

**A PHILOLOGICAL APPROACH TO TEACHING ENGLISH IN THE DIGITAL AGE:
DEVELOPING MEDIA AND LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE**

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Abstract: This study explores a technology-based approach to English language teaching with a particular focus on developing students' media competence. As technology continues to shape contemporary educational landscapes, it becomes important to evaluate how digital tools can support language learning and enhance students' ability to critically evaluate media. The aim of the study was to examine how technology-based teaching methods can support the development of media competence in English language learners. Using a mixed-methods approach, the study included qualitative and quantitative data, including surveys, classroom observations, and student performance assessments. The results indicate that the integration of digital platforms and multimedia content into English language teaching significantly improved students' ability to engage with and analyze media. Moreover, students demonstrated improved critical thinking skills when navigating information in a variety of formats.

Keywords: Technology education, media competence, English language teaching, digital tools, critical thinking, multimedia learning, 21st century skills, educational technology.

Introduction

The rapid integration of technology into education has changed the teaching and learning landscape, offering both opportunities and challenges for educators. In particular, English language teaching has been significantly impacted by the rise of digital tools and multimedia resources. As technology continues to play an increasingly important role in our daily lives, it has become imperative for English language learners (ELLs) to develop media literacy, defined as the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and create media in various forms. This competency is vital for critical thinking and informed decision-making—skills needed to succeed in the digital age. The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of technology-based instructional practices on enhancing English language learners' media literacy. Using a combination of classroom activities, digital tools, and media analysis tasks, the study seeks to understand how technology can promote students' media literacy while simultaneously improving their language skills. The study hypothesizes that students who engage in technology-based learning strategies will demonstrate enhanced media literacy, including the ability to critically evaluate media content and create their own media in English. [1] The results of this study are expected to contribute to the growing body of research in educational technology and offer practical ideas for English teachers seeking to incorporate technology into their teaching practice.

Materials and Methods

This section describes the research design, methodology, and procedures used in the study. It provides a detailed description of how the study was conducted, including the selection of participants, the data collection methods, and the analytical techniques used. The research methodology is structured in a clear and logical manner to ensure transparency and replicability.

Research Design

This study used a mixed methods research design to examine the effects of technology-based approaches on enhancing media competence in English language learners. A combination of qualitative and quantitative data was collected to provide a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter. The study aimed to assess both measurable media competence outcomes and students' perceptions and experiences of technology-based English language learning.

Study Type

The study was descriptive-experimental as it attempted to examine the effects of integrating technology into English language learning and its relationship with media competence development. The study type allows for the identification and analysis of patterns in how students use technology to improve their English language skills, particularly in terms of media consumption and production.

Duration of the study

The study was conducted over a six-month period during the 2024-2025 academic year. The study consisted of two stages:

- Stage 1 (3 months): Preliminary data collection and assessment of basic levels of media competence.
- Stage 2 (3 months): Implementation of technology-based teaching methods followed by assessment of students' progress in media competence.

Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion Criteria

- Participants were students enrolled in English language courses at the university.
- Students with basic knowledge of English (CEFR level B1 or above).
- Participants who consented to participate in the study and were available throughout the study period.

Exclusion Criteria

- Students who were not native speakers of the target language and did not meet the basic English language proficiency requirements.
- Participants who had previously completed a specific advanced media literacy program.
- Students who had not passed either the pre- or post-test.

Sample Collection

Participants

A total of 60 English language students were recruited for the study. Participants were divided into two groups:

- Experimental group (30 students): students who were taught using technology.
- Control group (30 students): students who were taught using traditional methods without the introduction of technology.

Sample Selection Method

Participants were selected using random sampling to ensure a diverse representation of students with different backgrounds and academic levels. The random sampling method minimized selection bias and ensured the generalizability of the results.

Data Collection Methods

Pre-Assessment

Before the intervention, all participants completed a pre-assessment to measure their basic media literacy. This assessment included tasks that assessed:

- The ability to critically analyze media content.
- The ability to create and produce media using digital tools.
- Basic media literacy skills, such as the ability to distinguish between reliable and unreliable sources.

Intervention

The experimental group received technology-based English lessons that included the use of multimedia platforms, digital tools (e.g. podcasts, video creation tools, social media), and online media resources. These lessons were designed to engage students in activities that required them to:

- Analyse news articles, videos and podcasts.
- Create blog posts, videos and presentations.
- Participate in group discussions and debates using digital communication tools.

The control group continued with traditional English language learning that did not involve the use of multimedia or digital tools.

Post-assessment

After three months of learning, both the experimental and control groups completed a post-assessment identical to the pre-assessment, allowing for a direct comparison of changes in media competence levels.

Data Processing and Analysis

Qualitative Data

Qualitative data were collected through student interviews and focus group discussions. These discussions focused on students' experiences with technology-based learning methods and their perceptions of how technology impacts their English language learning and media competence. The interviews were transcribed and the responses were analysed using thematic analysis to identify recurring themes and patterns.

Quantitative data

Quantitative data from pre- and post-assessments were analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation) to assess overall improvements in media competence. To test statistical significance between the experimental and control groups, paired sample t-tests were conducted to compare pre- and post-assessment scores for both groups.

Data triangulation

To increase the reliability of the results, data triangulation was used by comparing the results of pre- and post-assessments, student interviews and classroom observations. This approach allowed for cross-validation of the study findings.

Statistical Tests Used

- Descriptive Statistics: Analyse overall trends and measures of central tendency in the data.
- Paired Sample t-Tests: To determine if there was a significant difference in media literacy levels between the pre- and post-assessments for the experimental and control groups.
- Thematic Analysis: To analyse the qualitative data from the interviews and focus group discussions, identifying key themes related to the impact of technology on media literacy.

Ethical Considerations

The study complied with ethical principles, ensuring that all participants gave informed consent before participating. Confidentiality was maintained and participants were assured that their

responses would only be used for the purposes of the study. The study was approved by the university's Ethics Committee.

Limitations of the Study

The study acknowledges certain limitations:

- Limited sample size: The sample was limited to one institution, which may limit the generalizability of the results.
- Access to technology: Not all students had equal access to technology outside the classroom, which may have impacted their engagement with digital tools.
- Teacher training: Differences in how teachers implemented technology-based methods may have impacted the effectiveness of the intervention.

Practical Implications

The findings of this study have significant practical implications for educators seeking to integrate technology into English language teaching. The study suggests that the use of multimedia platforms and digital tools can enhance students' media literacy and develop critical thinking skills. Teachers should be trained to effectively incorporate technology into their teaching strategies to maximize learning outcomes. [2]

Results

This section presents the findings of the study on the impact of technology-based approaches on English language learners' media literacy. The results are organized in a logical sequence and include both quantitative and qualitative data. Statistical analysis, tables, and figures are included to illustrate key findings, and we ensure that the findings are not duplicated or overlap with the discussion section. [3]

1. Quantitative Results

1.1 Pre- and Post-Assessments

Pre- and post-assessment scores were collected to measure the improvements in participants' media literacy. The comparison between the experimental and control groups is shown in the following table:

Group	Pre-assessment score (mean ± SD)	after assessment (mean ± SD)	Difference (average)	p-value
Experimental group	58,4 ± 6,2	78,3 ± 5,4	+19.9	<0,001
Control group	59,1 ± 5,8	62,5 ± 6,1	+3.4	0,011

- Experimental Group: The experimental group who received technology-based instruction showed a significant improvement in their media competence, with an average increase of 19.9 points (p-value < 0.001).

- Control Group: The control group who continued to use traditional methods also showed an improvement, but the change was much smaller (3.4 points) and statistically significant with a p-value of 0.011.

These results indicate that integrating technology into English language teaching has a more

significant impact on improving media competence than traditional teaching methods.

1.2 Statistical Analysis of Media Competence Improvements

Paired sample t-tests were conducted to analyze the statistical significance of the improvements in media competence between the two groups. The results showed the following:

- Experimental Group: Significant improvement in post-assessment scores ($p\text{-value} < 0.001$).
- Control group: the improvement was statistically significant but smaller in magnitude ($p\text{-value} = 0.011$).

These results highlight the effectiveness of the technology-based learning approach in significantly improving media literacy.

2. Qualitative Results

2.1 Student Interviews

Interviews with students in the experimental group provided valuable information about their experiences of learning with technology. The following themes emerged from the analysis of interview transcripts:

- Increased engagement: Students reported higher levels of engagement in lessons that included multimedia tools. They noted that the interactive nature of technology-based activities made learning more enjoyable and effective.
- Improved critical thinking: Many students noted that using digital tools such as social media, blogging, and video creation helped them think critically about the content they consume and create.
- Improved media literacy: Students emphasized that exposure to a variety of media sources through technology improved their ability to evaluate and analyze media content for credibility, bias, and reliability.

2.2 Focus Group Discussions

Focus group discussions with the experimental and control groups revealed several differences between the two teaching methods:

- Experimental group: Students in the experimental group stated that technology allowed them to apply language skills in real-world contexts. They felt more confident in creating media content and engaging in discussions about current events, especially on social media platforms.
- Control group: Students in the control group felt that their learning was more traditional and less interactive. They expressed a desire to have more opportunities to use digital tools in their language learning.

These qualitative findings indicate that the students in the experimental group not only reported a measurable increase in media literacy but also a change in their attitudes towards media literacy and technology.

3. Classroom Observation Data

Classroom observations conducted during the study also provided relevant insights. The observations focused on the following key areas:

- Student Participation: Students in the experimental group demonstrated higher levels of participation in discussions, often citing examples from online sources such as YouTube videos, news articles, and social media platforms.
- Use of Technology: Students in the experimental group frequently used digital tools such as video editing software, blogs, and platforms for collaborating on assignments. These tools allowed for greater creativity and a more hands-on approach to learning.

In contrast, the control group was primarily exposed to traditional text-based materials and teacher-led learning. Their use of digital tools was limited, reflecting the traditional approach to learning in their classrooms.

4. Statistical analysis of qualitative data

Qualitative data from interviews, focus groups and classroom observations were coded and analysed thematically. The themes that emerged were analysed for frequency and relevance. The following table summarises the key themes and their frequency of mention in the experimental and control groups:

Topic	Experimental group	Control group
Interaction with technology	85%	30%
Critical Thinking	75%	45%
Improving media literacy	70%	20%

The results of the qualitative data analysis support the quantitative findings, showing that the experimental group demonstrated higher levels of engagement, critical thinking, and improved media literacy.

Conclusion of the Results

The results indicate a clear and significant improvement in the media literacy of students who learned English using technology compared to those who followed traditional methods. [4] Quantitative data from pre- and post-assessments, as well as qualitative data from interviews, focus groups, and classroom observations, support the effectiveness of using multimedia tools and digital resources to enhance students' ability to critically engage with and create media content. [5] These results support the idea that technology can play a key role in developing both language and media literacy in English language learning.

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