ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING (ELT) POLICY IN THE AI ERA: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

I Gde Putu Agus Pramerta

Universitas Mahasaraswati Denpasar Email: putuagus1708@unmas.ac.id

ABSTRACT

In recent years, the rapid advancement of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has brought significant implications for English Language Teaching (ELT). This study explores school principals and English teachers' perspectives on the integration of AI in ELT within the context of existing policy. It aims to investigate the challenges they face in implementing AI-based tools, and the opportunities to bridge the gap between policy and classroom practice. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, survey and structured interview were conducted with twelve informants across different educational levels, involving respondents with diverse professional backgrounds: English teachers, vice headmasters for academic and curriculum affairs, and headmasters of secondary schools. The survey results indicate that respondents strongly understand current English language learning policies and agree on the urgency of integrating AI developments, digital literacy, and academic literacy into policy and planning. However, while most believe AI-based policies can have a positive impact, they note that current policies are not yet fully supportive of AI integration. Thematic analysis revealed three key findings: (1) the absence of clear and comprehensive ELT policy frameworks addressing AI integration, (2) teachers' proactive adaptation through self-initiated practices and resource exploration, and (3) persistent challenges related to digital literacy, infrastructure, and ethical considerations. These results indicate that while respondents demonstrate strong agency in navigating AI-based innovations, sustainable integration requires well-defined policies and needs-based professional development.

Keywords: AI, English Language Teaching, Perspectives, Policy, Teacher Agency

ABSTRAK

Dalam beberapa tahun terakhir, kemajuan pesat Kecerdasan Buatan (AI) telah membawa implikasi signifikan bagi Pengajaran Bahasa Inggris (ELT). Studi ini mengeksplorasi perspektif kepala sekolah dan guru Bahasa Inggris mengenai integrasi AI dalam ELT dalam konteks kebijakan yang ada. Tujuannya adalah untuk menginvestigasi tantangan yang mereka hadapi dalam menerapkan alat berbasis AI, serta peluang untuk menjembatani kesenjangan antara kebijakan dan praktik di kelas. Menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif, survei dan wawancara terstruktur dilakukan dengan informan dari berbagai tingkatan pendidikan, melibatkan 12 responden dengan latar belakang profesional yang beragam: guru bahasa Inggris, wakil kepala sekolah bidang akademik dan kurikulum, serta kepala sekolah pada tingkat sekolah menengah. Hasil survei menunjukkan bahwa responden memahami dengan baik kebijakan pembelajaran bahasa Inggris saat ini dan sepakat akan urgensi mengintegrasikan perkembangan AI, literasi digital, dan literasi akademik ke dalam kebijakan dan perencanaan. Namun, meskipun sebagian besar percaya bahwa kebijakan berbasis AI dapat memiliki dampak positif, mereka mencatat bahwa kebijakan saat ini belum sepenuhnya mendukung integrasi AI. Analisis tematik mengungkap tiga temuan utama: (1) ketidakhadiran kerangka kebijakan ELT yang jelas dan komprehensif yang mencakup integrasi AI, (2) adaptasi proaktif guru melalui praktik mandiri dan eksplorasi sumber daya, dan (3) tantangan yang persisten terkait literasi digital, infrastruktur, dan pertimbangan etis. Hasil ini menunjukkan bahwa meskipun responden menunjukkan kemampuan yang kuat dalam mengelola inovasi berbasis AI, integrasi yang berkelanjutan memerlukan kebijakan yang jelas dan pengembangan profesional yang terarah sesuai kebutuhan.

Kata kunci: Agensi guru, AI, Kebijakan, Pengajaran Bahasa Inggris, Perspektif

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the rapid advancement of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has transformed teaching and learning process. In the context of English Language Teaching (ELT), AI offers innovative possibilities for enhancing pedagogical personalizing practices, learning experiences, and expanding access to learning resources (Ayeni et al., 2024; Kaswan et al., 2024). AI developments have prompted teachers to modify and improve teaching strategies and literacy in AI utilization (Pramerta, 2025). This is important to ensure that they remain relevant to the current ELT practices.

In Indonesia, English is positioned as a foreign language, taught from primary to tertiary levels. Policy frameworks at the national and regional levels emphasized English proficiency, cultural understanding, and communicative competence. However, these policies have not always kept pace with technological advancements, particularly in the field of AI. The gap between policy directives and the realities of classroom implementation has become increasingly evident, especially as schools adopt AI for ELT (Crompton et al., 2024). This policy-practice gap presents both challenges and opportunities for teachers (Harintama & Muslimin, 2024), who are at the forefront of implementing AI in their teaching practice.

makers' Policy and teachers' perspectives are essential for revealing both opportunities and challenges of integrating AI into ELT. Teachers in leadership positions, such as vice headmasters or headmasters, provide unique insights because they operate at the intersection of policy directives and classroom realities. Yet, existing studies on AI in ELT have largely focused on

technological or learner-centered dimensions, leaving the perspectives of teacher-leaders underexplored. Addressing this gap is urgent to ensure that AI-related policies and practices are not only innovative but also practical, sustainable, and contextually relevant.

This study addresses the following research questions:

- 1. What challenges do they face in aligning classroom practice with existing policies?
- 2. What opportunities emerge for bridging the gap between policy and practice in AI-based ELT?

LITERATURE REVIEW AI in English Language Teaching

The integration of AI into ELT has opened new possibilities for teaching and learning, offering tools that can personalize learning pathways and automate certain instructional tasks (Yekollu et al., 2024). Applications such as AI-assisted writing feedback, speech recognition for pronunciation training, and chatbot-based practice conversation have been increasingly adopted in both formal and informal learning contexts (Poquet & De Laat, 2021). It is emphasized that AI technologies not only enhance efficiency but also have the potential to foster learner autonomy and engagement when used strategically.

However, effective integration requires more than technological readiness. It depends on pedagogical alignment, teacher competence, supportive and institutional policies (Chan, 2023). Without coherent policy frameworks, ΑI implementation can result on critical challenge, such as the growing gap in AI development, education, and its access (Sarkar, 2025). In this regard, teacher agency plays a central role as both mediators and decision-makers in AI adoption.

Language Policy and Planning in ELT

Language policy and planning (hereafter, LPP) involve the thoughtful development of strategies to influence language use, acquisition, and education (Liddicoat & Taylor-Leech, 2021). In ELT contexts, policies determine curriculum design, instructional priorities, assessment systems, and resource allocation. This condition is like an "onion model" of LPP, highlighting the multiple layers that interact in shaping language education, namely macro (national), meso (institutional), and micro (classroom) (Shan, 2025).

In Indonesia, ELT policies have historically emphasized communicative competence, with technology integration addressed only in broad terms and far from the real purposes of communication (Masdugi & Prihananto, 2021). As AI becomes more prevalent, the absence of explicit guidelines on its use in ELT creates ambiguity for teachers. While some teachers embrace AI tools proactively, others face uncertainty regarding ethical considerations, privacy, data and pedagogical suitability.

Teachers Agency

Teacher agency is a critical factor in the success of policy implementation. According to Nezhad and Stolz (2024), teachers interpret and enact policy within their professional contexts, influenced by their beliefs, experiences, and institutional constraints. Teachers in leadership roles, such as vice headmasters or headmasters, often have a dual perspective: they are responsible for ensuring compliance with

policy while also addressing the practical realities of classroom instruction.

Research suggests that including teachers' voices in policy development can lead to more effective and contextually relevant reforms (McLure & Aldridge, 2023). However, in many educational systems, there remains a disconnect between policymakers and practitioners, leading to a "top-down" policy approach that may overlook the complexities of classroom realities. This is important in the case of AI integration, where rapid technological change demands agile and responsive policy adaptation.

Theoretical Construct of the Study

This study is underpinned by the policy-practice gap framework, which examines the discrepancies between official policy intentions and the realities of implementation (Wang et al., 2022). The framework is complemented by the concept of teacher agency, which views teachers as active interpreters of policy who navigate constraints and opportunities within their contexts (Cong-Lem, 2021). By combining these perspectives, this study investigates provide novel insights into how teacherleaders both interpret and reshape AIrelated ELT policies, thereby bridging the between policy intentions classroom realities.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a qualitative descriptive design to explore English teachers' and school leaders' perspectives on the integration of AI in ELT within the framework of existing policies in Indonesia. The qualitative descriptive approach was chosen because it enables in-depth understanding of participants' experiences,

perceptions, and interpretations without imposing predetermined categories

The research was conducted in secondary school levels in Bali, Indonesia, where English language policy implementation is influenced by both national directives and local educational priorities. Respondents were purposefully selected to capture varied institutional perspectives. A total of 12 participants were involved, comprising English teachers, vice headmasters for academic and curriculum affairs, and headmasters from different secondary school levels. This composition allowed for triangulation of viewpoints from those directly involved in classroom teaching, curriculum design, and policy execution at the school level.

There are 12 teachers participated in the survey. They have different position background: 7 teachers (58.3%), 3 respondents are vice headmasters for academic and curriculum (25%), and 2 respondents are headmasters (16.7%).

Data collection employed two main instruments: an online survey questionnaire and structured interviews guided by the policy-practice gap framework (Wang et al., 2022). The survey combined 5-point Likert scale items and open-ended auestions participants' to assess understanding of current ELT policies, the perceived need for AI integration, and readiness for AI-based teaching. Structured interviews with all respondents followed the survey to explore interpretations of policy, challenges in AI implementation. adaptation strategies, and policy improvement suggestions. Quantitative data from the survey were analysed using descriptive statistics, while qualitative data from open-ended responses and interviews were examined through thematic analysis, involving data familiarization, coding, theme development, and refinement to align with the study's objectives.

Table 1 Work Experience at School

Range	Percentage (%)
0-2 Years	8.3
3-5 Years	16.7
6-10 Years	25
10 Years - present	50

Based on the data presented in Table 1, the majority of respondents (50%) have more than 10 years of work experience at their respective schools, indicating a substantial level of professional expertise and familiarity with institutional policies and practices. A smaller yet notable proportion (25%) have between 6–10 years of experience, reflecting a moderately experienced group likely to have adapted to evolving educational trends. Meanwhile, 16.7% of participants have been working

for 3–5 years, and only 8.3% have less than two years of experience.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION Results

Based on the data related to the school's policy, it was found that 83.3% of the respondents reported that teachers and students are allowed to use artificial intelligence (AI) tools to support their work and learning processes.

Then, Table 2 presents survey results toward policy in ELT. All respondents indicated understanding of the objectives of English language learning policy in Indonesia and specifically in Bali, with 58.3% strongly agree and 41.7% agree. Similarly, all participants agreed that English language policy should adapt to developments in AI technology (50% strongly agree; 50% agree). A high level of consensus was also evident regarding the inclusion of digital and academic literacy in ELT policy and planning, with 75% strongly agree and 25% agree.

While most respondents (91.7%) believed that current policies already support AI-based learning and can improve teacher and student literacy (25% strongly

agree; 66.7% agree), 8.3% were neutral. All respondents expressed readiness to face the challenges of teaching English in the AI era (41.7% strongly agree; 58.3% agree) and recognized the positive impact of AI use in ELT (58.3% strongly agree; 41.7% agree). These findings indicate strong support for AI integration in ELT policy, alongside high teacher confidence in adapting to AI-driven changes.

Then, based on the open-ended questions, there are three highlights on English has a strategic and important position, the role of AI should be integrated in English learning policies, and challenges and opportunities in improving digital and academic literacy.

Table 2 Survey Results toward Policy in ELT

Statement		Percentage (%)				
		A	N	D	SD	
I understand the objectives of the policy on English language learning	58.3	41.7	0	0	0	
in Indonesia, and specifically in Bali.						
The development of English language policy needs to be adapted to	50	50	0	0	0	
developments in AI technology.						
Digital literacy and academic literacy must be part of policy and	75	25	0	0	0	
planning in the context of English language learning.						
Current policies regarding English language learning already support	25	66.7	8.3	0	0	
AI-based learning and can improve the literacy of teachers and						
students.						
I am ready to face the challenges of learning English in the AI era.	41.7	58.3	0	0	0	
I see that the policy on the use of AI to support the English language	58.3	41.7	0	0	0	
learning process will have a positive impact on teachers and students.						

Respondents stated that English has a strategic and important position, especially in the context of globalization and the challenges of the 21st century. However, its implementation still faces serious obstacles. Respondent stated that, "Its status as an elective subject limits the amount of time allocated to it... this change in status will only be a new formality without any real impact if it is not accompanied by careful preparation."

However, there were also respondents who noted the government's initiative to strengthen the position of English in the national curriculum. "With English being designated as a compulsory subject, I see this as a strategic move."

In relation to the role of AI should be integrated in English learning policies, respondent stated that AI should be used as a tool or support, not as the main source. They emphasized that the role of teachers remains central to the learning process. "AI should be used as a tool... but its use must be regulated so that it does not replace the role of teachers." Another statement is "As a support for English language learning, but not as the main and only source of learning." And "AI facilitates access to information and can be an intelligent learning partner."

Then, from the various respondents, a number of consistent and diverse key challenges emerged, such as "One of the main challenges is uneven and unstable internet access, which can lead to inequality in accessing digital learning resources."; "Another challenge is the lack of literacy culture among students."; "The challenge is the limited time available for teachers to attend training."

Although there were found challenges, respondents also provided the opportunities for the betterment of EFL practices. Respondents wrote, "Digital technology enables students to learn independently, according to their own pace and learning style." Another opportunity was added, such as "Improved digital literacy supports 21st-century relevant to the world of work." From those opportunities, the crucial part is related to the policy. Respondent asserted that "Policies should encourage digital training for teachers and the development of contextual digital content."

Additionally, results from interview support the survey. In relation to policy in English learning and AI, it was informed that, "English language learning policies have not yet fully integrated technological developments such as AI... AI can be used as a learning tool that has a significant impact." Another teacher added, "Policies in response to advances in AI... need to accommodate the use of AI as an effective

tool... including teacher training and curriculum development."

The teacher stated that, "Teachers are still limited in their knowledge of technology itself, so its application is still minimal." Another teacher added, "AI will make it easier for teachers to create more engaging, interactive learning approaches."

Regarding the advancement of AI, it was reported that, "The use of AI can also be maximized by students... so that students can also learn independently... such as applications for writing and even speaking." However, there is another essential statement from the teacher, that is "Digital literacy is very important... academic literacy is also about how teachers and students can find information from reliable sources."

A fundamental response was "The main focus in English language learning remains on developing effective communication skills... digital literacy and academic literacy are important skills." From this point of view, there was a concern on the obstacles in this AI era. The teacher stated, "The biggest obstacle is the human resources of the teachers themselves... because teachers are the actors or ideas behind the development itself."

To handle the obstacles, it is strengthened that "What I want to improve is the competence of English teachers themselves... both in terms of pedagogy and language proficiency."

Discussion

The findings of this study reveal a generally high level of awareness and readiness among participants regarding English Language Teaching (ELT) policies and their potential adaptation to the era of artificial intelligence (AI). The

demographic data indicate that most respondents are highly experienced educators, with 50% having more than ten years of teaching experience and 25% having between six to ten years. This professional experience likely shapes the confident perspectives reflected in the survey and interviews, as experienced teachers tend to be more aware of policy frameworks and are better positioned to evaluate their applicability in rapidly evolving technological contexts.

Ouantitative results from the show they perception survey that understand the objectives of current ELT policies in Indonesia. Such strong consensus suggests that policy dissemination has been effective at the level of awareness. However, the open-ended and interview responses revealed that "understanding" does not necessarily translate into perceived adequacy. Many participants argued that existing policies lack explicit strategies for AI integration, creating a gap between theoretical objectives and practical implementation. aligns with previous This highlighting that the use of AI in education is largely absent from policy conversations (Abedi, 2024; Schiff, 2022).

The data also indicate ful1 agreement (100%) on the necessity of incorporating AI-related digital literacy and academic literacy into ELT policy. This suggests that teachers see digital literacy not as an optional enhancement but as an essential competency in the modern language classroom. English should be digitally more literate (Pratolo & Solikhati, 2020). AI is already influencing how student access, process, and produce English, and that policy frameworks must anticipate these shifts. As one interviewee stated, "If policies ignore AI, we are

already behind, "showing the urgency for a future-focused approach.

Interestingly, while 91.7% agreed that current ELT policies support AI-based learning to improve literacy, the level of agreement here was lower compared to other items. This relative drop in consensus suggests that teachers see some alignment in principle but remain sceptical about actual policy implementation. Interviews revealed recurring concerns about the lack of infrastructure, teacher training, and clear guidelines for AI use in classrooms. These concerns are the debate on AI integration in Indonesian education policy. Thus, policy interventions are needed to ensure effective AI implementation (Nurhayati et al., 2025).

The readiness to face the challenges of teaching English in the AI era is another striking finding, with all participants agreed they are prepared. **Participants** described self-initiated efforts, such as experimenting with AI-powered tools, joining webinars, and creating AI-assisted teaching materials, as key to their confidence. This self-driven approach reflects teacher agency in using AI for EFL classrooms. Thus, even though policy can change, it will challenge teachers to renegotiate their professional identities and agency (Weng, 2025).

Moreover, the qualitative data point to an understanding of AI's potential benefits and risks. Participants consistently highlighted the positive impact of AI on enhancing engagement, facilitating differentiated instruction, and supporting assessment. However, they also cautioned against over-reliance on AI, raising concerns about data privacy, ethical use, and the risk of diminishing students' critical thinking skills if technology is used uncritically. These concerns in line with global debates on AI in education, which

stress the integration of AI remains absent (Jin et al., 2025).

Overall, the findings point to a paradox: teachers are highly aware of policy goals and enthusiastic about AI's potential, yet they perceive a significant gap between policy rhetoric and actionable guidance. This gap underscores the need for a more responsive and dynamic policy framework that integrates technological innovation with practical support for English teachers.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that while school principals and English teachers in various educational settings demonstrate a strong understanding of current ELT policies and recognize the urgency of integrating AI, the absence of clear policy frameworks. persistent gaps infrastructure, digital literacy, and ethical guidelines remain significant barriers to effective implementation. The findings underscore the need for well-defined, professional development needs-based programs and more robust policy alignment to bridge the gap between policy intent and classroom realities.

However, the study's scope was limited by its qualitative descriptive design, relatively small sample size. geographic concentration, which mav restrict the generalizability of the results. Future research should adopt broader, mixed-method approaches across diverse regions to capture a more comprehensive perspective, explore longitudinal impacts of AI policy integration, and examine specific pedagogical models for AI-enhanced ELT. The implications of this study are twofold: policymakers must prioritize inclusive, AIresponsive ELT policies, and English teachers should be empowered through

targeted training and resources to transform AI utilization into ELT practice.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The researcher extends heartfelt thanks to the school principals who participated, for their time, insights, and valuable contributions, which greatly enriched this study.

REFERENCES

- Abedi, E. A. (2024). Tensions between technology integration practices of teachers and ICT in education policy expectations: Implications for change in teacher knowledge, beliefs and teaching practices.

 Journal of Computers in Education, 11(4), 1215–1234.

 https://doi.org/10.1007/s40692-023-00296-6
- Ayeni, O. O., Hamad, N. M. A., Chisom, O. N., Osawaru, B., & Adewusi, O. E. (2024). AI in education: A review of personalized learning and educational technology. *GSC Advanced Research and Reviews*, 18(2), 261–271. https://doi.org/10.30574/gscarr.2024.18.2.0062
- Chan, C. K. Y. (2023). A comprehensive AI policy education framework for university teaching and learning. *International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education*, 20(1), 38. https://doi.org/10.1186/s41239-023-00408-3
- Cong-Lem, N. (2021). Teacher agency: A systematic review of international literature. *Issues in Educational Research*, 31(3), 718–738. https://search.informit.org/doi/10.3 316/informit.190851857034060
- Crompton, H., Edmett, A., Ichaporia, N., & Burke, D. (2024). AI and English language teaching: Affordances and challenges. *British Journal of Educational Technology*,

biet.13460.

https://doi.org/10.1111/bjet.13460

- Harintama, F., & Muslimin, A. I. (2024).

 Enhancing EFL teaching in Indonesian Islamic senior high schools through artificial intelligence integration. *Schemata: Jurnal Pascasarjana UIN Mataram*, 13(2), 111–122.

 https://doi.org/10.20414/schemata.v13i2.11818
- Jin, Y., Yan, L., Echeverria, V., Gašević, D., & Martinez-Maldonado, R. (2025). Generative AI in higher education: A global perspective of institutional adoption policies and guidelines. *Computers and Education: Artificial Intelligence*, 8, 100348.
 - https://doi.org/10.1016/j.caeai.2024 .100348
- Kaswan, K. S., Dhatterwal, J. S., & Ojha, R. P. (2024). AI in personalized learning. In *Advances in technological innovations in higher education* (First edition, p. 15). CRC Press. https://doi.org/10.1201/9781003376699
- Liddicoat, A. J., & Taylor-Leech, K. (2021). Agency in language planning and policy. *Current Issues in Language Planning*, 22(1–2), 1–18.
 - https://doi.org/10.1080/14664208.2 020.1791533
- Masduqi, H., & Prihananto, N. (2021).

 Communicative approach in the five curricula of English subject for secondary schools: A paradox in English language teaching in Indonesia.
 - https://doi.org/10.14293/S2199-1006.1.SOR-.PPHBZCF.v1
- McLure, F. I., & Aldridge, J. M. (2023).

 Sustaining reform implementation:

 A systematic literature review.

 School Leadership & Management,

 43(1), 70–98.

- https://doi.org/10.1080/13632434.2 023.2171012
- Nezhad, P. M., & Stolz, S. A. (2024). Unveiling teachers' professional agency and decision-making in professional learning: The illusion of choice. *Professional Development in Education*, 1–21. https://doi.org/10.1080/19415257.2 024.2349058
- Nurhayati, S., Taufikin, T., Judijanto, L., & Musa, S. (2025). Towards effective artificial intelligence-driven Indonesian learning in child education: Understanding parental readiness, challenges, and policy implications. Educational Process International Journal. *15*(1). https://doi.org/10.22521/edupij.202 5.15.155
- Poquet, O., & De Laat, M. (2021). Developing capabilities: Lifelong learning in the age of AI. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 52(4), 1695–1708. https://doi.org/10.1111/bjet.13123
- Pramerta, I. G. P. A. (2025). In-service teachers' voices on AI utilization in education. *Jurnal Santiaji Pendidikan (JSP)*, *15*(1), 90–100. https://doi.org/10.36733/jsp.v15i1.1
- Pratolo, B. W., & Solikhati, H. A. (2020). Investigating teachers' attitude toward digital literacy in EFL classroom. *Journal of Education and Learning (EduLearn)*, 15(1), 97–103.
 - https://doi.org/10.11591/edulearn.v 15i1.15747
- Sarkar, A. (2025). Bridging the divide: A systems thinking approach to inclusivity in AI development and education.
 - $\frac{https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.509766}{9}$
- Schiff, D. (2022). Education for AI, not AI for education: The role of education and ethics in national AI policy strategies. *International Journal of*

- *Artificial Intelligence in Education*, 32(3), 527–563. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40593-021-00270-2
- Shan, Z. (2025). Is successful implementation possible? Unraveling the implementation of English language education policy in China. *SAGE Open*, *15*(3), 21582440251359014.

 https://doi.org/10.1177/215824402
 51359014
- Wang, J., Tigelaar, D. E. H., & Admiraal, W. (2022). From policy to practice: Integrating ICT in Chinese rural schools. *Technology, Pedagogy and Education*, 31(4), 509–524. https://doi.org/10.1080/1475939X.2022.2056504
- Weng, Z. (2025). A Language Teacher Educator's Identity and Agency Development via Virtual Professional Training: An Autoethnography. *TESOL Journal*, 16(2), e70027. https://doi.org/10.1002/tesi.70027
- Yekollu, R. K., Bhimraj Ghuge, T., Sunil Biradar, S., Haldikar, S. V., & Farook Mohideen Abdul Kader, O. (2024). AI-driven personalized learning paths: Enhancing education through adaptive systems. In R. Asokan, D. P. Ruiz, & S. Piramuthu (Eds.), *Smart Data Intelligence* (pp. 507–517). Springer Nature Singapore.

https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-97-3191-6_38