

## **Could the Future teaching and learning of Maltese Language include Virtual Reality?**

### **Abstract**

Although virtual reality (VR) technology is growing in popularity, little is known about the potential use of VR tools in the teaching of Maltese. This study investigated this topic using a mixed research approach. Data on the use of VR in language learning environments was collected from 25 teachers using a qualitative approach through a focus group technique. Twenty-five teachers participated in an online survey that was conducted as part of the quantitative phase of the research to obtain information on the potential effectiveness of VR technology in the context of teaching Maltese as a second language (ML2). The results of the study provided insight on the efficacy of employing VR in teaching ML2. On the basis of the findings of the NVivo thematic analysis and the quantitative information collected from the survey, the study provides a thorough overview of the benefits and drawbacks of VR for international students learning ML2. Teachers praise VR for its effectiveness in engaging students in an immersive environment and enhancing the learning context with essential entertainment aspects. According to this study, VR tools are not currently being used to assist students in learning ML2, and there is still a lot of confusion around the rules for applying these tools in ML2 settings. The most significant components of this ambiguity are critically discussed in this presentation, along with various VR-related difficulties such as high costs, bulky headsets, and technical problems.

**Keywords:** *virtual reality (VR), educational VR technology, second language acquisition, VR apps for language learning, an immersive VR environment, learning Maltese as a second language.*