

AI-Mediated Communication and Language Development: Sociolinguistic, Pragmatic and Pedagogical Risks and Implications for EMI and ESL Education

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Abstract ID: 249

Event: Linguistics 2026 Athens

Subject: 22. AI linguistics

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Keywords: Artificial Intelligence in Language Education, Sociolinguistic and Pragmatic Competences, Linguistic Identity, Critical Thinking and AI

Abstract

The 21st century has marked an era of unprecedented technological advancement; the rapid integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into our daily life as well as into the educational and communicative practices represents one of the most significant transformations of the twenty-first century. Various tools, grammar checkers, translation systems and conversational agents that are based on AI, are now deeply embedded in language learning environments, particularly within English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) and English as a Second Language (ESL). While these technologies offer important pedagogical benefits, their pervasive use raises critical concerns regarding long-term sociolinguistic, pragmatic, cognitive and identity-related consequences.

This interdisciplinary research investigates how AI reshapes students' writing and speaking practices, focusing on sociolinguistic behavior, pragmatic competence, academic reasoning, critical thinking and linguistic identity.

The study aims to examine how reliance on AI-mediated communication influences spontaneous language production, interaction patterns and students' willingness to take linguistic risks. It explores how the constant AI use may affect authentic face-to-face communicative engagement and social interaction and how it might undermine critical thinking. Particular attention is paid to pragmatic competence, including the comprehension and production of implicatures, presuppositions, speech acts and culturally appropriate discourse, as well as the interpretation and development of non-verbal communication skills. Additionally, the research addresses the risk of linguistic homogenization, investigating how AI-generated language may threaten individual voice, stylistic variation and the preservation of learners' unique linguistic and cultural identities.

Methodologically, the project will adopt a mixed-method, an interdisciplinary framework that integrates theoretical and empirical approaches. A systematic literature review grounded in sociolinguistics, pragmatics, applied linguistics, pedagogy and language processing will establish the theoretical foundation. Empirically, the research will involve quantitative statistical analysis combined with qualitative discourse analysis. This comprehensive methodology enables the identification of linguistic, pragmatic and cognitive changes that are associated with AI.

The research will provide theoretical grounding, as well as corpus development, followed by empirical research and data collection and will conclude with an in-depth examination of contemporary Natural Language Processing (NLP) and Large Language Models (LLMs). This final phase will ensure that pedagogical insights and analytical conclusions reflect the most current developments in AI technology.

The expected outcomes will include a detailed mapping of AI's impact on writing and speaking practices, with particular attention to how AI-mediated communication shapes learners' critical language identities in EMI and ESL contexts. The study will identify cognitive, socio-pragmatic and identity-related risks associated with AI use, alongside the generation of original empirical data. By bridging theory, empirical evidence, pedagogy and critical language identity, this research will make a significant contribution to sociolinguistic and pragmatic theory while offering practical frameworks for the responsible and reflexive integration of AI in EMI and ESL education.