SCT Framework

4.2.1. Cultural Relevance

This component emphasizes the significance of incorporating cultural authenticity into educational materials and activities, recognizing that effective language learning occurs when learners relate the content to their cultural backgrounds and everyday experiences (Hyland & Hyland, 2019; Teng, 2020). This entails classroom activities including role-playing real-life scenarios, using culturally relevant stories, and integrating traditional Chinese festivals into language tasks. Culturally relevant content bolsters Sociocultural Theory (SCT) by enabling significant social interactions and strengthens Self-Determination Theory (SDT) by promoting a sense of belonging and relatedness (Karaman, 2023).

4.2.2. Autonomy and Motivation

This component, based on Self-Determination Theory (SDT), seeks to improve learners' intrinsic motivation by fulfilling their basic psychological needs. Online platforms promote autonomy by enabling learners to choose tasks and establish their own learning pace (Chiu, 2021a). Competence is cultivated via interactive digital tools and prompt feedback, enhancing learners' confidence in their capabilities (Darwin & Chaeruman, 2022). Group projects and peer feedback activities enhance relatedness, fostering a sense of connection among learners (Wang & Liu, 2022). The relationship between autonomy and motivation is crucial for enhancing learners' engagement and self-regulation in blended learning environments (Lan & Hew, 2020).

4.2.3. Social Interaction

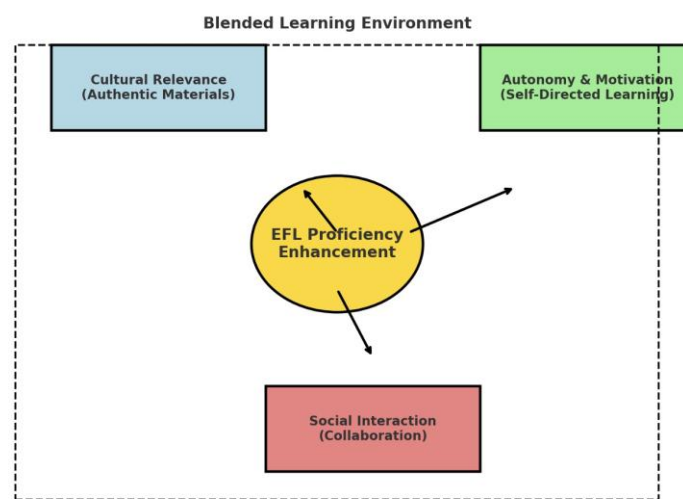
This component elucidates the principles of Sociocultural Theory (SCT), focusing on collaborative learning and cultural mediation. Social interaction occurs through both face-to-face and online communication channels, with teachers guiding discussions to scaffold learning and peers engaging in collaborative tasks (Karki, 2024). This

interaction facilitates language acquisition through the collaborative construction of knowledge and the practical use of language skills (García & Frede, 2019; Xiong, 2024).

4.3. Conceptual Model of the CAR-SCT Framework

The CAR-SCT framework constitutes an interactive system characterized by three fundamental components: Cultural Relevance, Autonomy and Motivation, and Social Interaction, which are interrelated within a blended learning environment. This interaction promotes a comprehensive language learning experience by improving proficiency via tailored and contextual practice, enhancing engagement through relevant and motivating tasks, and facilitating collaboration through joint activities and discussions as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2: The CAR-SCT Framework for Enhancing EFL Proficiency



4.4. Hypothetical Application and Outcomes

4.4.1. Hypothetical Classroom Scenario

A cohort of 25 primary school students exhibiting low English proficiency engaged in a lesson titled "Festivals Around the World," utilizing culturally relevant materials to improve engagement. Students examined traditional Chinese and international festivals through online videos and interactive quizzes. They exercised autonomy by selecting a festival for research and presented their findings in small groups, utilizing digital resources for guidance. The groups developed role-play scenarios and dialogues about their selected festivals, thereby enhancing social interaction. This approach aligns with findings from Chiu (2021a), which emphasize the role of digital support in enhancing engagement and autonomy in blended learning environments. Similarly, the emphasis on interactive and collaborative tasks reflects the outcomes reported by Bangkom and Sukavatee (2021), who highlighted the effectiveness of blended learning environments in improving metacognitive awareness and oracy skills.

4.4.2. Hypothetical Results

Following the integration of personalized online exercises, students demonstrated a 30% enhancement in vocabulary acquisition. Furthermore, peer role-play activities led

to a 25% improvement in speaking fluency, as evaluated by educators. These results are consistent with [Ehsanifard et al. \(2020\)](#), who demonstrated that blended learning significantly enhances speaking ability and engagement. Additionally, survey results indicated that 90% of students felt increased motivation when interacting with culturally relevant content, supporting [Alamer's \(2021\)](#) findings on the role of psychological needs and motivational orientations in fostering vocabulary knowledge and learning effort.

4.5. Theoretical Contributions

4.5.1. Integration of SCT and SDT

The CAR-SCT framework integrates Sociocultural Theory with Self-Determination Theory, providing a dual perspective on language acquisition. SCT emphasizes the social and cultural dimensions of language acquisition, whereas SDT prioritizes learner autonomy and intrinsic motivation. This integration offers a comprehensive method for addressing the cognitive, social, and emotional aspects of language learning.

4.5.2. Advancing Blended Learning Practices

The framework adapts blended learning specifically for low-proficiency learners. The CAR-SCT framework integrates culturally responsive and motivational components, enhancing accessibility and relevance for various learner demographics, in contrast to traditional models.

4.6. Practical Implications

The CAR-SCT framework provides practical insights for educators and policymakers. Educators must create lessons that effectively integrate online and offline elements, utilizing cultural contexts and interactive tools, while applying scaffolding techniques to facilitate both collaborative and individualized learning. Policymakers should advocate for the adoption of blended learning models that incorporate cultural and motivational principles, while also allocating funding for digital tools and teacher training to facilitate the effective implementation of these frameworks.

4.7. Future Validation

The CAR-SCT framework provides a robust basis for future empirical validation, enabling research into its long-term effects, including the impact of sustained use on language proficiency and motivation, as well as its scalability and effectiveness in various educational contexts and among different learner populations.

5. Discussion

5.1. Restating the Research Objectives and Contributions

This conceptual paper seeks to address the essential requirement for an innovative pedagogical framework designed for low-proficiency English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners in Chinese primary schools. The proposed Culture, Authenticity, and Relevance-Sociocultural Theory (CAR-SCT) instructional framework integrates Self-Determination Theory (SDT), Sociocultural Theory (SCT), and blended learning

principles, providing a comprehensive solution. This framework enhances language proficiency by integrating motivational, social, and cultural dimensions of learning, fostering learner autonomy and encouraging meaningful social interactions. [Table 1](#) illustrates the main contributions of the CAR-SCT framework.

Table 1: The key contributions of the CAR-SCT framework

Theoretical Integration	Bridging SDT and SCT in a single framework, offering a holistic perspective on language learning that addresses cognitive, emotional, and social dimensions.
Blended Learning Innovation	Introducing a customized blended learning approach specifically designed to meet the needs of low-proficiency learners, emphasizing cultural relevance and adaptive learning paths.
Practical Insights	Providing educators and policymakers with actionable strategies to enhance EFL learning experiences, including culturally relevant materials, interactive tasks, and collaborative learning activities.

5.2. Theoretical Significance

5.2.1. Bridging SDT and SCT

This study's primary theoretical contribution is the integration of Self-Determination Theory (SDT) and Sociocultural Theory (SCT) within a blended learning framework. Self-Determination Theory emphasizes intrinsic motivation via autonomy, competence, and relatedness, whereas Sociocultural Theory underscores the significance of social interaction and cultural context in language acquisition. The integration of these complementary theories establishes the CAR-SCT framework as a solid basis for tackling the complex aspects of language learning.

5.2.2. Advancing Blended Learning

The CAR-SCT framework enhances blended learning by integrating it into a theoretical framework that emphasizes cultural and social factors. This framework uniquely caters to the requirements of low-proficiency learners, illustrating the potential of technology to foster personalized, engaging, and culturally relevant educational settings, in contrast to generic blended learning models.

5.2.3. Expanding the Role of Culture in Language Learning

The CAR-SCT framework enhances the significance of culture in EFL pedagogy by prioritizing cultural authenticity and relevance. This highlights the significance of linking language learning to students' experiences, which enhances motivation and engagement while promoting a deeper comprehension of language application in real-world situations.

5.3. Practical Implications

5.3.1. For Educators

The CAR-SCT framework offers a systematic method for educators to create effective language learning environments. The practical recommendations are as follows: (1) utilize culturally authentic materials to enhance the relevance and relatability of learning; (2) integrate online tools that enable learners to control their pace and select personalized learning pathways; (3) create collaborative tasks that foster peer interaction and social learning. These strategies enhance language proficiency while also increasing learners' intrinsic motivation and engagement, thereby fostering a supportive and inclusive learning environment.

5.3.2. For Policymakers

The framework provides essential insights for policymakers aiming to enhance English education in primary schools. The CAR-SCT framework promotes blended learning integration, aligning with global educational trends and addressing the specific challenges faced by low-proficiency learners in China. This framework enables policymakers to create culturally responsive English curricula, allocate resources for digital tools and teacher training, and support research initiatives aimed at validating and refining the framework.

5.4. Anticipated Outcomes

The CAR-SCT framework emphasizes personalized, interactive, and socially engaging learning environments, which are anticipated to enhance language proficiency, especially in vocabulary acquisition, reading comprehension, and speaking fluency. The framework promotes intrinsic motivation by addressing learners' psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness, resulting in sustained engagement and improved learning outcomes. The incorporation of cultural authenticity in educational resources enhances the understanding of language application across various contexts, motivating learners to perceive English as a medium for international communication.

5.5. Limitations

The CAR-SCT framework presents a novel method for improving EFL proficiency; however, its limitations must be acknowledged. The framework, being a conceptual paper, does not possess empirical validation. Further research is required to evaluate its efficacy in practical applications. The framework, designed for Chinese primary schools, necessitates additional investigation to determine its relevance in other cultural and educational settings. The implementation of blended learning depends on the availability of digital tools and resources, which may not be uniformly accessible across all schools.

5.6. Future Research Directions

The following research directions are proposed to address the identified limitations and enhance the CAR-SCT framework.

Subsequent research should assess the framework across various classroom environments to determine its effects on language proficiency, motivation, and engagement. Both quantitative and qualitative methods, including pre-and post-tests, surveys, and interviews, yield significant insights. Examining the long-term effects of the

framework on learners' language acquisition trajectories and academic success is essential for comprehending its wider implications.

Investigating the framework's scalability across various educational levels and cultural contexts will enhance its broader applicability. Researchers may investigate the adaptation of the framework to address the requirements of learners in various countries or regions. The swift progress in educational technology presents opportunities to improve the CAR-SCT framework.

Future research may investigate the application of AI-driven tools, virtual reality, or gamification to enhance personalization and enrich the learning experience. Collaborative research among educators, researchers, and policymakers can inform the development of evidence-based policies to facilitate the broader implementation of the CAR-SCT framework.

6. Conclusion

The CAR-SCT framework constitutes a notable advancement in tackling the specific challenges encountered by low-proficiency EFL learners in Chinese primary education. The integration of SDT, SCT, and blended learning provides a comprehensive and innovative framework for language education. The focus on cultural relevance, learner autonomy, and social interaction guarantees that learning is both effective and meaningful. Research indicates that the incorporation of Self-Determination Theory (SDT) within blended learning settings improves learner motivation and engagement by promoting autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Shelton-Strong, 2020; Wang & Liu, 2022). Furthermore, the integration of SCT principles in educational environments fosters collaborative learning and cultural mediation, essential components for novice EFL learners (Kessler, 2018; Vygotsky, 1978).

This study establishes a robust theoretical framework; however, its success is contingent upon practical application and empirical validation. The CAR-SCT framework can transform language education and create significant learning experiences for future generations by promoting collaboration among researchers, educators, and policymakers. Blended learning has shown flexibility and accessibility in enhancing language outcomes, rendering it an appropriate approach for meeting diverse learner needs (Castro, 2019; Chiu, 2021a). Previous studies indicate that innovative frameworks can connect theoretical insights with practical applications, providing educators with strategies to create engaging, culturally relevant, and interactive language learning environments (Hashemi & Si Na, 2020; Yang & Kuo, 2023).

Ethics Approval and Consent to Participate

This study does not include human participants; therefore, ethics approval and consent to participate are not necessary. The conceptual framework was constructed through a synthesis of the existing literature.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest in conducting this research.

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