

DIGITAL LINGUISTICS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

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Abstract. This article explores the impact of digital linguistics on English language teaching (ELT) in the internet age. It discusses lexical, syntactic, pragmatic, and discourse changes driven by digital communication technologies and examines how these changes influence teaching practices. The paper highlights the role of digital tools in ELT, the need for teacher digital literacy, and future directions such as multimodality and the integration of artificial intelligence in language education.

Keywords: digital linguistics, English language teaching, digital communication, multimodality, artificial intelligence, digital literacy.

1. Digital Linguistics and ELT: Theoretical Foundations

Digital linguistics refers to the study of language through and within digital mediums. It emphasizes how language is shaped by technology and how new forms of communication (e.g., social media, texting, memes) redefine linguistic structures. In the ELT context, digital linguistics helps educators understand how students' linguistic environments outside the classroom influence their learning inside it.

2. Lexical and Syntactic Shifts in Digital English

Digital communication introduces novel vocabulary (e.g., emojis, internet slang) and alters sentence structure due to brevity, speed, and platform limitations. These lexical innovations reflect changing communicative needs and inform curriculum updates to align classroom materials with real-world usage.

3. Pragmatics and Discourse in Online Communication

Online discourse, unlike traditional writing or speech, often merges spoken and written features. Pragmatic cues (e.g., sarcasm, politeness) are signaled through punctuation, emoji, or layout. Understanding these pragmatic features is crucial for ELT, especially for teaching digital literacy and communication skills.

4. Multimodality and ELT Practice

Multimodal communication combines text, audio, video, and visuals. ELT practices must adapt by integrating these elements into language instruction, using tools like interactive videos, digital storytelling, and social platforms that replicate authentic digital communication contexts.

5. Teacher Digital Literacy and Pedagogical Innovation

The effectiveness of incorporating digital linguistics into ELT depends on teachers' digital competence. Educators must be equipped with skills to evaluate digital texts, use technological tools, and foster student engagement through digital platforms.

6. Artificial Intelligence and the Future of ELT

AI-powered tools, including chatbots, adaptive learning systems, and speech recognition software, are revolutionizing ELT. These technologies personalize learning, offer instant feedback, and simulate real-life communication scenarios, aligning with digital linguistic realities.

Digital linguistics offers valuable insights for transforming English language teaching in the 21st century. By embracing the changes in language driven by digital communication, educators can foster more relevant, engaging, and effective learning environments.

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