

# Epistemic Agency in Technology-Mediated Task-Based Language Teaching: A Cross-Cultural Study of Teachers in Mainland China and England

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## Abstract

This paper derives from a doctoral study that interrogates how university English teachers in Mainland China and England enact epistemic agency within technology-mediated task-based language teaching (TMTBLT). This study employs a micro-ethnographic design, integrating participant observation, interviews, and reflective field notes, to elucidate how teachers make knowledge-based judgements within the context of national digitalization and educational reform agendas. The Epistemic Framework Theory (EFT) provides an analytical framework for tracing how teachers' professional values, epistemological stances, and pedagogical strategies are negotiated within institutional and cultural structures. Research findings reveal not a binary opposition between a “collectivist East” and an “individualistic West”, but rather epistemic hybridization and contextual negotiation: Chinese language teachers are reshaping moral and collectivist traditions by adapting to digital governance and global competence agendas, while English teachers navigate the marketisation and internationalization of higher education. Their pedagogical logic increasingly hinges on three imperatives: accommodating diverse international student cohorts, demonstrating institutional value, and balancing academic integrity with service-oriented expectations. This dynamic reveal that teacher development functions not merely as a cultural manifestation, but increasingly as a knowledge negotiation mediated by political and economic forces within globalized education. By reconceptualizing knowledge agency as situated within an intersecting field of cultural, ethical and market logics, this paper challenges universalist interpretations of teacher agency. It calls for the establishment of a more reflective, decolonized understanding of teacher professionalism across linguistic contexts.

**Keywords:** cross-national comparison; digital pedagogy; epistemic negotiation; global education reform; teacher development