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## **Exploring Gen Z English Teachers' Challenges on ChatGPT Integration in Language Learning**

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### **Abstract**

The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in language learning has emerged as a growing trend through platforms such as ChatGPT, which support creativity and teaching efficiency. However, its implementation still faces various challenges among Generation Z English teachers. Therefore, this study aims to explore the challenges, perceptions, and experiences of these teachers in integrating ChatGPT into the language learning process. Therefore, this study aims to explore the challenges, perceptions, and experiences of Generation Z English teachers in integrating ChatGPT into the language learning process. This research employed a qualitative research design using a narrative inquiry approach. The participants were four Generation Z English teachers who are actively teaching in various educational institutions. Data were collected through written interviews using a Google Form that consisted of open-ended questions, allowing participants to express their

experiences in detail. The findings reveal that ChatGPT is perceived as a useful learning tool to enhance creativity, efficiency, and student engagement, yet it still encounters obstacles such as technical issues, ethical concerns, and institutional policy limitations. In conclusion, ChatGPT can serve as a valuable complement to language learning but cannot replace the essential role of teachers as primary educators.

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## INTRODUCTION

The development of information and communication technology has brought significant changes in various aspects of life, including education. Continuous technological innovation has contributed to the transformation of the learning process, in terms of methods, learning resources, and media used. This condition shows that access to learning resources is no longer limited to the role of educators alone, but can be obtained widely through various platforms and digital devices. With the presence of technology, both learners and educators can utilize various tools to accelerate and expand the process of acquiring knowledge (broad-based learning). Therefore, mastering technology has become essential as part of the readiness to face the challenges of 21st-century learning (Faiz & Kurniawaty, 2023). In recent years, the progress of digital technology has rapidly accelerated. One of the innovations that has gained significant attention in the field of education is the emergence of ChatGPT. ChatGPT (Generative Pre-trained Transformer) was developed by OpenAI, a non-profit organization established in 2015, beginning in 2018. OpenAI was founded by Elon Musk along with several prominent figures from Silicon Valley, San Francisco, such as Reid Hoffman and Sam Altman. The emergence of ChatGPT has sparked various responses from the public, particularly within academic settings (Husnaini & Madhani, 2024).

This tool provides both educators and learners with the opportunity to interact dynamically, develop ideas, and receive adaptive feedback to support a more

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*Nanda Safitri*

personalized and effective learning process. Lund and Wang (2023) also asserted that ChatGPT holds great potential for advancing academia and libraries in new ways. However, it is equally important to consider how to use this technology responsibly and ethically, so that collaboration through AI can enhance work quality, generate new scientific knowledge, and help shape future professionals. This is because the integration of AI in education also brings pedagogical, technical, ethical, and institutional challenges that educators must address.

Among the educators experiencing this transformation are Generation Z English teachers. This generation is commonly referred to as digital natives, as they were born and raised in an era marked by rapid technological advancement (Prensky, 2001). Consequently, Generation Z teachers tend to demonstrate positive attitudes toward innovation and strong adaptability in integrating technology into their teaching practices (Seemiller & Grace, 2016). However, despite their technological familiarity, Generation Z teachers also encounter challenges in balancing technology integration with pedagogical principles, particularly when implementing AI-based tools such as ChatGPT in language learning contexts (Zawacki-Richter, et al, 2019; Kasneci et al., 2023).

In English language learning, ChatGPT can be used for a variety of purposes. For instance, educators can utilize ChatGPT to create reading texts tailored to students' proficiency levels, design grammar and vocabulary exercises, develop dialogue scenarios, and provide examples of feedback on students' writing. In addition, ChatGPT can be employed to generate teaching ideas, design simple lesson plans, and conduct conversation simulations. The use of this technology encourages teachers to be more creative and innovative in developing the learning process (Smutny & Schreiberova, 2020).

The integration of ChatGPT into language learning presents significant changes to pedagogical practices, particularly in terms of providing feedback, enriching materials, and enhancing independent learning. Nugroho et al. (2023) explain that ChatGPT is capable of providing personalized learning support that was previously difficult to achieve through conventional methods. With natural language

processing capabilities, this model can generate various language activities such as conversation examples, grammar exercises, and even writing revisions. This allows students to practice continually without time limits, while also reducing learning anxiety because they are not interacting directly with humans. Furthermore, the research indicates that ChatGPT has the potential to be a scaffolding tool that helps students gradually correct errors through adaptive feedback. However, researchers also emphasize that the use of ChatGPT still requires teacher supervision to prevent linguistic misconceptions or excessive dependence. Thus, ChatGPT opens up new opportunities in language learning, but still requires the role of the teacher as an academic curator to ensure the quality and relevance of the learning.

The development of artificial intelligence technology, particularly Large Language Models (LLM) such as ChatGPT, has brought about a significant new paradigm in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education (Wang et al., 2024). ChatGPT, which is based on the Generative Pre-trained Transformer architecture, has the ability to generate coherent and contextual text (Koraishi, 2023). In the context of EFL, this technology has the potential to function as a personal tutor, conversation partner, and source of adaptive and personalized learning materials, ranging from providing instant feedback on student writing to supporting teachers in designing more interactive learning activities (Balci, 2024; İnci Kavak et al., 2024; Koraishi, 2023). Wang et al. (2024) assert that LLM opens up great opportunities in personalizing learning, enhancing interaction, and shifting away from conventional teaching approaches. The challenges of implementing this technology become even more relevant when linked to Generation Z teachers, who are educators born and raised in a digital environment and have a relatively high level of technological literacy (Prensky, 2001; Seemiller & Grace, 2018). These characteristics encourage Generation Z teachers to be more open and inclined to integrate AI-based technologies, including ChatGPT, into their teaching practices. However, this integration also faces ethical, pedagogical, and institutional challenges, such as issues of student authenticity, technology dependence, and institutional regulatory limitations. Therefore, an in-depth study of the specific

needs, perceptions, and challenges of Generation Z teachers in utilizing AI in EFL learning is very important.

However, although various studies have shown that ChatGPT and large language models have the potential to improve learning personalization and provide adaptive feedback in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning Lund & Wang (2023), existing studies still focus heavily on the benefits of this technology. Other research confirms that ChatGPT can support independent and continuous language learning, particularly through the provision of exercises and feedback based on natural language processing (Nugroho et al., 2023). However, discussions regarding the challenges of implementing this technology from the perspective of teachers are still relatively limited, especially when it comes to Generation Z English teachers, who are known to have high technological literacy and a positive attitude towards digital innovation (Seemiller & Grace, 2018). The familiarity of Generation Z teachers with technology does not automatically eliminate pedagogical and ethical issues in learning practices, such as maintaining the authenticity of the student learning process and managing the potential for dependence on artificial intelligence (AI), as emphasized in research on educators as digital natives (Prensky, 2001). Based on the limitations of these studies, this research aims to deepen the understanding of the challenges faced by Generation Z English teachers in integrating ChatGPT into language learning, so that it can provide empirical contributions to the development of more reflective pedagogical practices and support educational policies that are adaptive to the development of artificial intelligence technology.

## METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach with a narrative inquiry design, chosen because its primary aim is to understand the personal experiences and reflections of Generation Z English teachers in integrating ChatGPT into the language learning process. Retrieved from Clandinin and Connelly (2004) narrative inquiry is a research approach that focuses on individuals' life stories to understand

the meanings of their lived experiences. Through narratives, researchers can explore how teachers interpret the challenges, opportunities, and pedagogical values that emerge as they engage with artificial intelligence (AI)-based technologies. Thus, this study does not merely describe the phenomenon of ChatGPT use but also interprets the meanings behind teachers' subjective experiences as key actors in technology-based learning transformation.

The research participants consisted of four Generation Z English teachers aged 22–28, selected through purposive sampling based on the following criteria: (1) actively teaching English at public schools or Islamic boarding schools; (2) belonging to Generation Z, born between 1997 and 2012; (3) having used or attempted to integrate ChatGPT in their teaching activities; and (4) willing to share their personal experiences and reflections regarding ChatGPT use. The selection of participants with these criteria aimed to ensure that the collected data were relevant, in-depth, and aligned with the focus of the study.

Data collection was conducted in February 2025 through structured online written interviews administered via Google Forms. This single-instrument approach was strategically and intentionally selected to ensure methodological consistency across a geographically dispersed sample of Generation Z English teachers. By utilizing a written format, the study provided a private and reflective environment, allowing participants to articulate their pedagogical experiences with a level of depth and introspection that is often difficult to achieve in time-constrained, real-time oral interviews. This was particularly crucial given that the participants were digital natives, for whom digital written communication is a natural and expressive medium.

The interview instrument was meticulously developed to function as a comprehensive data-gathering tool, utilizing a series of open-ended, probing questions designed to elicit narrative-rich data. The instrument was structured around three core dimensions: (1) the multifaceted technical, pedagogical, and ethical challenges encountered during the integration of ChatGPT in English language learning; (2) teachers' professional perceptions regarding the

transformative role and long-term impact of artificial intelligence on their instructional practices; and (3) the specific adaptive pedagogical strategies and innovative workarounds applied to manage integration hurdles within the classroom.

Each question was crafted to encourage thick description, moving beyond simple affirmations to capture the underlying reasoning behind the teachers' instructional choices. This method allowed the researcher to gather verbatim qualitative evidence that reflected the authentic voices of Gen Z educators from various educational institutions and diverse geographical locations. The Google Forms link was distributed via WhatsApp to facilitate seamless and flexible access, ensuring that participants could contribute their insights at their own pace and convenience. This procedural flexibility was vital for maximizing response rates and ensuring the richness, authenticity, and reliability of the qualitative data, ultimately providing a robust foundation for the subsequent thematic analysis.

Data analysis was carried out using the narrative thematic analysis technique adapted from Riessman (2008), focusing on how participants constructed meaning through their stories. The stages of analysis included: Data Familiarization, Coding and Thematic Identification, Narrative Structuring, Cross-Narrative Comparison, and Interpretation and Meaning Construction. To ensure the trustworthiness of the data, this study applied four criteria proposed by Lincoln & Guba (1985): Credibility, Transferability, Dependability, and Confirmability.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

### **FINDINGS**

#### **1. Generation Z English Teachers' Challenges in Integrating AI into Language Learning**

The interview results provide a comprehensive and critical overview of the multifaceted challenges encountered by Generation Z English teachers when integrating artificial intelligence, specifically ChatGPT, into their pedagogical frameworks. Far from being isolated incidents, these challenges emerge as a web of

interconnected obstacles, spanning technical, pedagogical, institutional, and ethical dimensions. As digital natives, Gen Z teachers are uniquely positioned to navigate these hurdles, yet the findings suggest that their digital fluency alone is insufficient to overcome the deep-seated structural and conceptual barriers inherent in current AI adoption.

From a technical and infrastructural standpoint, limitations in digital access remain the most pervasive and fundamental obstacle. Despite the global narrative of a digital revolution, the majority of teachers reported that unstable internet connectivity significantly hinders the seamless and reliable implementation of ChatGPT during live instruction. As one teacher candidly noted, *“Usually, because the internet connection is not good, AI cannot be used smoothly.”* This technical friction often results in instructional dead time, forcing teachers to abandon AI-integrated plans in favor of conventional methods. Beyond the binary of connectivity, the economic architecture of AI platforms, specifically the freemium model, presents a secondary hurdle. The limited features, slower processing speeds, and strict token constraints of free accounts restrict the duration, intensity, and complexity of AI-assisted activities. This creates a subtle but definitive digital divide, where the quality of AI-enhanced education is dictated by the financial capacity of the institution or the individual to afford premium subscriptions.

Pedagogically, the data suggests a persistent tension between the efficiency of AI and its actual classroom suitability. While ChatGPT can generate content in seconds, teachers highlighted that its output often fails to align with the highly specific and varied proficiency levels of their students. One respondent remarked, *“AI does help, but we still have to make constant adjustments because sometimes the answers are too complex or simply not appropriate for the class level.”* Furthermore, the language generated by AI is frequently perceived as overly generic, rigid, or lacking the pragmatic nuances and cultural context essential for authentic language acquisition. In the EFL (English as a Foreign Language) context, where sociolinguistic competence is as vital as grammatical accuracy, the machine’s tendency toward formulaic English is a significant drawback. Consequently, teachers must assume the role of secondary editors or pedagogical filters, re-



contextualizing and humanizing AI outputs to ensure they resonate with the students' unique cultural and linguistic characteristics.

Institutional challenges further complicate this landscape, particularly for educators working within the specific socio-cultural framework of Islamic boarding schools (*Pesantren*). In these settings, institutional policies often rooted in the desire to maintain a focused spiritual environment strictly limit or entirely prohibit student access to personal gadgets and the internet. One teacher explained the profound impact of this policy: *“At Islamic boarding schools, students are not allowed to use cell phones or laptops, so I cannot use ChatGPT as a direct tool in class.”* This institutional barrier necessitates a dramatic shift in the AI's role; instead of being a transformative student-facing tool, ChatGPT is relegated to a behind-the-scenes lesson-planning assistant for the teacher. While this still offers benefits in terms of teacher productivity, it limits the students' exposure to AI literacy, potentially leaving them behind in a world increasingly driven by algorithmic competency.

Finally, ethical concerns regarding academic integrity and cognitive dependence remain at the forefront of the Gen Z teacher's professional consciousness. Despite their own comfort with technology, these teachers expressed a cautious and protective stance toward their students. There is a palpable fear that over-reliance on AI could lead to widespread plagiarism and, more critically, a decline in the students' ability to engage in independent critical thinking. To mitigate these risks, educators emphasized that their role has shifted toward becoming proactive moral guides. As one teacher stated, *“We provide guidance from the outset so that students do not become too dependent because GPT is not always accurate.”* This highlights an essential evolution in the teacher's identity: they are no longer just instructors of language, but facilitators of "AI Literacy" and "Evaluative Skepticism." They are the primary actors ensuring that students learn to use these tools not as a replacement for thought, but as a critically-controlled supplement to it.

Thus, these findings underscore that the integration of AI in English language teaching is a high-stakes balancing act. Gen Z teachers are successfully navigating the intersection of technological efficiency and humanistic values, yet

they remain constrained by infrastructure, institutional policy, and the inherent limitations of machine logic. For AI to be truly effective in the classroom, the burden of adaptation cannot rest on the teacher's shoulders alone; it requires a systemic reimagining of educational support, infrastructure justice, and ethical framework development.

## **2. Teachers' Perceptions of the Role and Impact of AI in English Language Teaching**

The research findings illuminate a sophisticated duality in how Generation Z English teachers perceive the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) within the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) landscape. These educators, uniquely characterized as digital natives who came of age alongside the social media revolution, exhibit a perception that is simultaneously optimistic and profoundly critical. The consensus among participants suggests that ChatGPT is not viewed as an existential threat to the profession, but rather as a robust supplementary tool that significantly catalyzes professional efficiency and instructional creativity.

For many Gen Z teachers, ChatGPT serves as a versatile digital collaborator that mitigates the heavy administrative and creative burdens inherent in modern lesson preparation. The data reveal that the platform is extensively utilized as a primary resource for developing innovative teaching materials and brainstorming interactive learning activities that resonate with younger learners. As one participant passionately noted, *“AI helps me develop interesting teaching materials and learning strategies, allowing me to present complex topics more engagingly.”* Another teacher reinforced this sentiment, stating, *“When I’m not sure which activities to use for a specific grammar point, I ask GPT and receive a multitude of diverse ideas.”* These testimonials underscore that AI is perceived as a source of instant inspiration, a digital brain that assists teachers in overcoming creative blocks and diversifying their pedagogical repertoire.

However, beneath this technological enthusiasm lies a steadfast dedication to the humanistic aspects of education. While AI is capable of processing and synthesizing vast amounts of information, every respondent emphasized that it lacks the ontological nature necessary to replace a human educator. The results point to a

strong conviction that language acquisition is a socio-cultural process that goes well beyond simple linguistic competency. It is firmly anchored in character development, the transmission of moral principles, and the subtle nuances of interpersonal relationships. This concept was succinctly summed up by a teacher who said, "*AI cannot teach values and manners like teachers in the classroom.*" For these instructors, the classroom remains a sacred space for emotional labor and ethical guidance areas where algorithms have no footing.

Additionally, participants voiced significant concerns regarding the mechanization of pedagogy. They emphasized that an over-reliance on AI-generated content could damage the spontaneity of classroom interactions and undermine the authenticity of a teacher's distinct instructional style. There is a palpable concern that the soul of the teaching-learning process may be replaced by a standardized, algorithmic tone if educators become mere conduits for AI outputs. As a result, these Gen Z educators are actively striving to maintain a delicate equilibrium. They aim to harness technology's computational capacity to handle the labor of teaching while preserving their own instructional intuition and the human spark that ignites student motivation.

Ultimately, the perception of Gen Z English teachers reflects a balanced techno-humanist approach. They embrace ChatGPT as an efficient assistant for technical and creative tasks, yet they remain the primary architects of the classroom's moral and social climate. This critical adoption ensures that while technology accelerates content delivery, the heart of education, human connection and character development, remains firmly under the stewardship of the teacher.

### **3. Teachers' Strategies and Adaptations in Addressing the Challenges of AI Integration**

The interview results profoundly demonstrate that Gen Z English teachers have not merely been passive recipients of technological change, but rather, they have developed a diverse and sophisticated array of adaptive strategies to navigate the inherent complexities of Artificial Intelligence (AI) integration. In a landscape characterized by rapid digital transformation, these educators are exhibiting high levels of professional agency. The most prevalent approach identified across the data

is the strategic utilization of ChatGPT as a behind-the-scenes assistant. This role is primarily situated within the instructional design and lesson preparation phase, acting as a cognitive scaffold that augments the teacher's creative capacity before they even step into the classroom. This strategic placement is critical, as it allows teachers to leverage AI's immense computational power, its ability to synthesize vast amounts of information, and generate diverse content while maintaining absolute sovereignty and control over the actual live classroom delivery.

One participant provided a detailed description of this workflow, which serves as a blueprint for modern lesson planning: *"I use GPT to compile initial ideas, brainstorm thematic units, and generate potential discussion questions that I might not have thought of on my own. However, I never take the output at face value. I meticulously modify and vet every sentence so they can be implemented in class, often without any direct reliance on technology during the actual lesson."* This testimony underscores a significant broader trend: the emergence of the teacher as a pedagogical filter. In this capacity, Gen Z teachers are not simply outsourcing their work to an algorithm; they are engaged in a rigorous process of manual adjustment. They recalibrate language complexity to ensure it meets the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) of their students, substitute generic examples with local realities, and strip away cultural biases inherent in Western-centric AI training data. By doing so, they ensure that the technology remains a culturally relevant and linguistically appropriate bridge rather than a barrier to learning.

Furthermore, the research data reveals a remarkable level of proactiveness among these digital-native educators. Interestingly, the findings indicate a stark disconnect between teacher needs and institutional provision. Despite a significant and perhaps concerning lack of formal professional development, workshops, or standardized institutional training, these teachers have taken it upon themselves to master the nuances of Generative AI. They engage in constant, independent experimentation, often late into the night, to map out the shifting boundaries of AI potential and its inherent limitations. This trial-and-error approach is not merely a technical exercise; it is a profound reflection of their professional resilience and adaptability. In a rapidly evolving digital landscape where yesterday's tools are

today's relics, Gen Z teachers are developing Prompt Engineering as a new form of digital literacy, learning how to communicate with machines to elicit the most pedagogically sound responses.

This independent mastery, however, reveals a deeper systemic issue. The teachers emphasized that individual initiative, no matter how inspired, is ultimately insufficient without robust systemic backing. The heroic effort of the individual teacher cannot substitute for a cohesive institutional strategy. Participants expressed a critical and urgent need for multi-layered institutional support. This ranges from structured pedagogical training moving beyond "how to click" to "how to teach with" to the provision of enhanced technological infrastructure. The digital divide is not just about who has an internet connection, but who has access to the most powerful versions of these tools. One teacher poignantly reflected on the necessity of high-quality tools, noting, *"The best support the school could give would probably be a funded, unlimited AI Pro account for every teacher."* This highlights a growing desire for equitable access to advanced features such as higher logic reasoning, larger token windows, and data privacy protections that could further optimize their teaching efficiency and safeguard student data.

Beyond the technicalities, these adaptive strategies represent a fundamental transition toward a more integrated techno-pedagogical identity. This identity marks a departure from "the traditional binary of the tech-savvy teacher" versus "the traditionalist." Instead, Gen Z educators are forging a third path. They are becoming "Techno-Humanists" who view technology not as a replacement for human connection, but as a means to free up time for it. By using AI to handle the drudgery of rubric creation, syllabus drafting, and grammar exercise generation, they reclaim the emotional and intellectual space necessary for human-centered instruction. They recognize that while an AI can generate a perfect essay prompt, only a teacher can sense the frustration in a student's eyes or the subtle shift in a classroom's atmosphere.

The findings also suggest that this identity shift involves a high degree of evaluative skepticism. Gen Z teachers, having grown up in an era of fake news and algorithmic bias, are inherently less likely to trust AI blindly. Their adaptive

strategies often include cross-referencing AI outputs with traditional textbooks or peer-reviewed sources. This critical engagement ensures that the curriculum remains academically rigorous and factually accurate, mitigating the risks of AI hallucinations that could lead to student misconceptions.

Moreover, the adaptive strategies identified in this study highlight a shift in the locus of authority in the classroom. Traditionally, the teacher was the primary source of linguistic input. Now, with AI acting as a co-creator, the teacher's authority is derived from their ability to curate, validate, and mediate. They are no longer just "teaching English"; they are teaching "English in a digital world." This involves modeling for students how to use AI as a tool for inquiry rather than a shortcut for cheating. Teachers reported using AI-generated texts as bad examples for students to critique, thereby turning the limitations of the technology into a powerful pedagogical moment that fosters critical thinking.

However, the path to full integration remains fraught with tension. The desire for AI Pro accounts and unlimited access is balanced by a fear of technological dependency. Teachers expressed a recurring concern that if the behind-the-scenes assistant becomes too dominant, the teacher's own creative muscles might atrophy. Therefore, a core component of their adaptive strategy is the intentional disconnection, choosing moments to keep the classroom analog to ensure that the spark of human spontaneity and authentic social interaction remains the heartbeat of the educational experience.

Ultimately, these adaptive practices demonstrate that Generation Z English teachers are at the forefront of a pedagogical revolution. They are the pioneers of a balanced approach that marries the computational efficiency of the 21st century with the timeless humanistic values of character building, empathy, and social growth. For this integration to reach its full potential, the educational system must move from a posture of passive observation to one of active empowerment, recognizing that the best support for teachers is not just better software, but a comprehensive framework that values their role as the indispensable human bridge in the digital age. This study concludes that the future of EFL education lies not in the hands of

the machines, but in the hands of teachers who are brave enough to use them, critical enough to doubt them, and wise enough to know when to turn them off.

## DISCUSSION

The findings of this research provide a rich insight into how Generation Z English teachers in Indonesia navigate the rapidly evolving domain of Artificial Intelligence (AI), particularly ChatGPT. As digital natives, these educators are often assumed to have an innate fluency with technology; however, this research clarifies that AI integration is not a seamless process of technical adoption. Conversely, this is a sophisticated pedagogical process influenced by a fragile balance between individual readiness and systemic constraints. Although Gen Z teachers demonstrate high digital literacy and an open attitude toward innovation, the success of AI in the classroom is ultimately governed by the complex interplay of structural, pedagogical, institutional, and ethical factors. This confirms that AI integration is not just about using tools, but about contextually redefining the instructional ecosystem of manner.

From a technical perspective, the transition toward AI-assisted learning faces significant ground-level obstacles. Unstable internet connectivity and feature limitations on free ChatGPT accounts emerged as major obstacles. This research reinforces global concerns raised by UNESCO (2023), which argues that digital infrastructure inequality remains a critical barrier to equitable education.

In the Indonesian context, this disparity is even more pronounced. Educators in rural areas or within the traditional framework of Islamic boarding schools face a "participation gap" where the theoretical potential of AI as a democratic learning tool is hampered by the reality of poor bandwidth. One teacher honestly stated, *"Usually, because of unstable internet connections, AI cannot be used smoothly, so we revert to conventional methods."* Therefore, this discussion affirms that technological optimism must be balanced with a commitment to infrastructure justice. Sustainable integration cannot rely solely on teacher enthusiasm; it requires institutional intervention to provide equitable access to high-speed internet and premium AI features.

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Nanda Safitri

One of the most profound shifts identified in this study is the evolution of teacher identity from "source of knowledge" to "AI-mediated content curator." The findings indicate that teachers do not treat ChatGPT as an infallible oracle. Conversely, they are actively involved in the validation and modification process. This critical stance is a response to what Wang et al. (2024) presented as the risk of AI hallucinations, where AI generates content that is factually incorrect but linguistically very convincing.

In this research, the teacher acts as a cultural mediator, refining AI outputs that are often too rigid or blind to local context. As highlighted by Koraishi (2023), AI lacks the capacity to understand students' socio-emotional needs and cultural nuances. For example, when ChatGPT generates English dialogue that feels too formal or "Western," teachers intervene to contextualize the language to align with the realities of Indonesian students. This shows that the "human-in-the-loop" model is not just an ethical choice, but a pedagogical necessity.

The mismatch between AI-generated content and student needs reflects deeper conceptual limitations of Large Language Models (LLMs). ChatGPT operates based on statistical probabilities and pattern prediction, not actual semantic understanding. This study aligns with the observations of Hz & Meisuri (2024), who found that although AI responses are linguistically coherent, they often fail to grasp implicit meaning and cultural references.

In language classrooms, where meaning is often negotiated through social context, this limitation becomes a significant pedagogical challenge. This demands a new form of evaluative literacy from teachers. Teachers must be able to distinguish not only whether the grammar is correct, but also whether the pragmatic "spirit" of the response is appropriate for the students' level. This emphasizes that teachers' higher-order thinking skills analysis, evaluation, and synthesis are becoming more vital than ever in an AI-saturated environment.

The research highlights that institutional policies serve as the "gatekeepers" of innovation. In Islamic boarding schools, where gadget policies are strictly regulated to maintain spiritual focus, the direct use of AI in the classroom is nearly non-existent. However, the findings reveal a unique form of pedagogical flexibility.



Even when students cannot access the tool, teachers use AI as a "behind-the-scenes assistant" for lesson planning.

This resilience supports the argument of Holmes et al. (2019) that institutional readiness and policy flexibility are the ultimate determinants of technological success. The adaptive capacity of Gen Z teachers in navigating these structural limitations positioning AI as a preparation tool rather than a student-facing medium, demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of how to work within a system without compromising core educational values.

Ethical concerns regarding plagiarism, student dependence, and the erosion of critical thinking are central to the Gen Z teacher's narrative. Unlike older paradigms where technology was seen as a threat to be banned, these teachers view themselves as "moral guides." They acknowledge that their role is to provide an ethical framework for students to use AI responsibly.

This proactive stance aligns with İnci Kavak et al. (2024), who argue that AI integration must remain under human control and be guided by pedagogical values. Furthermore, concerns highlighted by Japoshvili-Ghvinashvili and Suleman (2023) regarding diminished human interaction and data security risks necessitate a skeptical adoption. For Gen Z teachers, the priority is not just teaching with AI, but teaching AI literacy, ensuring that students remain critical of the machine's output.

Consistently, the participants in this study do not view ChatGPT as a replacement. Instead, they perceive it through what Zhao (2025) calls an augmentative lens a tool that strengthens their professional capacity. This is consistent with Wahyuningtias et al. (2025), who noted that EFL teachers utilize AI to streamline administrative tasks while keeping human interaction at the heart of the learning experience.

The positive impact of AI on teacher creativity is undeniable. Teachers reported that ChatGPT acts as a digital collaborator that helps generate innovative ideas, a finding that resonates with Hazaymeh et al. (2024) regarding AI's potential to increase motivation. However, there is a lingering critical attitude toward over-automation. Teachers fear losing their authentic voice and spontaneity. Sütçü & Sütçü (2023) emphasize that a teacher's belief in their own pedagogical

effectiveness is what ultimately prevents technology from overshadowing their identity.

The adaptive strategies of Gen Z teachers, such as mastering "prompt engineering" independently, reveal an active engagement with technology. They are not passive users but active innovators who refine AI outputs to embed contextual and moral values. This confirms that for Gen Z educators, technology remains subordinate to the affective and character-building dimensions of teaching which Wang (2024) asserts are exclusively human. This shift illustrates a broader transformation in professional identity. The teacher is no longer just an instructor but a techno-humanist who balances technological competence with humanistic values. They are increasingly navigating the tension between digital efficiency and the interpersonal dimensions of education.

Overall, this study confirms that the effective integration of ChatGPT in the Indonesian EFL context requires a multi-layered solution. It is not enough to provide hardware and internet access; there must be institutional support that allows for flexible policies, professional development that focuses on "evaluative literacy," and a formal recognition of the teacher's role as a curator.

## CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the findings and discussion of the study, it can be concluded that Gen Z English teachers face multidimensional challenges in integrating artificial intelligence, particularly ChatGPT, into language learning. These challenges include technical, pedagogical, institutional, and ethical aspects. Limitations in digital infrastructure, the incompatibility of AI output with the level and context of learners, educational institution policies that restrict the use of technology, and concerns about plagiarism and student dependence are the main obstacles to the practice of AI integration in the classroom.

Nevertheless, this study shows that Generation Z English teachers have a positive but critical perception of ChatGPT's role. AI is seen as a supporting tool that helps improve teachers' efficiency, creativity, and professional reflection, especially in the stages of lesson planning and material development. Consistently,

teachers reject the view that AI can replace the role of educators, and emphasize that language learning still requires human interaction, the instilling of values, and pedagogical sensitivity that cannot be replicated by technology.

This study also concludes that Generation Z teachers develop adaptive strategies to respond to these limitations, including positioning ChatGPT as a behind-the-scenes assistant, editing and contextualizing AI output, and independently improving digital literacy. These strategies demonstrate the active role of teachers as curators and mediators of technology, rather than passive users of AI.

Overall, the integration of ChatGPT in English language learning is a complex and contextual pedagogical process that depends not only on technological readiness but also on institutional support, ethical awareness, and teachers' reflective competence. Generation Z English teachers emerge as key actors in bridging the potential of AI with the humanistic values of education, so that technology functions as a support for meaningful learning, not a substitute for the role of educators.

English teachers should continue to improve their AI literacy and digital skills to effectively, critically, and ethically use technology. AI use should be tailored to students' characteristics and learning needs and accompanied by efforts to instill responsibility so students do not become dependent on AI results. Educational institutions should provide support in the form of open AI policies, regular training, ethical guidelines, and adequate technological facilities. Strong institutional support will help teachers optimize AI use, especially in areas with limited digital access.

Further research should expand the focus to include students' perspectives and intergenerational comparisons of teachers' use of AI. Additionally, developing needs-based training models is important so teachers can use AI creatively without abandoning human values. Thus, AI can function as an intelligent partner that strengthens, rather than replaces, the role of teachers in creating meaningful, contextual learning, while also encouraging sustainable innovation and long-term pedagogical development across diverse educational environments.

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