



THE IMPACT OF DIGITAL MEDIA ON STUDENT LAUNGUAGE AND SPELLING SKILLS

Challenges and Opportunities in the Digital Age of Communication

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ABSTRACT

Digital platforms bloomed to the fullest in the COVID 19 era. Before this era people hardly knew of zoom, Webex or teams. The period definitely was very challenging for survival; however, it brought great luck to the digital platforms.

Resorting to these platforms for teaching - learning process proved to be challenging for the teachers as well as students. New methods to fit into this E learning were devised by teachers who were till then had friendship with chalk & board. Being trained in a traditional way of teaching, the teaching fraternity found this digital platform a herculean task.

However, the impact of this mode is seen in the later era- the post Covid era, with the schools restoring to the offline mode the education had more challenge instore - Poor writing skills, vocabulary and spellings. The attention span of the students had come down and they were reluctant to write their notes.

The word bank in our head is a tool we have instant access to. This word bank helps us communicate better. If we wanted to fix something we would need the right tools for the task at hand in order to get the job done properly and in an efficient manner. Having a wide range of vocabulary works in the same way. The connection between spelling, vocabulary, and reading comprehension is clear: proficiency in spelling and vocabulary directly influences students' ability to understand and engage with texts.

The way people perceive the content on the digital platforms is very uncertain.

"A special kind of beauty exists which is born in language, of language, and for language." – Gaston Bachelard

Indexterms: Digital media, language development, spelling skills, vocabulary loss, student writing, online learning, AI tools, communication, reading comprehension.

INTRODUCTION

The beauty of any language lies in its vocabulary. The students in their learning phase are taught the basic spellings and vocabulary. The purpose of education is to empower students with critical and creative thinking.

The traditional teaching methods were devised in such a way that students were involved in the learning process – mentally and physically. There was a great focus on the teaching techniques to teach the students basic grammar and spellings. The students were given assignments to make sentences with the words in different forms of speech which polished their language and the grammar syntax. The students critical thinking was enhanced with such activities.

There used to be a dictation test where the students had to write the words dictated by the teacher. This made the students to read the text books with attention and focus on the spellings of the hard words of the lessons. Any mistake in the spellings was dealt with imposition of writing the word 10 times in their notebooks.

The paragraph writing assignment involved the creative aspect of the students. The students explored the day-to-day life situations to write the content and also read the textbooks thoroughly so as to use the storyline in their writings.

Additionally, the impact of technology on literacy cannot be overlooked. Many young learners are now exposed to informal spelling from an early age through digital devices, which can shape their understanding of language and spelling. As these learners grow up in a technology-rich environment, they may struggle to differentiate between formal and informal spelling, leading to potential challenges in academic and professional settings where standard conventions are expected.

We talk about sustainable development in every sector. Why is the concept of sustainable development not applicable to the education sector?

This paper focusses on the negative influence of the digital tools in the education sector, especially with concern to vocabulary and the creative writing aspects. Analysis of the decline of the skills and increase in the dependency on the internet for information and easy access to the content is the aim of this presentation.

CHALLENGES OF DIGITILIZATION IN EDUCATION SECTOR

Its rightly said – Change is inevitable. Education sector is not left untouched with this change. It has evolved itself from Gurukuls to the traditional schools and now to schools equipped with technology.

However, we should also ponder over the question that how far is the change or progress as we call it relatable or advantageous for us!! While we are dealing with languages, we all understand that it's our brain and emotions that's play a vital role while we deliver a speech or we write a piece of literature,

1. Lack of human perception –

The intrusion of technology has brought a decline in this aspect of humane touch. The students are no longer relying on their creative aspect as with just a click of the button they get a readymade content Infront of them. The emotional touch is lost in this robotic world.

“Our language is the reflection of ourselves. A language is an exact reflection of the character and growth of its speakers.” – Cesar Chavez

2. Autocorrect and suggestions –

Even if when the students start to put their content on the digital platform the autocorrect feature puts the spellings and syntax in the correct format on its own. This has proved to be a disadvantage for the students as they never learn the correct format or the spelling.

3. Content – a click away

Readymade contents online hinder the deep understanding or interpretation of literature. The students give the prompts for a writing task in CHAT GPT or META and the whole content with options to choose from is right on their screens. How authentic is the content? This question should crop up in everyone's mind. The present generation of the students is not serious of this aspect as long as the online platforms provide them the content on the fingertips.

4. Impact on Reading skills

The rule of language is Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing skills. Not only the writing but also the reading style of the students is also impacted with this digitization. The students are not inclined to have a physical copy of the books but prefer the online apps sourced by some unknown websites. The poor knowledge of the basics of language will prove to be lethal for the legacy of language and literature.

Diluted Language

The usage of shortforms, EOD (End of the day), BTW (By the way), IDK (I don't know). With the informal nature of digital communication, many users gravitate toward phonetic spelling, which simplifies words based on their pronunciation rather than their traditional spelling.

Examples include: "nite" for "night", "thru" for "through", "Kool" for "cool"

This phonetic approach can make messages easier and quicker to write; however, it can lead to misunderstandings, especially in professional or academic contexts where standard spelling is expected.

What we call as the SMS language and the self-abbreviated words are flourishing the internet nowadays. The sanctity of the language is at stake. The priority to speed as compared to accuracy is the requirement of this generation. Emojis, GIFs have replaced most of the vocabulary.

“Language shapes the way we think, and determines what we can think about.” – Benjamin Lee Whorf

5. Loss of Formality

Digital communication often encourages a more casual tone, which can lead to a decline in the use of standard spelling and grammar rules. This informal style is evident in:

a. Emails: Casual language in professional emails can blur the line between formal and informal communication.

b. Academic Writing: Students may adopt informal spelling and slang in essays and assignments, which can negatively impact their grades and academic performance.

The shift toward informality can undermine the clarity and professionalism expected in various forms of written communication.

6. Copy-Paste Culture and the Decline of Original Thinking

The internet makes it easy to find answers with a quick search. This is leading to more copy-pasting, less critical thinking, and a drop in creativity—especially in how the students express their thoughts pertaining to any topic. The originality of a writing is questionable in the present scenario.

7. Decline in the literature works

Have you ever wondered, how this progress will increase our dependency on this artificial knowledge. This era may witness the draught of authors and poets. There will be no original works left except for the already existing pieces.

Every write up would have to be tested for its originality. A separate unit for quality check, check for plagiarism has to be instituted.

These platforms were designed by people who had the skills – critical thinking, creative thinking and problem solving. The prevalence of these platforms has robbed our students of all the skills. We will be creating literary handicapped people in the educational institutions. The rich culture of literature is at high risk, an issue that has to be taken up seriously in the forthcoming years.

TESTIMONIALS

“Digital tools made expression effortless, but at a cost. I began leaning on **emojis** to convey *emotion* and **thesauruses** to *sound articulate*. Gradually, my ability to **describe feelings** or choose words instinctively declined. Language felt *less like self-expression* and *more like a compilation of shortcuts* curated by software.”

“We all might not realize it, but digitalization is killing our creativity day by day. Personally, I took this for granted, but slowly I realized that it was actually affecting my day-to-day activities. Since everything is available on the internet ChatGPT and other platforms, people rarely use their creativity and prefer copying instead. This has become an endless cycle through which I lost both my creativity and the strong vocabulary I had developed by reading books and using the dictionary. The modern way of communicating through texts and messages has slowly poisoned my spelling, as they are filled with default abbreviations and initialisms.”

“Although digitalization has made work easy and fast, yet it has hampered my writing skills because of too much reliance on autocorrects. Due to availability of too much data, my creativity and imagination skills have degraded, resulting in facing issues in solving day to day problems.”

“As a student, I see how digitalization has ruined budding vocabulary skills and creativity among young people. I watch as children deem it stupid to try to learn spellings because there is autocorrect, and how doing art is for losers because we have AI for that. It has not only hampered but has killed the will to create, to innovate, to invent, to make mistakes, and learn from them. Children refuse to do basic tasks like writing an essay for an assignment because some websites will do it for them. This is not only degrading their knowledge, but it’s also hampering their will to do certain basic tasks.”

The reflections from students across different classes also point towards the decline in the quality of students passing out from the formal educational set up. Though they have relied on AI for completing their activities and assignments yet they don’t appreciate the dependency.

DEGRADATION IN SPOKEN LANGUAGE DUE TO DIGITILAZATION

Language – the medium of communication and letting know our thoughts. Children who were in their foundational learning stage during the pandemic time are the worst hit. The virus may have taken lives but it has proved more fatal for the kindergarten kids. The blooming stage was hindered and they were restricted to the screens. The phase where kids learn by doing and imitating the teacher, were not exposed to the physical classes.

Spanning from low attention levels to deformed vocabulary. Their reading skills have also been affected. Their vocabulary has been restricted to the short forms and slangs and they feel it’s ok to have this language.

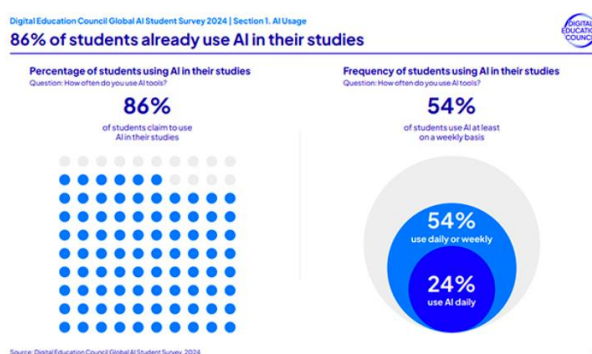
The accent in the spoken language has greatly been influenced by the platforms like Tik Tok, YouTube shorts. The so-called cool language of the internet is dominating the formal spoken language.

They have no idea of the formal usage of language which would be necessary for them when they move to the higher grades and eventually to their careers. Their jobs would be at risk and the anxiety levels of the students might rise as they won’t be able to fit in the formal scenario.

The parent community initially found these digital tools quiet helpful as their children no longer troubled them for completing their home works. However, as time passed , the parents also joined the community who are opposing the too much dependency on these online tools. They have a feeling that even after investing high amounts in their children’s education the output is minimum. The learning outcomes are not being reached

Survey Analysis

In a recent survey from the **Digital Education Council**, a global alliance of universities and industry representatives focused on education innovation, the majority of students (86%) said they use artificial intelligence in their studies. And they are using it regularly: Twenty-four percent reported using AI daily; 54% daily or weekly; and 54% on at least a weekly basis.



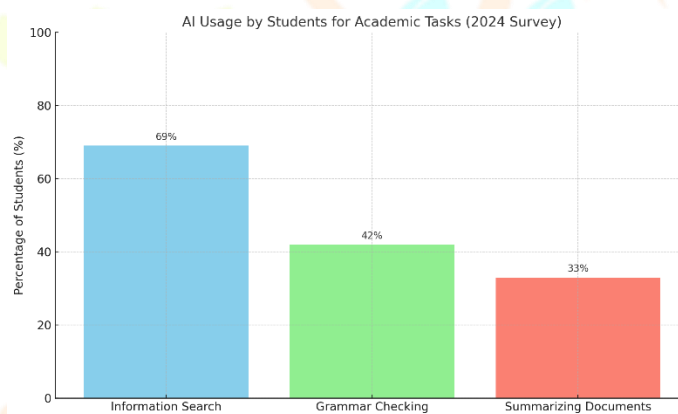
Courtesy of Digital Education Council

For its **2024 Global AI Student Survey**, the Digital Education Council gathered 3,839 responses from bachelor, masters, and doctorate students across 16 countries. The students represented multiple fields of study.

On average, surveyed students use 2.1 AI tools for their courses. ChatGPT remains the most common tool used, cited by 66% of respondents, followed by Grammarly and Microsoft Copilot (each 25%). The most common use cases:

- Search for information (69%);
- Check grammar (42%);
- Summarize documents (33%);
- Paraphrase a document (28%); and
- Create a first draft (24%).

SURVEY INSIGHTS & GLOBAL TRENDS



According to a survey conducted in 2024 by the Digital Education Council, 86% of students admitted to utilizing AI tools frequently for academic work, showcasing its popularity among students.

69% use AI tools for searching for information, 42% use them for checking grammar, and 33% for summarizing documents. While all these processes improve work efficiency, they may lower the learner's interaction with those materials restricting advanced learning.

OPINION POLL:

Is AI generated content and readily available texts hindrance to students' creativity?

Select one or more

☐ Yes 11

☐ No 2

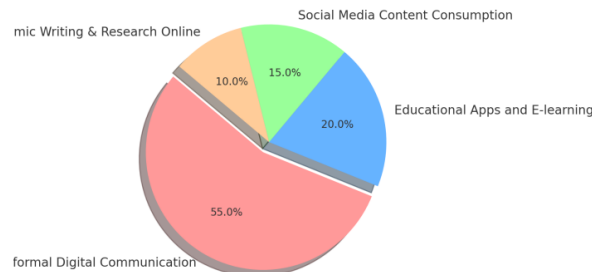
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[View votes](#)

The poll taken from a small sample of class 12 students clearly tells us that even the student community agrees that AI once thought to be a boon has turned out to be a bane. This is all due to the excessive dependency on this tool. The name ‘Artificial’ itself is a clear indication of the hollowness of the intelligence. It is emptying the human brains.

There was a time when people like Newton, Albert Einstein and many others relied on their brains to invent new things and gave a new dimension to the human existence

Digital Influence Pie Chart - Student Digital Language Usage - Formal vs. Informal Contexts



This pie chart represents how students use digital tools and platforms in relation to language: - 55% Informal Digital Communication (texting, chatting, social media slang) - 20% Educational Apps and E-learning (Grammarly, Quizlet, etc.) - 15% Social Media Content Consumption (Instagram, YouTube, etc.) - 10% Academic Writing & Research Online (assignments, online journals)

The chart shows a dominance of informal communication, indicating a potential risk to vocabulary and spelling accuracy unless balanced by educational usage.

"The rise in AI usage forces institutions to see AI as core infrastructure rather than a tool," commented Alessandro Di Lullo, CEO of the Digital Education Council and Academic Fellow in AI Governance at The University of Hong Kong.

IDEAS FOR LANGUAGE REVIVAL AND DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION

Encouraging the Revival of Traditional Methods: Schools should encourage spelling bees, dictation, story writing and oral presentations.

Encouraging a Balanced Use of Technology: Support blended learning where digital instruments augment, rather than eliminate, traditional teaching.

Professional Development Courses for Teachers: Foster strategic imagination aimed at digitally enabling rigorously taught language with proper scaffolding.

Raising Awareness and Monitoring from Parents: Teach parents how to guide usage of tools and encourage reading in absence of screens.

Workshop for Plagiarism Awareness: Teach students to be original and responsible when utilizing sources available online.

Revise the Curriculum: Teach digital literacy, including ethics of AI content generation with focus on language studies, encouraging students to use AI-generated content within limits.

Broaden Language Enrichment Activities: Promote daily logging activities, book clubs, language games, and public speaking for students.

CONCLUSION

“A man with a scant vocabulary will almost certainly be a weak thinker. The richer and more copious one's vocabulary and the greater one's awareness of fine distinctions and subtle nuances of meaning, the more fertile and precise is likely to be one's thinking. Knowledge of things and knowledge of the words for them grow together. If you do not know the words, you can hardly know the thing.” —

Henry Hazlitt

When languages are taken into account in general, the negative effects of digital devices such as media and common information network on the language have been emphasized. Peck states that media, especially digital media, harms languages with its written, oral and visual forms (1998:28). She also adds that especially the verbal and visual media have a higher destructive effect on them since they are much more commonly used.

A strong vocabulary, spelling and creative writing are all connected. The web that contributes to the academic success of a student. A good vocabulary bank helps the student to understand any kind of complex texts. Also, while writing the usage of words with correct context and spellings adds to the personal touch to the piece of writing and gives a satisfaction of achievement for the student. The writing piece which the student can own and be proud of.

Instead of copying polished vocabulary from internet or any digital platform, even if the students use simple vocabulary in their creative writing it would be counted as a learning step.

The success of a student should never be judged by the ability to use difficult vocabulary but by the ease with which words flow from the student.

Agreed that we can't deny the influence of digitalization, yet we can accommodate this tool with much more honesty to enhance the teaching learning process. Blended learning as it is termed can come handy for teachers as well as students.

Post Pandemic could be called as the Restoration era – be it be health sector, financial sector or the education sector. Everything was streamlined. The students were drilled with the basics of language. Hybrid teaching was devised to support the learning process and easy transition.

Using the online platforms for enhancing the creative aspect and vocabulary of the students is one of the best ways. The teacher should be trained well in the implementation of digital learning tool like google forms, Canva, YouTube etc.

“Language is the light of the mind.” – John Stuart Mill

Research Through Innovation

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