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Role of Teacher Competence and Attitudes in Promoting Digital Literacy in English Language Teaching

Shalini Singh[1] and Dr. Sher Singh[2]
[1]Research Scholar, Department of Education
[2]Assistant Professor, Department of Education
Sunrise University Alwar Rajasthan

Abstract: *In the 21st century, digital literacy has become an essential component of English language teaching. Teachers play a central role in integrating digital tools and fostering students' digital competencies. This paper examines how teacher competence and attitudes influence the promotion of digital literacy in English classrooms. Using a review-based approach, the study analyzes existing literature on digital competence, pedagogical integration, and teacher attitudes.*
Findings indicate that teachers' technological skills, pedagogical knowledge, and positive attitudes significantly enhance students' digital literacy outcomes. However, barriers such as lack of training, infrastructural limitations, and resistance to change hinder effective implementation. The paper concludes that continuous professional development and institutional support are crucial for improving digital literacy in ELT

Keywords: Teacher competence, digital literacy, English language teaching, attitudes, ICT integration

I. INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary digital era, the integration of technology into education has transformed the nature of teaching and learning, particularly in English language teaching, where communication, interaction, and access to authentic resources are essential. Digital literacy, broadly defined as the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and create information using digital technologies, has become a core competency for both teachers and learners in the 21st century. Within this context, the role of teacher competence and attitudes has emerged as a decisive factor in promoting digital literacy in ELT classrooms.

Teacher competence encompasses not only subject knowledge and pedagogical expertise but also digital competence, which involves the effective use of information and communication technologies for instructional purposes. Research indicates that digital competence is multidimensional, involving technical skills, pedagogical integration, ethical awareness, and critical thinking abilities necessary for navigating digital environments (Falloon, 2020). At the same time, teachers' attitudes defined as their beliefs, perceptions, and willingness to adopt technology play a crucial role in determining whether and how digital tools are integrated into teaching practices.

Studies have shown that even when technological resources are available, negative attitudes or lack of confidence among teachers can hinder effective implementation (Nurholis et al., 2024). In ELT contexts, digital literacy is particularly significant because language learning increasingly involves multimodal communication, online collaboration, and exposure to diverse linguistic inputs through digital platforms. The shift from traditional print-based literacy to digital literacy requires new competencies such as navigating hypertexts, synthesizing online information, and engaging in digital communication, all of which must be facilitated by competent teachers (Laeli et al., 2020).

Furthermore, empirical studies reveal a strong relationship between teachers' digital competence and their frequency of using digital media in the classroom, suggesting that higher levels of competence lead to more consistent and effective technology integration (Zayyana, 2023). This relationship highlights the importance of equipping teachers with

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adequate training and professional development opportunities to enhance their digital skills. In addition to competence, teachers' attitudes significantly influence their adoption of ICT in ELT.

Positive attitudes towards technology are associated with increased willingness to experiment with innovative teaching methods, improved classroom engagement, and enhanced student learning outcomes. Conversely, negative attitudes often result in resistance to change and limited use of digital tools, thereby restricting students' opportunities to develop digital literacy skills. Research using structural equation modeling has demonstrated that attitudes, self-efficacy, and digital competence collectively influence teachers' ICT integration practices, with attitudes acting as both a direct and mediating factor (Wang et al., 2024).

Moreover, studies have found that digital literacy itself can shape teachers' attitudes, indicating a reciprocal relationship in which increased competence leads to more positive perceptions and vice versa (Doğan & Geçikli, 2025). This interplay suggests that fostering both competence and positive attitudes is essential for successful digital literacy promotion. Theoretical frameworks such as the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge model and the European Digital Competence Framework for Educators emphasize the integration of technology with pedagogy and content knowledge, underscoring the need for teachers to develop holistic competencies rather than isolated technical skills.

Studies based on these frameworks highlight that personal factors such as confidence, openness to innovation, and frequency of technology use are strong predictors of teachers' digital competence (Cabero-Almenara et al., 2021). In ELT classrooms, teachers with high digital competence are better equipped to design interactive lessons, use multimedia resources, facilitate online communication, and assess students through digital platforms, thereby creating a dynamic learning environment that supports the development of digital literacy.

Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the adoption of digital technologies in education, further emphasizing the importance of teacher readiness and adaptability. Research on teachers' digital learning identity indicates that attitudes toward digital literacy and the ability to use technology for professional learning are critical for sustaining effective digital practices in classrooms (Koh et al., 2021).

Despite the recognized importance of teacher competence and attitudes, several challenges persist in promoting digital literacy in ELT. These include inadequate training programs, lack of institutional support, limited access to technological resources, and disparities in digital skills among teachers. Many teachers report having positive attitudes toward digital technologies but lack the necessary knowledge and training to implement them effectively, resulting in a gap between perception and practice (Laeli et al., 2020).

Furthermore, the rapidly evolving nature of digital technologies requires continuous professional development to ensure that teachers remain updated with current tools and pedagogical strategies. Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach that includes policy support, teacher training, and the development of a supportive learning environment. In conclusion, the role of teacher competence and attitudes in promoting digital literacy in English language teaching is both critical and multifaceted.

Competent teachers with positive attitudes are more likely to integrate technology effectively, thereby enhancing students' digital literacy and preparing them for the demands of the digital age. Conversely, a lack of competence or negative attitudes can impede the integration of digital tools and limit students' learning opportunities. Therefore, understanding and strengthening these factors is essential for achieving effective digital literacy integration in ELT and ensuring that education systems meet the evolving needs of the 21st century.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Concept of Digital Literacy in ELT

Digital literacy refers to a combination of technical, cognitive, and social skills required to function effectively in digital environments. In ELT, it includes skills such as online reading, digital writing, multimedia communication, and critical evaluation of online content.

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A systematic review highlights that digital literacy is foundational for language learning, while digital competence emphasizes pedagogical integration and professional development. Teachers must therefore balance technical knowledge with pedagogical application.

2. Teacher Competence in Digital Education

Teacher competence includes technological, pedagogical, and content knowledge (TPACK framework). Digital competence specifically refers to the ability to integrate ICT tools effectively into teaching.

Studies reveal that teachers' digital teaching ability directly affects classroom efficiency and student engagement. Competence areas include:

Digital resource management
Online communication
Assessment using digital tools
Facilitating student collaboration

Research also shows that teachers who possess strong digital competence can better design interactive lessons and foster higher-order thinking skills among students.

3. Teacher Attitudes toward Digital Technology

Teacher attitudes encompass beliefs, perceptions, and willingness to adopt digital tools. Positive attitudes are linked to higher levels of technology integration.

A study on English teachers' attitudes found that lack of digital competence negatively affects classroom management and learning outcomes. Conversely, teachers with positive attitudes actively seek professional development and experiment with innovative teaching methods.

4. Relationship between Competence and Attitudes

Teacher competence and attitudes are interdependent. Competence builds confidence, which fosters positive attitudes, while positive attitudes encourage skill development.

Research indicates that teachers with moderate digital competence often hesitate to fully integrate technology, highlighting the need for continuous training. Thus, both competence and attitude are critical for effective digital literacy promotion.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative review methodology based on secondary data. Relevant research articles, journals, and reports published between 2015 and 2025 were analyzed.

A. Data Sources

Peer-reviewed journals
Educational databases
Research articles on ELT and digital literacy

B. Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was used to identify key patterns related to:

Teacher competence
Teacher attitudes
Digital literacy outcomes

ROLE OF TEACHER COMPETENCE IN PROMOTING DIGITAL LITERACY

Teacher competence plays a crucial role in:

Designing technology-integrated lessons
Enhancing student engagement
Promoting collaborative learning
Developing critical thinking skills

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Competent teachers use tools such as learning management systems, multimedia content, and online assessment platforms effectively. They also guide students in evaluating digital information critically.

ROLE OF TEACHER ATTITUDES IN PROMOTING DIGITAL LITERACY

Teachers' attitudes influence:
Adoption of digital tools
Innovation in teaching practices
Student motivation
Positive attitudes lead to:
Increased use of digital resources
Student-centered learning
Continuous professional development
Negative attitudes result in resistance to change and limited technology use.

CHALLENGES IN PROMOTING DIGITAL LITERACY

Despite its importance, several challenges exist:
Lack of training programs
Limited infrastructure
Digital divide
Resistance to change
Studies emphasize that institutional support and policy intervention are essential to overcome these barriers.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Role of Teacher Competence and Attitudes in Digital Literacy

Dimension	Teacher Competence	Teacher Attitudes	Impact on Students
Technology Use	Ability to use digital tools	Willingness to adopt tools	Improved engagement
Pedagogy	Integration of ICT in teaching	Positive perception of innovation	Better learning outcomes
Assessment	Use of online evaluation tools	Openness to new methods	Continuous feedback
Communication	Digital collaboration skills	Encouragement of interaction	Enhanced participation
Professional Development	Continuous skill improvement	Motivation to learn	Lifelong learning skills

II. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that teacher competence and attitudes are critical factors in promoting digital literacy in English language teaching. Competent teachers with positive attitudes can effectively integrate technology, enhance student engagement, and foster essential digital skills. However, challenges such as lack of training and infrastructure must be addressed through policy support and professional development programs.

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