English as Second Language (ESL) Teachers' Voices in The AI Era: A Narrative Inquiry Into Pedagogical Experiences In English Language Education

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Abstract — This study explored ESL teachers' experience and made sense of artificial intelligence (AI) in their everyday teaching using Clandinin's (2022) narrative inquiry framework. Participants shared how AI has gradually become part of their classroom practices. Their stories suggest that while AI opens new possibilities for teaching, it also brings concerns. Several participants explained that AI enabled them to tailor lessons to different learner needs and to create materials that are more engaging and motivating. Increased participation and confidence were frequently mentioned outcomes, particularly when lessons became more interactive and visually rich. However, these benefits came with challenges. Problems such as unstable internet connections, limited access to technology, overdependence on AI, and doubts about the accuracy and originality of AI-generated content were observed. To manage these issues, they described carefully reviewing outputs, setting clear rules for AI use, and designing tasks that still required student interaction, discussion, and critical thinking. Across the narratives, a shared belief emerged: AI should support teaching, not replace professional judgment. From the teachers' stories, six key themes emerged: the need for guided use of AI, changing teacher attitudes, emerging risks, improved planning and assessment, AI as a teaching partner, and greater learner agency. The study proposes the Jabillo Framework as a guide for responsible and ethical AI integration in ESL education. The framework may inform teacher training, policy development, and monitoring efforts, while future studies are encouraged to examine students' perspectives and experiences with AI.

Keywords: AI integration, artificial intelligence, Jabillo's Framework, pedagogical impact

I. INTRODUCTION

The proponents of this study situate its context within the growing role of AI-powered tools in enhancing engagement and motivation in ESL classrooms. In the current AI-driven era, artificial intelligence is reshaping education by offering innovative tools that support both teaching and learning. De Guzman, Tenedero, Gapas, and Deabanico (2024) note that advancements in AI and machine learning have transformed language education through the use of communicative chatbots, automated writing feedback, and immersive virtual and augmented reality environments. When combined with high-quality instructional materials, these tools can further strengthen language learning outcomes (Lee & Koh, 2020).

Despite these advantages, integrating AI into English classrooms raises concerns about plagiarism, overreliance on technology, and the production of inauthentic student outputs. Many teachers also struggle with limited training and experience in using AI effectively, which leads to hesitation and uncertainty about its adoption. Similar challenges were observed in the present research context, as informal discussions with colleagues during a division event revealed persistent difficulties in teaching writing skills.

These conditions highlight the need for a balanced approach that leverages AI support while preserving core language competencies. As AI continues to influence education, it is imperative to prepare students to use these tools responsibly and ethically. This idea was emphasized by Dr. Bernardo “Aido” N. Sepeda, Executive Director of the National Research Council of the Philippines, who stressed that students must learn to use AI properly, especially as real-world contexts no longer impose rigid academic constraints.

In response to these gaps, this paper examines the role of AI in ESL instruction, focusing on its perceived benefits and challenges. It aims to provide ESL teachers with practical insights into integrating AI in English education and to contribute to ongoing discussions on the future of AI in language teaching and learning.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

This study aimed to explore the impact of artificial intelligence in the teaching of English as a second language within the Division of Pagadian City. Specifically, this study sought to address the following key questions:

- How do the co-participants describe their experiences utilizing AI-powered tools in teaching English as a second language?
- What significant meanings can be formulated from the experiences shared by the co-participants?
- What themes emerged from the formulated meanings of the co-participants?
- What output may be recommended to enhance the effective use of AI-powered tools in teaching and learning English as a second language?

II. METHODOLOGY

This study used qualitative methods, specifically the narrative inquiry approach articulated by Clandinin (2022), which emphasizes relational and contextual meaning-making in exploring lived experiences. It also focused on interviewing a person, collecting information from stories, reporting experiences, and interpreting those experiences for the individual. The data collection process of this study began with a semi-structured interview to systematically elicit teachers' voices in integrating AI into English teaching in the context of ESL, by exploring the "lived stories" of the co-participants.

2.1 Data Generation and Selection of Co-Participants

The selection of participants was done through purposive sampling based on pre-determined criteria. The chosen district must meet specific qualifications and consist of small to large national

high schools, as defined in DepEd Memo No. 043, series of 2017, also known as the 2017 Brigada Eskwela Implementing Guidelines. Based on these criteria, City Central and West districts were selected from five options. City Central has five schools with 20 English teachers, while City West has five schools with 16 English teachers. To select ten participants, the study focused on the ten Grade 10 English teachers with at least three years of experience, especially in AI-integrated teaching. It also included teachers who allowed students to use AI-powered tools for learning English. Additionally, Grade 10 teachers were considered because their students frequently use AI for essay writing and rely on AI more than younger learners.

After selecting participants, permission was obtained from the appropriate authorities. The data required for the study were gathered through face-to-face interviews, each lasting approximately 30 to 60 minutes. Ethical consideration was strictly observed, especially in recording the different stories of the co-participants. The collected data were transcribed verbatim for analysis.

The next step was transcribing the data gathered. It included converting audio recordings into text and coding and tabulating to identify key themes and patterns. Data were appropriately organized, interpreted, and transcribed. To ensure reliability, the research followed a structured approach with clear documentation, resulting in consistent, repeatable data collection and analysis. To enhance credibility, member checking was conducted, allowing participants to review a summary of the initial findings to validate their accuracy and ensure their perspectives are correctly represented.

a. Data Analysis

This study adopted Clandinin's (2022) narrative inquiry approach, which emphasizes relational and contextual meaning-making. The process began by engaging participants and composing field texts, in which stories were gathered through structured interviews designed to elicit rich, experience-based narratives (Clandinin, 2022). The researcher then attended to the three-dimensional inquiry. Next, narratives were re-storied, moving from field texts to research

texts while preserving participants' voices and highlighting significant meanings such as turning points, values, and identity shifts (Kutsyuruba & Stasel, 2023). Finally, the process involved composing research texts and presenting rich, descriptive narratives supported by direct quotes and interpretive commentary, while ensuring ethical considerations, such as confidentiality and relational responsibility, are maintained throughout (Clandinin, 2023).

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

3. *1 Research Question 1: How do the co-participants describe their experiences utilizing AI-powered tools in teaching English as a second language?*

Corollary Question 1 sought to understand how co-participants described their experiences with AI-powered tools in ESL instruction. During this stage, the researcher highlighted and documented the significant experiences shared by the ten participants, particularly those that described the integration of AI-powered tools into their English as a Second Language (ESL) teaching practices. These highlighted portions served as the foundation for identifying significant experiences and recurring ideas across the narratives.

The story narrated by participant 10 highlighted the importance of AI as a teaching support, especially for simplifying difficult lessons and building a teacher's confidence in grammar and explanation, making them more understandable for his students, which led to better engagement in class. His story also revealed the risk of over-reliance. His suggestion for schools to hold seminars on proper AI use highlighted the need for students and teachers to understand both the benefits and the risks.

In addition, the collective narratives of 10 ESL teachers revealed a transformative shift in pedagogy, in which AI-powered tools emerged as both a catalyst for innovation and a challenge to traditional teaching practices. The ten narratives showed that AI-powered tools have become a valuable support system for ESL teachers, enabling faster lesson planning, simplifying

complex topics, and enabling differentiated instruction. Tools like ChatGPT, Copilot, Grammarly, Canva, and Gamma helped teachers create engaging materials, design assessments, and prepare interactive activities. Participant 1's story, "From Curiosity to Catalyst," reflects this transformation. AI allowed her to break down difficult lessons and tailor tasks for diverse learners, reducing preparation time and improving classroom interaction.

Teachers also observed positive effects on students. AI-supported lessons encouraged active participation, improved writing and reading skills, and boosted confidence, especially among struggling learners. Personalized activities and visually appealing materials made classes more engaging and motivated students to take ownership of their learning. However, challenges emerged across narratives. poor internet connectivity, unequal access to devices, over-reliance on AI, and concerns about accuracy and originality. Teachers worried that excessive dependence could hinder creativity and critical thinking. Issues in assessment fairness and plagiarism were also noted.

To address these, teachers adopted strategies such as validating AI outputs, setting classroom rules, encouraging group work, and conducting in-class tasks to monitor authenticity. Many recommended school-level guidelines, training sessions, and better infrastructure to ensure responsible use. Overall, the synthesis shows that AI is most effective when treated as a partner, not a replacement, balancing innovation with human judgment to enhance teaching and learning.

3.2 Research Question 2: What significant meanings can be formulated from the experiences shared by the co-participants?

From the significant statements shared by the co-participants, one of the first significant meanings emerged is the movement from initial curiosity to transformation. This meaning reflects how participants began their journey with curiosity, which gradually deepened into experiences that reshaped their perspectives, attitudes, and practices. From the participants' stories, AI as an empowering teaching partner was also noted. Teachers described how AI supported them in clarifying lessons, offering varied strategies, and simplifying daily tasks. It was perceived as a

consultant who builds confidence, brings creativity, and enhances autonomy in instructional practices. It also supports lesson planning, differentiation and assessment, The co-participants' shared experiences highlighted the essential support AI provides in making lesson planning more efficient, effective, and convenient.

Moreover, the participants shared that AI integration advances learner agency and engagement. Through personalized feedback, adaptive resources, and interactive tools, AI encourages learners to become more active co-participants in class while giving them greater control over their pace and learning style.

While AI offers many benefits to teachers, challenges and risks in ai-mediated ESL instruction was also evident in the narratives of the co-participants, ranging from overreliance on AI tools to concerns about ethical and academic integrity, internet connectivity, and gaps in training and professional development. With this, co-participants suggested effective and responsible use of AI in ESL classrooms.

Participants emphasized that the use of AI-powered tools should be regulated and applied in moderation. They also highlighted that teacher and student training would help maximize the benefits of these tools in enhancing ESL teaching and learning while reducing potential drawbacks.

3.3 Research Question 3: What themes emerged from the formulated meanings?

From the narratives of 10 co-participants in Pagadian City Division regarding AI integration in ESL classrooms, this study identified six main themes: evolving teacher attitudes, AI as a transformative teaching partner, AI-enhanced lesson planning,

differentiation and assessment, increased learner agency and engagement, challenges and risks in AI-mediated education, and the strategic need for guided AI integration.

3. 4 Research Question 4: What output may be recommended to enhance the effective use of AI-powered tools in teaching and learning English as a second language?

This study identified key themes from co-participants' experiences, which led to the development of Jabillo's Framework, a structured model for integrating AI-powered tools in ESL teaching and learning.

Jabillo's Framework for AI Integration in ESL Education

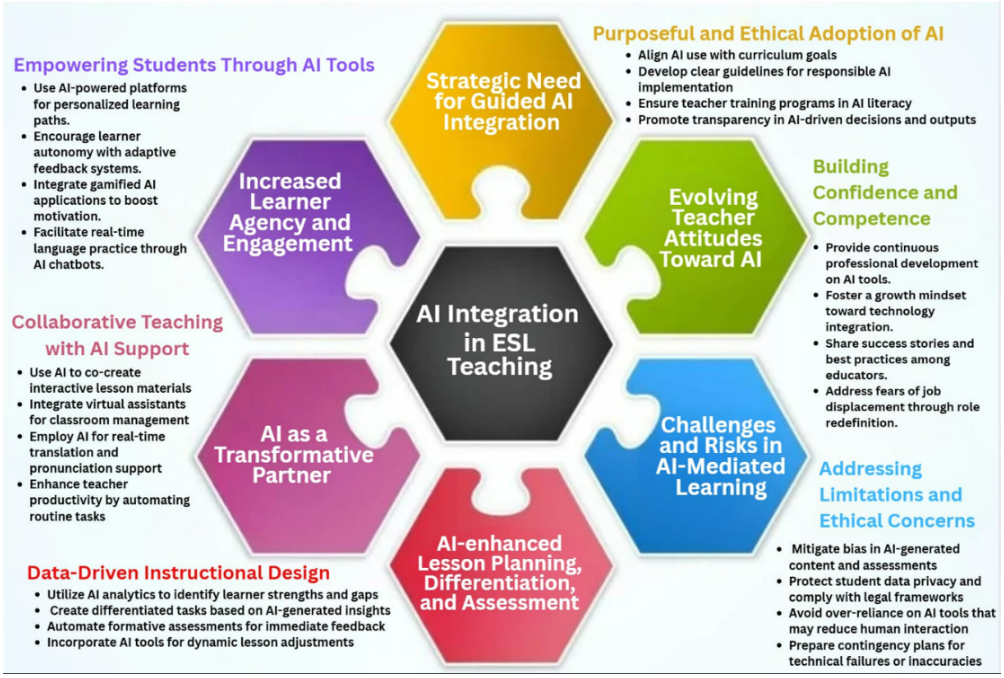

FIGURE 1
JABILLO'S FRAMEWORK FOR AI INTEGRATION IN ESL EDUCATION

This figure presents the components and relationships involved in integrating AI-powered tools into ESL teaching. The framework integrates study findings with insights from existing literature, emphasizing the need for clear policies, ethical practices, and teacher training to fully harness the potential of AI-powered tools while minimizing their limitations.

This framework aligns with UNESCO's human-centered principles for AI in education, which emphasize that AI should strengthen human capacities and support sustainable development, ensure equitable and inclusive access, remain explainable and safe, and be guided by human accountability (UNESCO, 2019; 2022a; 2022b; 2023b). These principles are reflected in the ethical and pedagogical dimensions of the framework, particularly in promoting responsible AI use and supporting teachers and students through informed integration. Furthermore, the framework is grounded in the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) model, which highlights the importance of balancing technology, pedagogy, and content knowledge in effective teaching. It also draws from Cognitive Load Theory (CLT), recognizing the need to manage mental effort when using AI tools to enhance learning without overwhelming students.

The integration of AI in ESL education lies at the center of the framework, represented by the inner hexagon. At the same time, six interconnected principles surround it like puzzle pieces, emphasizing that each is essential for successful implementation. These components collectively ensure that AI is adopted in a purposeful, ethical, and effective manner. The Strategic Need for Guided AI Integration is critical because it aligns AI use with curriculum goals and establishes clear guidelines for responsible implementation. Evolving Teacher Attitudes Toward AI is equally important, as teachers' confidence and openness strongly influence the success of technology adoption.

Implementing Guidelines for Teachers

A. Lesson Planning

1. Start with AI Analytics. Use AI-powered tools to analyze student performance data and identify strengths, gaps, and preferred learning styles.

2. Align with Curriculum Goals. Ensure AI-generated suggestions fit your learning objectives and standards.
3. Co-create Materials with AI. Use AI to generate interactive content (e.g., dialogues, quizzes) but review and adapt them for accuracy and cultural relevance.
4. Plan for Flexibility. Incorporate AI tools that allow real-time adjustments based on student progress.

B. Differentiated Tasks

1. Group Learners by Data Insights. Use AI analytics to form groups or assign tasks based on proficiency levels.
2. Design Tiered Activities. Create tasks for slow, average, and fast learners using AI recommendations.
3. Monitor Engagement. Track participation through AI dashboards and adjust tasks as needed.

C. Assessment

1. Use AI for Formative Feedback. Implement AI tools for instant feedback on grammar, pronunciation, and writing.
2. Combine AI and Teacher Judgment. Validate AI-generated scores and comments to ensure fairness.
3. Prepare Backup Plans. Have manual assessment options ready in case of technical issues.

General Guidelines for Students

Allowed

1. Use AI tools for practice, feedback, and research under teacher supervision.
2. Engage with AI chatbots for language drills and pronunciation exercises.
3. Apply AI suggestions for improving writing and speaking skills.

Not Allowed

1. Submitting AI-generated work as original without teacher approval.
2. Using AI for cheating or bypassing learning tasks.
3. Sharing personal data with AI tools without consent.

IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

4.1 Conclusion

The significant meanings drawn from the participants' testimonies revealed the dichotomous nature of AI integration in ESL education. While most participants viewed AI-powered tools as transformative partners that enhance learner agency and engagement, they also recognized potential challenges and risks, particularly concerns about maintaining authenticity in learning. This result implies that successful AI integration requires a balanced approach, leveraging its benefits while implementing safeguards to address ethical and pedagogical limitations.

The emergence of these six themes implies that successful AI integration in ESL education requires a holistic approach that addresses both technical and pedagogical dimensions. It is not enough to introduce AI tools; schools must provide strategic planning, teacher training, risk management, and learner-centered practices to ensure that AI enhances rather than disrupts authentic language learning. AI is transformative but needs to be regulated. Thus, Jabillo's framework, built on six interconnected core principles, provides a holistic guide for implementing

AI in ESL education ethically and effectively. It also ensures that technology complements human expertise, promotes equity, and enhances both teaching and learning experiences.

4. 2 Recommendation

Jabillo's Framework is recommended as a foundation for designing and conducting training and workshops on prompt engineering and digital literacy. Schools' Policymakers and program implementers may establish clear guidelines and regulations in the utilization of AI-powered tools to prevent misuse, ensure academic honesty, and encourage critical thinking. Further investigations are recommended to examine its impact from the learners' perspective, as understanding their experiences and perceptions is essential for developing learner-centered and ethically sound AI applications.

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