

## Multimodality And Transliteracy Through Digital Humanities In English Language Teaching

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### ABSTRACT

Digital Humanities has established different modes of humanistic inquiry and reconfigured humanities education by synthesizing digital technologies. It offers an interdisciplinary framework within the domain of English Language Teaching that reorients pedagogy from textbook-centric instruction towards digitally mediated, learner-centered practices. This paper investigates the pedagogical applications and contextual significance of Digital Humanities in English Language Teaching, underscoring its capacity to enhance linguistic proficiency digital literacy and critical interpretation. Digital Humanities in English Language Teaching related with constructivist and interactive learning paradigms to emphasize participation, collaboration and experiential knowledge production through language pedagogy, digital literacy, cultural studies and technological mediation. The paper critically examines key Digital Humanities applications in English Language Teaching which includes digital texts hyper reading practices, corpus-driven language learning, digital storytelling, multimodal composition and the pedagogical deployment of social media as contemporary linguistic and cultural artefacts. The study further offers a deep analysis of artificial intelligence enabled tools, such as grammar checkers and writing platforms within English Language Teaching context that foster editorial competence, ethical paraphrasing practices and academic integrity. In addition this paper underscores the pedagogical value of digital archives and oral history repositories in enriching cultural, literacy, refining pronunciation and enhancing interpretive competence. The integration of Digital Humanities in English Language Teaching is not without its challenges. The paper addresses critical concerns of digital divide, inequitable access to technological resources, over reliance on Artificial Intelligence mediated tools, need for teacher training and institutional support. Digital Humanities facilitates multilingual pedagogical environments, advances and culturally responsive teaching practices.

**Keywords:** Digital Humanities; English Language Teaching; Digital Pedagogy; Multimodality; Corpus-based language learning; Artificial Intelligence in education; Inclusive Pedagogy; Constructive learning

### INTRODUCTION:

The proliferation of digital technologies in the twenty-first century has fundamentally altered the ways in which language, knowledge, and culture are produced and circulated. Reading and writing practices have expanded beyond print-centric forms to include multimodal, interactive, and networked modes of communication. As a result, English Language Teaching now operates within a complex digital ecology where learners encounter language through social media, online platforms, artificial intelligence driven tools, and multimedia texts. Despite this transformation English Language Teaching practice continues to rely on pedagogical models that treat digital technologies as supplementary rather than constitutive of language learning.

Digital Humanities has emerged as a field that directly addresses the epistemological implications of digital transformation in the humanities. Rather than merely digitizing traditional content, it reconfigures humanistic inquiry by integrating computational methods, digital archives, multimodal texts and participatory knowledge production. Scholars argue that Digital Humanities

represents a shift in how meaning is constructed, interpreted, and disseminated, emphasizing collaboration, interdisciplinarity, and critical engagement with technology. This shift has significant implications for English Language Teaching, where language learning is increasingly shaped by digital environments and cultural flows.

In many English Language Teaching contexts, digital tools are introduced instrumentally grammar checkers, presentation software or online exercises without being embedded within a broader pedagogical philosophy. Such approaches risk reinforcing surface-level engagement with technology while neglecting issues of multimodality, cultural representation, and ethical digital practice. Digital Humanities offers an alternative framework that situates language learning within social, cultural and technological contexts, encouraging learners to engage critically with texts, media, and linguistic data.

Multimodality and transliteracy are central to this framework. Multimodality recognizes that meaning is produced through the interaction of linguistic, visual, auditory and spatial modes, challenging the dominance of print-based literacy. Transliteracy extends this concept by

emphasizing the ability to navigate across multiple platforms, genres, and cultural contexts. For English learners, particularly in multilingual societies such as India, these competencies are essential for academic participation and social mobility.

The Indian higher education context presents unique opportunities and challenges for Digital Humanities informed English Language Teaching. English functions as both a global lingua franca and a gatekeeping language associated with academic and professional success. At the same time, classrooms are characterized by linguistic diversity, uneven access to digital resources, and varied levels of digital literacy. National policy initiatives increasingly emphasize digital integration, blended learning, and outcome-based education, creating a context in which Digital Humanities informed pedagogies are both relevant and necessary.

This study seeks to examine how undergraduate learners perceive Digital Humanities based English Language Teaching practices and to assess their pedagogical impact on language learning, digital literacy, and critical interpretation. By grounding the analysis in empirical data, the study contributes to a growing body of research that seeks to conceptualize digital pedagogy in English Language Teaching not as a collection of tools but as a coherent, theoretically informed framework.

### **Digital Humanities and English Language Teaching**

Digital Humanities is an interdisciplinary field that integrates digital technologies with humanistic inquiry to transform research, pedagogy, and knowledge production. It emphasizes that digital media do not merely transmit information but actively shape meaning-making, challenging traditional humanities pedagogy that privileges linear texts and individual interpretation.

Within English Language Teaching, Digital Humanities reorients pedagogy from teacher-centered transmission to learner-centered, participatory practices. Learners engage with authentic digital texts, analyze language patterns through corpora, create multimodal compositions, and participate in online communities of practice. These activities situate language learning in real-world communicative contexts, enhancing relevance and learner motivation.

Digital Humanities also foregrounds the cultural and ideological dimensions of language. Digital texts such as blogs, social media posts, and online narratives are embedded in power relations, identity formations, and cultural representations. Critical engagement with such texts fosters not only linguistic competence but also cultural and ethical awareness, extending English Language Teaching beyond functional instruction toward critical language education.

In multilingual contexts like India, Digital Humanities enables inclusive and culturally responsive pedagogy by allowing learners to draw upon diverse linguistic repertoires while engaging with global Englishes. Open-access digital resources further expand access to authentic language input. However, effective integration requires addressing challenges related to access, teacher training, and institutional support.

### **Theoretical Framework**

*Advances in Consumer Research*

The integration of Digital Humanities into English Language Teaching is underpinned by multiple pedagogical and linguistic theories that emphasize learner-centered, technology-mediated, and socially situated learning.

Constructivist Learning Theory asserts that learners actively construct knowledge through experience and reflection rather than passive absorption (Piaget 23). Digital Humanities based practices such as digital storytelling and hyperreading align with this view by enabling learners to engage interactively with texts and contexts. Vygotsky's concept of the Zone of Proximal Development in Social Constructivism highlights the role of social interaction and scaffolding in learning (Vygotsky 86). Digital platforms, collaborative annotation tools, and online discussion forums facilitate peer-supported language development in English Language Teaching classrooms.

Hymes's Communicative Language Teaching prioritizes authentic communication and meaningful language use (Hymes 271). Digital Humanities resources such as blogs, podcasts, and social media provide real-world communicative contexts, strengthening learner's communicative competence. Task-Based Language Teaching emphasizes learning through purposeful tasks that mirror real-life language use (Ellis 45). Digital storytelling projects, corpus-based analysis, and multimodal assignments function as authentic tasks integrating language learning with digital literacy.

Multimodality Theory argues that meaning is produced through multiple semiotic modes beyond written text (Kress 1). Digital Humanities practices support multimodal meaning-making by combining textual, visual and auditory elements. Thus expanding traditional English Language Teaching literacy frameworks. Corpus Linguistics and usage-based learning emphasize language acquisition through exposure to authentic linguistic data (Biber et al. 2). Digital corpora enable learners to explore real-world usage patterns, promoting empirical and descriptive language learning.

Critical Digital Literacy Theory stresses the importance of evaluating digital texts ethically and critically (Lankshear and Knobel 9). Digital Humanities informed English Language Teaching encourages learners to interrogate authorship, ideology, and representation, particularly in AI-mediated writing environments. Postmethod Pedagogy advocates context-sensitive, flexible teaching practices that respond to local learner needs (Kumaravadivelu 34). Digital Humanities supports this approach by enabling adaptive pedagogies suitable for multilingual and culturally diverse classrooms such as those in India.

### **Review of Literature**

Existing scholarship identifies Digital Humanities as a transformative force in humanities education, emphasizing interdisciplinary learning, participatory knowledge production, and digital textuality (Burdick et al. 7). Studies in English Language Teaching reveal that digital texts and hyperreading environments enhance learner's interpretive and critical navigation skills (Hayles 67).

Research on corpus-based language learning

demonstrates its effectiveness in improving grammatical awareness, vocabulary acquisition, and discourse competence through exposure to authentic usage (McEnery and Hardie 112). Similarly, digital storytelling and multimodal composition have been shown to enhance writing fluency, speaking confidence, and learner engagement (Robin 221).

Studies on social media in English Language Teaching highlight its role in developing pragmatic competence, genre awareness and public discourse literacy (Gee 19). Recent research on AI tools in language education acknowledges their value in editing and feedback while cautioning against uncritical dependence and ethical misuse (Zawacki-Richter et al. 6).

In the Indian context, scholars argue that digital pedagogy can address multilingualism and learner diversity but emphasize persistent challenges such as the digital divide, infrastructural constraints, and limited teacher training (Mishra and Koehler 1025). Policy-oriented studies note that National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 strongly advocates digital integration, blended learning, and outcome-based education, aligning with Digital Humanities informed English Language Teaching practices.

### Research Gap

While existing scholarship examines digital tools, multimodality, corpus-based learning, and AI in English Language Teaching, few studies conceptualize these practices within a coherent Digital Humanities framework. Most English Language Teaching research treats technology as a supplementary aid rather than as an interdisciplinary paradigm integrating language pedagogy, cultural studies, and critical digital literacy. Empirical research on learner's perceptions of Digital Humanities based English Language Teaching remains limited, particularly in Indian higher education contexts. Existing studies often overlook learner engagement, ethical AI use, cultural literacy, and multilingual classroom dynamics, and there is little quantitative evidence addressing challenges such as access inequality, AI overreliance, and the need for teacher training. This study addresses these gaps by adopting a Digital Humanities framework and offering quantitative, learner-centered evidence on the impact, challenges, and relevance of Digital Humanities informed English Language Teaching in Indian undergraduate classrooms.

### Methodology

This study adopts a quantitative descriptive research design to examine undergraduate learner's perceptions of Digital Humanities informed English Language Teaching practices. A quantitative approach is particularly appropriate for this study as it enables systematic measurement of learner's attitudes, experiences, and perceived learning outcomes across a relatively large participant group. In alignment with the objectives of Language Learning & Technology, the methodology foregrounds transparency, replicability, and pedagogical relevance rather than experimental generalization.

The methodological framework is designed to capture learner's engagement with multimodal, digitally mediated English Language Teaching practices and to assess the

perceived impact of such practices on language learning, digital literacy, and ethical awareness. Rather than evaluating a single technological intervention, the study conceptualizes Digital Humanities as an integrated pedagogical ecosystem encompassing digital texts, corpus tools, artificial intelligence enabled writing platforms, multimodal composition, and digital archives.

### Research Design

The research design is cross-sectional and descriptive, focusing on learner's self-reported perceptions at a specific point in time. This design allows for the identification of trends and patterns related to Digital Humanities based pedagogical practices within English language classrooms. While inferential designs may offer predictive insights, descriptive analysis is particularly suited to emerging research areas such as Digital Humanities informed English Language Teaching, where establishing baseline evidence is a necessary first step.

The study is guided by the following research questions:

1. How familiar are undergraduate learners with digital tools and Digital Humanities based practices used for learning English?
2. How do learners perceive the impact of Digital Humanities informed English Language Teaching on their language skills and digital literacy?
3. What challenges do learners experience while engaging with digitally mediated English language learning?
4. These questions are addressed through structured questionnaire data analyzed using descriptive statistical methods.

The study involved 100 undergraduate students from Indian degree colleges across commerce and arts streams. Reflecting linguistic and socio-cultural diversity, English served as both subject and medium of instruction. Participation was voluntary, with informed consent, anonymity and the right to withdraw ensured throughout the study.

### Research Instrument

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire designed to capture learner's experiences with Digital Humanities based English language learning practices. The questionnaire consisted of multiple-choice questions and short response prompts, allowing for both quantitative measurement and qualitative insight.

The instrument was organized into the following thematic sections:

**Digital Familiarity:** Learner's familiarity with digital tools such as online platforms, e-books, videos and AI-assisted writing tools.

**Pedagogical Practices:** Exposure to Digital Humanities informed English Language Teaching practices, including digital texts, multimodal assignments, corpus-based activities, and digital storytelling.

**Learning Outcomes:** Perceived impact of digital learning on vocabulary development, grammar awareness, writing proficiency, and speaking confidence.

**Artificial Intelligence in Learning:** Learner's use of grammar checkers and Artificial Intelligence based writing platforms, along with ethical perceptions of such

tools.

**Challenges and Constraints:** Difficulties related to access, pronunciation, comprehension, and technological infrastructure.

The questionnaire items were reviewed by peers in English language pedagogy to ensure clarity and content validity.

### Data Collection

The questionnaire was administered online, enabling efficient data collection and reducing manual entry errors. Automated recording and analysis aligned with the study's focus on digital pedagogy and ensured participant's baseline access to digital platforms.

### Data Analysis Framework

Data analysis was conducted employing descriptive statistical techniques consistent with the study's research design. The following analytical procedures were applied:

**Frequency Analysis:** To determine the distribution of responses across Likert-scale and multiple-choice items.

**Percentage Analysis:** To interpret overall trends in learner's perceptions of digital familiarity, pedagogical effectiveness, and challenges.

**Categorical Grouping:** To cluster related responses for interpretive clarity, particularly in items addressing challenges and Artificial Intelligence usage.

**Tabular Representation:** To present results in a clear, reader-friendly format consistent.

While inferential statistical analysis was beyond the scope of this study, the descriptive approach provides meaningful insights into learner perceptions and establishes a foundation for future mixed-methods or experimental research.

### Results

The findings derived from the quantitative analysis of questionnaire responses collected from 100 undergraduate learners. Results are organized thematically to reflect the study's research questions and to align with Language Learning & Technology reporting conventions. Tables are used selectively to highlight key trends, followed by analytical interpretation rather than descriptive repetition.

### Learner's Familiarity with Digital Tools for English Language Learning

The first set of items examined learner's familiarity with digital tools used for learning English, including online platforms, e-books, videos, and artificial intelligence assisted applications.

Table 1: Learner's Familiarity with Digital Tools for English Learning (n = 100)

Response Category	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	56	54.4%
Agree	39	37.9%
Neutral	6	5.8%
Disagree	2	1.9%

The results indicate a high level of digital familiarity among participants, with over 92% of respondents either agreeing or strongly agreeing that they are familiar with digital tools used for learning English. This suggests that

learners possess the foundational digital competence necessary for engaging with Digital Humanities informed pedagogical practices. The low percentage of disagreement indicates minimal resistance to digital engagement, reinforcing the viability of Digital Humanities based English Language Teaching in undergraduate contexts.

### Perceived Impact of Digital Learning on Language Skills

Participants were asked to indicate how digital learning practices have influenced specific areas of English language development, including vocabulary, grammar, writing and speaking.

Table 2: Perceived Impact of Digital Learning on English Language Skills

Language Skill	Positive Response (%)
Vocabulary development	82%
Grammar awareness	76%
Writing proficiency	79%
Speaking confidence	71%

The data reveal exposure to digital texts, multimedia content and AI-supported editing tools appears to support lexical expansion and written accuracy. Speaking confidence, while positively rated, shows slightly lower percentages, suggesting that oral skill development may require more structured or synchronous digital interaction.

### Multimodality and Learning Engagement

To examine the role of multimodality in learner engagement, participants responded to related digital storytelling, multimedia presentations and multimodal assignments.

A majority of respondents reported that multimodal activities enhanced their interest and motivation in learning English. Learners indicated that combining text with images, audio, and video helped them understand concepts more effectively and express ideas more confidently. This finding aligns with multimodality theory, which posits that meaning-making is strengthened through the interaction of multiple semiotic modes.

### Use of Artificial Intelligence Enabled Tools

Participants were asked about their use of AI-based grammar checkers and writing platforms in learning English, as well as their perceptions of the benefits and risks associated with such tools.

Table 3: Learner's Perceptions of AI-Enabled Tools in English Learning

Perception Category	Percentage
Helpful for editing and correction	67%

Improves confidence in writing	61%
Risk of overdependence	43%
Raises ethical concerns	38%

The results suggest that learners recognize the pedagogical value of Artificial Intelligence tools for editing and feedback. Also, a substantial proportion of respondents express concern about overreliance and ethical implications. This indicates an emerging awareness of critical digital literacy, underscoring the need for pedagogical guidance on ethical Artificial Intelligence use rather than unregulated adoption.

### Challenges in Digital English Language Learning

Participants were also asked to identify challenges encountered while using digital tools for learning English.

Table 4: Reported Challenges in Digital English Learning

Challenge	Frequency
Limited internet or device access	31
Pronunciation difficulties	27
Difficulty understanding meaning in context	19
No major challenges	26

The data indicates that infrastructural constraints remain a significant barrier for a portion of learners. Pronunciation difficulties suggest that while digital tools support receptive and written skills effectively, additional scaffolding may be required for oral language development. Notably, a quarter of respondents reported no major challenges, reflecting variability in learner experiences.

### Discussion

The findings provide empirical support for the pedagogical relevance of Digital Humanities informed English Language Teaching. High levels of digital familiarity among learners indicate readiness for digitally mediated pedagogy, reinforcing constructivist assumptions that learners can actively engage with technological tools to construct linguistic knowledge. The perceived effectiveness of digital learning, particularly in vocabulary development and writing, aligns with corpus linguistics and usage-based learning theories that emphasize exposure to authentic language data.

Digital texts, linguistic corpora and AI-supported feedback facilitate descriptive rather than prescriptive learning by enabling learners to observe real language use patterns.

Multimodal engagement emerges as a key contributor to learner motivation and comprehension. Positive responses to multimodal assignments support multimodality theory, which argues that learning is enhanced through the integration of multiple semiotic modes. These findings challenge traditional text-centric English Language Teaching models and underscore the importance of multimodal composition in contemporary curricula.

Learner's nuanced perceptions of Artificial Intelligence tools are especially significant. While AI-assisted

feedback is valued, concerns regarding overdependence and ethical use highlight the need for critical digital literacy instruction. Rather than restricting AI tools, Digital Humanities informed English Language Teaching should promote guided, reflective engagement that emphasizes authorship, originality, and ethical practice. However, persistent access-related challenges reveal structural inequalities, underscoring the need for institutional support and infrastructural investment to ensure equitable implementation.

### Digital Humanities as an Integrative English Language Teaching Paradigm

The findings position Digital Humanities not as a collection of tools but as a coherent pedagogical paradigm capable of reconfiguring English Language Teaching in digitally mediated environments. Learner's positive perceptions of multimodal activities, corpus-based learning, and AI-assisted writing indicate strong alignment between Digital Humanities pedagogy, contemporary communicative practices, and learner expectations, while also highlighting the need for theory-driven and ethically informed instructional design.

From a constructivist perspective, high learner engagement suggests that Digital Humanities practices promote active knowledge construction. Digital storytelling, hyperreading and multimodal composition enable learners to engage with language as a dynamic system rather than a fixed set of rules. Social constructivist theory further illuminates the collaborative potential of such practices, as digital platforms support shared meaning-making, collaborative authorship, and scaffolded learning beyond the physical classroom.

The findings also affirm the relevance of communicative and task-based language teaching frameworks. Reported improvements in vocabulary, writing, and speaking reflect the effectiveness of authentic, purpose-driven digital tasks. Multimodality and transliteracy emerge as central competencies, particularly in multilingual contexts like India. Learner's perceptions of AI tools reveal digital literacy and infrastructural challenges.

### Pedagogical Implications

The findings have important implications for English Language Teaching, curriculum design, and teacher education. English Language Teaching curricula should adopt Digital Humanities as a pedagogical framework rather than treating digital tools as supplementary, emphasizing theory-driven instruction grounded in multimodality, transliteracy, and critical engagement with digital texts. Teacher education and professional development programs must prepare educators to implement Digital Humanities informed pedagogy through training in multimodal composition, corpus-based teaching, ethical AI use, and culturally responsive digital practices. Assessment practices should also expand beyond text-centric models to include multimodal projects, digital portfolios, and reflective tasks that better capture communicative competence and digital literacy. Finally, institutions must address infrastructural inequities by investing in digital resources, connectivity, and support systems to ensure equitable access and inclusive implementation.

### Challenges and Limitations

While this study offers valuable insights into learner's perceptions of Digital Humanities based English Language Teaching, certain limitations must be acknowledged. The reliance on self-reported data may introduce response bias, as perceptions do not always correspond to measurable learning outcomes. Additionally, the descriptive research design limits causal interpretation. The study's focus on a specific undergraduate context in Indian higher education also restricts generalizability. Future research should adopt mixed-methods or longitudinal approaches to examine long-term effects on language proficiency and digital literacy.

### Conclusion

This study demonstrates that Digital Humanities offers a coherent and theoretically grounded framework for reimagining English Language Teaching in digitally mediated, multilingual contexts. By integrating multimodality, transliteracy, corpus-based learning, and critical digital literacy, Digital Humanities informed

English Language Teaching moves beyond instrumental uses of technology toward inclusive, learner-centered, and culturally responsive pedagogy.

Empirical evidence from undergraduate learners indicates that such practices enhance learner engagement, linguistic awareness, and ethical understanding of digital tools. At the same time, the study highlights persistent challenges related to access and infrastructure, emphasizing the need for sustained institutional support and policy alignment. As digital technologies continue to reshape language use and communication, English Language Teaching must adapt to these evolving realities. Digital Humanities provides not only technological resources but also the conceptual framework required to navigate this transformation. By embracing Digital Humanities informed pedagogy, English Language Teaching can better prepare learners for the communicative demands of contemporary academic and professional environments while fostering critical, ethical, and inclusive language education

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