



THE IMPORTANCE OF MEDIA AND JOURNALISM SKILLS IN TRAINING FUTURE ENGLISH TEACHERS

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ABSTRACT

This article investigates the integration of media literacy into English Language Teaching (ELT) and its pedagogical significance in modern education. It explores how media texts, digital tools, and international practices contribute to developing learners' linguistic competence, critical thinking, and digital literacy. The study emphasizes the importance of authentic media materials in ESL/EFL classrooms, highlighting their role in improving comprehension, communication skills, and cultural awareness. Furthermore, it examines the use of digital technologies such as online platforms, educational applications, and multimedia tools in language instruction. The article also analyzes global approaches to media education, demonstrating how different countries incorporate media literacy into their curricula. The findings suggest that media literacy is a crucial component of modern ELT, enhancing both language acquisition and learners' ability to critically engage with information in the digital age.

INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, English Language Teaching (ELT) has undergone a profound transformation driven by globalization, technological advancement, and the rapid development of digital communication systems. English has evolved from being taught primarily through textbooks, grammar-focused exercises, and classroom lectures into a dynamic, real-world language that learners encounter daily across multiple digital platforms. Today, students are exposed to English

through social media networks, online video platforms, digital news outlets, podcasts, blogs, and various forms of computer-mediated communication. This constant exposure has significantly changed the nature of language learning, making it more interactive, authentic, and context-based. As a result of these changes, traditional teaching approaches are no longer sufficient to meet the needs of modern learners. Students are not only passive receivers of information but also active participants in digital communication environments. They



read, watch, share, and create content in English on a daily basis. This shift has created a strong need for integrating media literacy into English language education, as learners must now be able to critically understand, interpret, and evaluate the vast amount of information they encounter online. "Media literacy is commonly defined as the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and create media content in various forms. In the context of ELT, media literacy goes beyond simple language acquisition; it becomes a tool for developing deeper cognitive and communicative abilities. It enables learners to understand how media messages are constructed, how language is used to influence audiences, and how meaning can change depending on context, tone, and platform [1]". For example, the language used in a formal news article differs significantly from that used in a tweet or a YouTube comment section, and students need to recognize these differences to communicate effectively. Furthermore, integrating media literacy into ELT contributes to the development of essential 21st-century skills such as critical thinking, digital competence, creativity, and problem-solving. It encourages students to question the reliability of information, identify bias or misinformation, and become responsible digital citizens. In an era where information is abundant but not always accurate, these skills are increasingly important for both academic success and everyday life. Therefore, as learners continue to interact with digital content in English, the integration of media literacy into language education becomes not only beneficial but essential. It

supports the development of well-rounded communicative competence and prepares students to actively participate in the global information society.

Media Texts in ESL/EFL Classrooms

Authentic materials play a fundamental role in modern English Language Teaching because they provide learners with real-life language input that reflects how English is actually used in natural communication contexts. These materials include newspapers, online news articles, advertisements, films, documentaries, podcasts, blogs, interviews, and social media posts. Unlike simplified textbook content, authentic materials are not created for teaching purposes; instead, they are produced for native speakers and real audiences. This makes them highly valuable for exposing learners to natural vocabulary, grammar structures, idiomatic expressions, and discourse patterns. "One of the most important advantages of authentic materials is that they bridge the gap between classroom learning and real-world communication. Students are able to see how language functions in different contexts, tones, and registers. For example, formal language used in news reporting differs significantly from informal expressions found in social media conversations[2]". For instance:

- A **BBC News article** helps students develop formal vocabulary, academic expressions, and understanding of structured reporting style.
- A **YouTube vlog** exposes learners to spontaneous spoken English, including



slang, fillers, and natural pronunciation patterns.

- **Instagram captions or TikTok posts** demonstrate highly condensed, informal, and context-dependent language use.
- **Podcasts and interviews** provide exposure to natural speech rhythm, intonation, and interactive communication strategies.

By working with these materials, students gradually develop linguistic awareness and become more confident in understanding different forms of English used in global communication. **Educational Benefits.** The use of media texts in ELT classrooms offers a wide range of pedagogical and cognitive benefits that significantly enhance the language learning process. First and foremost, media texts increase learner motivation by making lessons more interesting, relevant, and connected to students' everyday lives. When learners interact with real-world content, they are more likely to stay engaged and actively participate in learning activities. One of the key educational benefits is the improvement of **reading and listening comprehension skills**. Students are exposed to diverse accents, speaking speeds, and writing styles, which helps them adapt to different communication situations. For example, listening to a news broadcast improves formal listening comprehension, while watching a vlog enhances understanding of informal speech. In addition, media texts contribute to **vocabulary development in authentic contexts**. Instead of memorizing isolated word lists, students encounter new vocabulary in meaningful situations, which improves retention and

understanding. For example, learning environmental vocabulary through a documentary about climate change is more effective than learning it from a textbook list. Another important benefit is the development of **grammatical awareness**. By observing how grammar is naturally used in real communication, students begin to recognize sentence patterns, tenses, and structures intuitively. This implicit learning strengthens their overall language accuracy. Moreover, media texts encourage **critical thinking and analytical skills**. Students learn to evaluate the reliability of information, identify bias, distinguish between fact and opinion, and understand persuasive techniques used in media messages. This is especially important in the digital age, where misinformation is widespread. Overall, media texts transform language learning from passive memorization into active, meaningful, and critical engagement with language.

The integration of media texts into classroom practice allows teachers to design interactive, student-centered, and communicative learning activities. These activities not only improve language skills but also develop collaboration, creativity, and analytical thinking among learners. One common classroom activity is **newspaper analysis**, where students examine headlines and identify key information such as the main idea, supporting details, and tone of the article. This activity helps learners improve reading comprehension while also developing summarization skills. Another effective method is **video-based learning**, where students watch short clips, documentaries, or interviews and



then summarize or discuss the content. For example, after watching a TED Talk, students can identify the speaker's main arguments and express their opinions in English. This improves listening comprehension, note-taking skills, and speaking fluency. "Group discussions based on media content are also widely used. For instance, students may analyze advertisements and identify persuasive techniques such as emotional appeal, repetition, or celebrity endorsement. This activity not only improves language skills but also enhances media awareness and critical thinking. Additionally, project-based learning can be implemented using media texts[5]". For example, students can create their own digital magazines, blogs, or video presentations on topics such as climate change, technology, or cultural traditions. This encourages creativity, teamwork, and practical use of English in meaningful contexts. For instance, a lesson based on a **climate change article from National Geographic** can be expanded into multiple activities: vocabulary analysis, group discussions, opinion writing, and presentation tasks. Through this integrated approach, students not only learn environmental vocabulary but also develop awareness of global issues and improve their ability to express complex ideas in English.

Digital Media Tools in Language Teaching

Digital technologies have fundamentally transformed the field of English Language Teaching (ELT), shifting it from traditional teacher-centered instruction to more interactive, flexible, and learner-centered approaches. In the past, language

learning was mostly limited to classroom environments, textbooks, and face-to-face instruction. However, the rapid development of digital tools and internet-based platforms has expanded learning opportunities beyond physical classrooms. Today, students are able to access English learning materials anytime and anywhere through smartphones, laptops, and tablets. This flexibility has made learning more continuous and personalized. Learners can watch videos, complete exercises, participate in online discussions, and communicate with teachers or peers regardless of location. As a result, language learning has become more dynamic, autonomous, and integrated into daily life. "Furthermore, digital tools allow learners to experience authentic communication in real-time. For example, students can interact with native speakers through online platforms, join virtual classrooms, or participate in global learning communities. This transformation has significantly improved exposure to real-life language use and enhanced communicative competence[6]".

A wide variety of digital tools are now commonly used in English language teaching to support different aspects of learning such as vocabulary development, grammar practice, listening skills, and interactive communication. Each tool serves a specific pedagogical purpose and contributes to a more engaging learning environment.

- **Duolingo** is widely used for vocabulary and grammar practice through gamified lessons that motivate



learners through points, levels, and rewards.

- **Quizlet** helps students memorize vocabulary through flashcards, matching games, and test modes, making repetition more interactive and effective.
- **Kahoot** is an interactive quiz platform that increases student engagement through competition-based learning, encouraging active participation in the classroom.
- **YouTube** provides authentic listening materials such as interviews, lectures, vlogs, and educational videos that help improve pronunciation and comprehension skills.
- **Google Classroom** is used for managing assignments, distributing learning materials, and providing feedback, making teacher-student communication more efficient.
- **Zoom / Microsoft Teams** enable virtual classrooms, allowing real-time interaction, group discussions, and collaborative learning activities even in remote settings.

These tools not only support language acquisition but also encourage independent learning and digital literacy development.

Digital tools can be effectively integrated into classroom activities to create engaging and interactive learning experiences. Teachers are increasingly using technology-based tasks to improve students' language skills in practical and meaningful ways. For example, teachers may assign students to watch **TED Talks** on topics such as education, technology, or environment and then summarize the main ideas in English. This activity helps improve listening comprehension, note-taking skills, and speaking ability during

presentations. Students can also create **digital presentations using Canva**, where they design visually attractive slides on topics such as cultural traditions or scientific discoveries. This not only improves writing and vocabulary skills but also develops creativity and digital design abilities. Another effective activity is conducting **online debates via Zoom**, where learners discuss controversial topics such as social media influence or climate change. This helps students improve fluency, argumentation skills, and confidence in spoken English. Additionally, vocabulary learning can be made more engaging through **Kahoot-based games**, where students compete in real-time quizzes. This gamified approach increases motivation and helps learners retain new words more effectively. These practical examples show how digital tools can transform traditional lessons into interactive, student-centered learning experiences.

"The use of digital tools in English language teaching offers numerous educational advantages that significantly enhance the learning process. One of the main benefits is **increased student engagement**. Interactive platforms, games, and multimedia content make learning more enjoyable and reduce boredom in the classroom. Students become more motivated to participate actively in lessons[8]". Another important advantage is **support for autonomous learning**. Digital tools allow students to study independently, repeat lessons, and learn at their own pace. This encourages responsibility and self-directed learning habits. Digital platforms also provide **instant**



feedback, which helps learners quickly identify their mistakes and improve their performance. For example, online quizzes immediately show correct answers, allowing students to learn from errors in real time. In addition, digital tools promote **collaboration among students**. Group projects, online discussions, and shared digital platforms encourage teamwork and communication skills, which are essential in both academic and professional contexts.

Despite their many advantages, digital tools in language teaching also present several challenges that need to be addressed for effective implementation. One major issue is **internet accessibility problems**. "In some regions, students may not have stable internet connections or access to digital devices, which limits their ability to fully participate in online learning activities. Another challenge is **distraction from non-educational content**. Since digital platforms also contain entertainment, social media, and gaming content, students may lose focus during learning activities and spend time on irrelevant material[10]". There is also a risk of **overdependence on technology**. Excessive reliance on digital tools may reduce face-to-face interaction and limit the development of traditional communication skills such as handwriting, direct conversation, and classroom discussion. Additionally, some teachers may face difficulties due to **lack of digital training**, which can affect the effective integration of technology into teaching practices. Therefore, while digital tools offer significant benefits,

they must be used in a balanced and pedagogically responsible way.

Critical Thinking and Media Analysis. One of the most important aspects of media literacy is critical thinking. Students learn to:

- Identify fake news;
- Analyze bias in reporting;
- Compare multiple sources;
- Evaluate credibility of information.

CONCLUSION

The integration of media literacy in English Language Teaching is increasingly essential in the digital age, where communication, education, and information exchange are largely mediated through digital technologies. In modern educational contexts, students are constantly exposed to a wide range of media sources such as online news platforms, social media networks, videos, podcasts, and interactive websites. Therefore, incorporating media literacy into ELT helps learners not only acquire language skills but also understand how meaning is constructed and communicated through different media formats. Media texts provide authentic and meaningful language input that reflects real-life communication. Unlike traditional textbook materials, media content exposes learners to current vocabulary, natural expressions, cultural references, and diverse communication styles. This helps students develop a more practical and context-based understanding of English. For example, news articles improve reading comprehension and vocabulary development, while videos and podcasts enhance listening skills and pronunciation awareness. Digital tools



further enhance interactive and student-centered learning by creating engaging and flexible educational environments. Platforms such as learning apps, online quizzes, video conferencing tools, and multimedia resources allow students to participate actively in the learning process. These tools also support personalized learning, enabling students to study at their own pace and according to their individual needs. In addition, digital tools encourage collaboration, creativity, and independent learning, which are essential skills in modern education. International educational practices also demonstrate the growing importance of media literacy in language teaching. Many countries have integrated media education into their curricula to prepare students for the challenges of the information society. This global

recognition highlights the need for learners to critically analyze media messages, identify misinformation, and responsibly use digital resources. As a result, media literacy has become a key component of modern educational strategies worldwide. Overall, media literacy not only improves language proficiency but also develops essential 21st-century skills such as critical thinking, creativity, digital competence, and information evaluation. It enables learners to become more active, informed, and responsible users of media in both academic and real-world contexts. Therefore, integrating media literacy into English Language Teaching should be considered a fundamental element of modern ELT curricula across the world.

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