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THE CLIMATE TURN IN LANGUAGE TEACHING

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The Climate Turn in Language Teaching

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Abstract: This Element critically explores the notion of climate education in the humanities, and how it should embrace the teaching, learning, and research of second and heritage languages (SL/HL), starting with basic language programs. Because language is inseparable from the spheres where climate narratives circulate. The interconnectedness between language (as discourse), sociolinguistics, culture, social justice, and the climate crisis entails an approach to Climate Humanities that requires a paradigmatic and epistemological turn. By addressing how SL/HL education works and whom it serves, together with the ethical dilemmas instructors face, the Element proposes a root-level curricular and program transformation for advancing an equitable language classroom with a focus on climate and sustainability. Comprehensive sections delve into three applied teaching principles: (1) critical analysis and decentralization of climate discourse, (2) contextualization of language teaching, and (3) transdisciplinarity. Examples for classroom implementation showcase praxis in action, and emerging questions and future directions are discussed.

Keywords: sustainability, climate discourse, language education, Climate Humanities, second languages

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