

Educational Administrators versus Teachers' Perspectives on the Use of AI in Language Learning: A Qualitative Study

Nguyen Anh Duc Dao^{1*}, Thanh-My Nguyen², Thanh Tan Tran³, Anh Phan⁴

¹ International University – Vietnam National University – Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

² Independent researcher, Vietnam

³ Ho Chi Minh City Open University, Vietnam

⁴ Ho Chi Minh University of Banking, Vietnam

*Corresponding author's email: dnaduc@hcmiu.edu.vn

*  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6349-8190>

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ABSTRACT

Keywords: appropriate use of AI, teachers' perceptions, teachers' expectations towards administrators, administrators' responses to teachers' expectations

Teachers' perceptions of AI use in language learning are mixed while policies and regulations cannot keep up with the increasing application of this technology in education. This study aims to explore L2 teachers' conceptualization of learners' appropriate use of AI tools, their expectations of the role of administrators in response to this technology trend, and administrators' response to such perceptions and expectations. A multi-method qualitative research design was employed. First, two focus group interviews were conducted with English language teachers at higher education institutions in Vietnam. Afterwards, four heads of school and program directors participated in semi-structured interviews where they shared their views of the trend and responded to the teachers' expectations. Key results from the study include specific instances in which students should be allowed to use AI both in class activities and homework assignments, for example brainstorming and group work activities and self-improvement of language skills. The findings also reveal that only a few of teachers' expectations have been addressed due to obstacles at the organizational level. Two important implications made by the study are the demands for updated and transparent policies and regular and open communication between educators and managers.

Introduction

Teachers' perspectives on AI's use in language learning are diverse, with enthusiasm for its benefits and apprehensions about its impact on teaching and learning dynamics. L2 educators recognize that the utilization of AI technologies in language acquisition by learners has become prevalent. They acknowledge the potential of AI tools to engage and assist learners, hence improving teaching and learning experiences, particularly in higher education (Espartinez, 2024). Therefore, rather than prohibiting the utilization of these innovative technologies, many

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institutions have initiated the promotion of ethical methods for their application in the context of education (Chan, 2023; Funa & Gabay, 2025; UNESCO, 2021).

Nonetheless, academic integrity is a crucial concern in the use of AI in education. OpenAI, the creator of ChatGPT, discontinued its plagiarism detection in July 2023 due to low accuracy rates, resulting in “far more dangers than benefits” for educators (Epstein-Gross, 2023, July 26). Turnitin, a widely utilized commercial system in academia, acknowledges that its ‘AI writing detection model may not consistently yield accurate results, thus it should not serve as the exclusive basis for punitive measures against a student’ (Turnitin, 2024).

In the language classroom, the distinction between “acceptable use” and “inappropriate use” of AI in learning remains contentious. This significant aspect may influence not only individuals directly engaged in the teaching and learning process but also those stakeholders responsible for evaluation and policy formulation. Funa and Gabay’s (2025) meta-synthesis of research on guidelines and recommendations on AI use in teaching and learning published from 2020 to 2024 reveals that studies have focused on policies and guidelines, implementation strategies and constraints of AI use in teaching and learning, but little discussion has been made on more practical considerations such as categorizing applications and conceptualizing suitable usage. Furthermore, while Nguyen (2023) admitted that language teachers and administrators/policy makers have varied or even opposing views of AI use in language education, there is a paucity of research on administrators' responses to teachers' apprehensions about the legitimacy of student AI usage and little is known about the underlying causes of such responses.

Literature review

Artificial intelligence (AI) has been studied since the 1950s, with early explorations of its mathematical possibilities by Turing (1950). Advancements have led to the development of chatbots like Eliza, OpenAI's GPT, and DeepSeek. Within the context of education, the rapid proliferation of generative AI has generated substantial debate regarding its ethical, pedagogical, and operational implications. In this section, the Teacher Agency theory will be analysed as the theoretical framework underlying the present study and then existing literature on AI use in language education will be reviewed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the current state of the field.

Teacher Agency Theory

Integrating AI in education provides both opportunities and challenges for teacher agency. According to UNESCO and the International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030 (2024), AI tools can help with delivering personalised learning experiences, offering real-time feedback, and alleviating administrative burdens, thereby potentially allowing for more meaningful teacher-student interactions. This can allow teachers to address varied student needs (Suello & Alda, 2024). However, Kennedy and Castek (2025) express a concern that the swift advancement of AI frequently surpasses the ability of educational systems to establish appropriate policies and instruction. This may often result in a conflict between educators' professional judgement and pressures from policy makers. Teachers are frequently regarded as "objects of discourse" instead of active contributors in making decisions concerning AI integration. This top-down approach may reduce teacher autonomy and agency, resulting in a discrepancy between the intended application of AI and the real needs of the classroom, so potentially undermining professional judgement.

Teacher Agency Theory (Priestley et al., 2015) offers a comprehensive framework for studying the perception and adoption of AI tools in higher education, specifically within the context of English language teaching and learning. This theory examines how teachers exercise professional judgement and make decisions in specific circumstances. The ecological approach claims that teacher agency is not merely an individual capacity, but an emerging phenomenon resulting from the interaction of individual efforts, available resources, and contextual or structural elements (Biesta & Tedder, 2007). This approach emphasizes that agency is a temporal process, consistently linking past experiences to present situations and directing attention towards future goals. Priestley et al. (2015) describe agency as consisting of three interconnected dimensions: "iterational" (past experiences and beliefs), practical-evaluative (current constraints and affordances), and projective (future goals and aspirations). This view is essential for analysing how teachers interpret institutional AI policies, modify instructional practices, and establish their positions amid broader technological transitions (Chisholm et al., 2019; Cong-Lem, 2021).

The current study will employ the Teacher Agency theory, focussing on its ecological aspects and the interaction of personal and contextual factors, to examine L2 teachers' perceptions of AI usage, their expectations of educational administrators, and the administrators' responses to these perceptions and expectations. This framework facilitates an examination of the main reasons for administrators' responses by analysing the wider socio-political and institutional processes that influence both teacher and administrator agency in the era of AI.

Appropriate Uses of AI

AI application is generally considered acceptable when it enhances the learning process, supports student development, and complements rather than replaces traditional teaching methods (Dinçer & Bal, 2024). AI tools such as Intelligent Tutoring Systems and adaptive platforms offer personalized learning experiences, aligning with constructivist pedagogies and Second Language Acquisition (SLA) principles (Jan et al., 2025; Ketamo, 2018). Chatbots and AI writing tools, for example, promote language production in meaningful contexts, aiding learners in vocabulary acquisition, brainstorming, and real-time error correction (Bozkurt et al., 2023; Chen et al., 2020). Furthermore, these tools support the Noticing Hypothesis by drawing learners' attention to linguistic gaps and errors, fostering interlanguage development (Schmidt, 1990). Studies in Southeast Asia, particularly in Vietnam, affirm these benefits. AI chatbots have been effectively used to simulate real-life communication scenarios in alignment with CLT principles (Nguyen, 2023; Hua et al., 2024). Teachers in other settings also value AI for out-of-class self-study, particularly vocabulary building and grammatical correction, which enhance learner autonomy (Limna et al., 2023; Moqbel & Al-Kadi, 2023).

Inappropriate Uses of AI

Despite its potential, AI can be misused, particularly when students rely on it to generate entire essays or complete assignments. Such practices undermine student engagement and hinder the development of higher-order thinking skills (Cong-Lem et al., 2024; Kasneci et al., 2023). They may risk becoming passive recipients of information, impeding the development of analytical skills and independent thinking (Phuong et al., 2024). This reliance complicates educators' ability to assess learning accurately and provide meaningful feedback (Grassini, 2023). Meanwhile, educators have expressed concern about the loss of contextual and cultural relevance in AI-generated texts, particularly in Southeast Asian contexts (Nguyen, 2023; Hua et al., 2024). From the perspective of Teacher Agency Theory, these challenges reflect constraints in the practical-evaluative dimension of agency, as teachers struggle to maintain pedagogical integrity amid technological disruption.

Furthermore, the concept of “AI-giarism” (Chan, 2024) highlights issues of academic integrity when AI-generated content is submitted without declaration. Detection tools like Turnitin and OpenAI’s classifiers have proven unreliable (Turnitin, 2024; Epstein-Gross, 2023), complicating efforts to enforce academic standards. Allowing AI in summative assessment may distort evaluation of language skills (Grassini, 2023). Thus, clear guidelines and policies are necessary to prevent AI misuse and uphold educational integrity (Chan, 2023; Phuong et al., 2024).

Teachers' Expectations of Administrators' Roles

Teachers expect institutional leaders to provide clear guidelines, ethical frameworks, and professional development opportunities to support effective AI integration (Dinçer & Bal, 2024; Chan, 2023). These expectations align with the projective dimension of teacher agency, as educators envision responsible and sustainable pedagogical practices with AI. Teachers also expect professional development opportunities to help them integrate AI effectively into their teaching. Training programs should address both technical and ethical aspects of AI use, enabling teachers to guide students appropriately (Cong-Lem et al., 2024; Echave et al., 2024; Grassini, 2023; Phuong et al., 2024; UNESCO, 2021). Teachers need to understand how to use AI responsibly and guide students in doing the same (Chan, 2023). Additionally, support in adapting teaching methods and assessment strategies in response to AI is crucial (Grassini, 2023). In addition, teachers call for participatory governance, seeking involvement in selecting and evaluating AI tools. This collaborative approach is essential for ensuring that institutional innovations remain grounded in classroom realities (Chisholm et al., 2019). Given AI’s capabilities, teachers look to administrators to support the re-evaluation of assessments, emphasizing critical thinking over rote information gathering (Grassini, 2023; Cong-Lem et al., 2024). Institutional support for feedback mechanisms and data-driven evaluation of AI implementation is also crucial (Chan, 2023).

Educational Administrators' Responses to the Call of Teachers

Educational administrators are beginning to respond to teachers’ concerns, though policy development remains inconsistent. In the wake of generative AI’s release, institutional responses have ranged from prohibition to integration, gradually shifting toward more balanced policies (An et al., 2025). However, many institutions still lack comprehensive AI guidelines. Teachers report the absence of clear directives on academic integrity and AI use in assessments (Barrett & Pack, 2023; Wolak & Keffer, 2023). In Vietnam, research indicates a disconnect between administrators’ optimistic stance on AI and teachers’ more cautious perspectives (Nguyen, 2023). While both groups recognize AI’s growing role, they differ in defining ethical usage, especially regarding student authorship. Though national strategies like Decision No. 127/QĐ-TTg (Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2021) support digital innovation, specific educational policies on AI remain limited. Teachers—especially early- and mid-career professionals—express concerns about inadequate training, reduced interaction, and the need for human-centric learning (Hua et al., 2024).

In summary, while the integration of AI in language learning offers transformative possibilities aligned with SLA theory, it also demands robust institutional support. Teachers seek clear policies, ethical guidance, assessment reform, and professional development. Administrators are beginning to respond, but the pace and depth of action must increase to ensure that AI enhances rather than disrupts the teaching and learning ecosystem.

Research Questions

In this context, amidst the excitement regarding the potential of AI in education, particularly in language teaching and learning, and in light of policies and regulations lagging behind this trend, it is beneficial to engage both educators and educational administrators in a dialogue to exchange their perspectives and then achieve consensus on what constitutes legitimate usage by learners. This study therefore seeks to address the following research questions:

1. What do L2 teachers perceive as learners' appropriate use of AI in language learning?
2. What are L2 teachers' expectations of the role of educational administrators in response to this technology trend?
3. How do educational administrators respond to teachers' conceptualizations of appropriate use of AI and expectations?

Methods

Pedagogical Setting & Participants

Higher education was chosen as the research context because learning assessments at this level can be conducted through multiple formats, including portfolios, written assignments, and research projects, which may trigger students' interest in AI technology support. The English language bachelor's degree program was selected to ensure that the instructor and administrator participants considered similar curricula, target students, and learning outcomes while exchanging their perspectives, which could help enhance the validity of the study.

The study employed a purposive sample technique to recruit potential participants from a pool of instructors in the English language bachelor's program at various tertiary institutions in Vietnam. These subjects come from different universities (ten in the focus groups and four in the interviews), and from either public or private schools, which ensures diversity in the nature of the organizations. They should hold at least a master's degree and have a minimum of two years of experience working at the tertiary level to understand the institution's policies and regulations. Two focus groups were established, each comprising six participants. Table 1 presents a summary of their teaching positions, experience, and qualifications.

Table 1*Focus groups - Demographic information*

FG	Code	Gender	Years of experience	Highest qualification	Teaching assignment	Type of institution
1	T1	Female	4	Doctorate	Skills; Linguistics; Research	Public
	T2	Female	10	Doctorate	Skills; Linguistics; Research	Private
	T3	Female	13	Master's	Linguistics	Public
	T4	Female	20	Master's	Linguistics	Public
	T5	Female	11	Master's	ELT	Private
	T6	Female	13	Master's	Linguistics, Translation	Public
2	T7	Male	10	Master's	Skills; Research; Culture & Literature, Translation	Public
	T8	Male	9	Master's	Reading; Business English	Public
	T9	Female	20	Doctorate	Skills, ELT	Public
	T10	Male	17	Master's	Skills	Public
	T11	Female	8	Master's	Skills	Public
	T12	Female	9	Master's	Skills; ESP	Public

Invitations were then sent to the Faculty Deans and Program Directors of the bachelor's degree program in the English language at various universities in Ho Chi Minh City. Nevertheless, only four of them agreed to participate in the semi-structured interviews. Their demographic data is presented in table 2.

Table 2*Semi-structured interviews - Demographic information*

Code	Gender	Years of experience in management	Highest qualification	Type of institution
A1	Female	30	Doctorate	Private
A2	Male	7	Doctorate	Private
A3	Female	27	Master's	Public
A4	Female	19	Doctorate	Public

Design of the Study

The study used a multi-method qualitative design. In the first phase, 12 English language instructors from various higher education institutions in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam,

participated in two focus groups to discuss the appropriate use of AI by English language major students and the roles administrators should play in handling AI-related issues. Focus groups were selected as they “will likely yield the best information, when interviewees are similar and cooperative with each other, when time to collect information is limited” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p.261). In the last phase, four semi-structured interviews were conducted with school heads and program directors, who were informed of the instructors' views and concerns about the status quo of institutions in the trend. This type of interview, while requiring the researchers to employ a predetermined guide, still allowed “the freedom to digress and probe for more information and even follow the interviewee’s lead where appropriate” (Mackey & Gass, 2022, p.312).

Data Collection & Analysis

As regard the procedure of data collection, the research team members first reached out to colleagues within their networks to invite their participation in the study. Following the call, 13 instructors expressed their interest in joining the study. However, one of them teaches non-English major students; hence, he was excluded from the list. The remaining 12 were requested to complete an availability form to assist the research team in scheduling the two focus groups. Following the arrangement of the two group interviews, a consent form was distributed to the participants through Google Forms to obtain their consent and gather their demographic information. They were also informed of the purpose of the study and use of data upon signing the form. The interviews were held and recorded via Zoom in Vietnamese to facilitate comfortable and effective communication among the instructors. They were encouraged to express any disagreement but reminded to wait until a speaker had finished his/her turn. Each discussion lasted approximately 75 minutes.

To collect data from the two focus groups, a discussion guide was created based on Hennink's (2014) structure, consisting of six sections as outlined in table 3. The key topics discussed in the focus groups were developed based on the first two research questions.

Table 3

Focus group discussion guide

Section	Purpose	No of items
Introduction	Welcoming the participants Introducing the topic Giving instructions	
An opening question	Breaking the ice Building rapport	1
Transition questions	Leading to the main topics	2
Key topics	Exploring participants’ views • Acceptable use in class • Acceptable use outside class • Inacceptable use • Concerns in decision-making • Expectations of admins • Suggested policy	6
Closing question	Summarizing and ending the interviews	1

In the second phase, the research team members communicated with the Deans and Program Directors at multiple institutions using email, messaging applications, or telephone. While seven administrators responded, only four of them returned a signed consent form and suggested a time for the meeting. All four interviews were conducted in Vietnamese and audio recorded. They lasted from 60 to 75 minutes.

The instrument used in the semi-structured interviews was an interview guide developed from the insights gathered from the focus groups. Table 4 delineates the concepts incorporated in the guide and the rationale for their inclusion.

Table 4

Themes included in interview guide

Theme	Purpose
Teachers' views of appropriate use of AI in class	Exploring administrators' reactions towards teachers' identification of appropriate use of AI in class
Teachers' views of appropriate use of AI outside class	Exploring administrators' reactions towards teachers' identification of appropriate use of AI outside class
Teachers' views of inappropriate use of AI	Exploring administrators' reactions towards teachers' identification of inappropriate use of AI
Teachers' concerns regarding decision making	Exploring administrators' reactions towards teachers' concerns about decision making regarding violations by students
Teachers' expectations of administrators	Exploring administrators' reactions towards teachers' expectations of administrators

Thematic analysis was utilised in both phases, encompassing familiarisation with the data, coding, theme identification, and theme refinement prior to reporting. Although the conversations were conducted in Vietnamese, all the themes, codes and findings were recorded in English to facilitate the reporting task. The data gathered from each focus group interview was analysed, and themes were identified inductively. Examples of these include "AI use in class", "AI use outside class" as main themes, and "planning", "pair/group work", "self-improvement of language skills", and "tasks involving critical thinking" as subthemes. A matrix was employed to document emerging themes from each session, after which the findings from two groups were compared, contrasted, and juxtaposed to enrich subsequent discussions. The responses from the four participants in the semi-structured interviews were organised in a table, aligned with the sequence of the interview prompts. Subsequently, similarities and variations in the perspectives were identified to facilitate understanding and interpretation.

To establish the validity and reliability of the study, the research team divided themselves into two pairs, each in charge of one focus group where one member led the discussion while the other listened and took notes of important discussion points. Consensus coding was employed when the members in each pair worked individually on coding and identifying themes, recording the findings in the matrix, then discussing to make modifications, with close attention paid to the Vietnamese-English translation of the codes, themes and quotes from participants' responses. After that, the two pairs exchanged and cross-checked the analysis done by the other pair, further refining the findings. Data from the four interviews was coded and the findings

were added to the table mentioned above by the interviewers themselves. However, all the other members listened to the recordings and gave feedback on the report of the analysis. It is an advantage for the research team that the four members have experience working as both language teachers and administrators, allowing thorough understanding and insightful interpretation of the data.

Findings and discussion

L2 Teachers' Perceptions towards Learners' Appropriate Use of AI in Language Learning

Learners' appropriate use of AI in language learning with in-class and out-of-class tasks

The findings revealed how L2 teachers define the "appropriate use of AI" in language learning, highlighting differences between in-class and outside-class contexts. Additionally, the participants were particularly challenged by the blurred boundaries between acceptable and inappropriate use of AI. These debates are further complicated when teachers address academic violations related to AI misuse

Regarding appropriate in-class use of AI, teachers expressed mixed views about its role in activities such as brainstorming and group work. Supporters considered it a valuable tool for generating and refining ideas. For example, T8 observed that her students used AI 'to solve case studies for additional answers in Business English.' This reflects an ecological perspective, which suggests that teacher agency arises from the interplay between individual intentions, available resources, and specific situational factors (Biesta & Tedder, 2007). In the same vein, Mhlanga (2023) suggested that teachers should use these technology platforms in ways that enhance their teaching methods and promote students' involvement in analytical and critical thinking. Another highlight was from T10 who suggested AI help "improve students' initial ideas for additional support in their in-class writing tasks." These findings align with Cox and Tzoc (2023) and Rasul et al. (2023), who found AI enhances brainstorming and early-stage organization of ideas.

Outside the classroom, teachers were more accepting, viewing AI as a useful tool for self-study tasks like vocabulary building, grammar correction, and quick feedback. Similarly, Moqbel and Al-Kadi (2023) highlighted AI's value for reinforcing knowledge during self-study, while Limna et al. (2023) emphasized its role in providing quick resources.

In the interview, T3 shared, "AI is useful for assisting with simple language tasks, but students still need to practice thinking through problems themselves" (T3). As for T6, she mentioned her acceptance of learning language use of ChatGPT in out-of-class translation tasks. She recommended the students to use ChatGPT to complete translation tasks. However, they have to "finish these tasks by themselves first and compare with the AI-generated products for language use" (T6).

This study highlights new values regarding learners' appropriate use of AI, particularly in out-of-class contexts, which remain underexplored. Teachers generally supported students using AI for language tasks, provided it promotes critical thinking rather than passive dependence. Such emphasis on cultivating students' self-monitoring, as explained by Bandura (2006), corresponds with socio-cognitive theory dimensions of self-regulation and intentionality. Besides, while teachers accepted the use of AI for translation, they emphasized the need for students to compare and evaluate the AI-generated content instead of copying it directly. These findings suggest a shift toward encouraging responsible and reflective AI use, where students are expected to actively engage with content and use AI as a support tool, not a substitute.

Learners' unaccepted use of AI

Alongside recognizing the potential benefits of AI, teachers also identified clear situations where its use should be restricted. Interview findings revealed opposition to AI use in certain tasks due to concerns about alignment between AI-generated outcomes and the curriculum's intended learning objectives (T1). This aligns with the ecological approach to agency, where teachers exercise responsibility and professional judgment to ensure their practice supports curriculum goals and serves the common good (Priestley, Robinson, & Biesta, 2011). As T1 emphasized, writing assignments are meant to reflect students' genuine skills and development, rather than relying on AI-generated responses. Specifically, T1 explained that when teaching writing—especially opinion essays—“the focus should be on ensuring that learner outcomes align with the curriculum goals, rather than being overly influenced by AI-generated results” (T1). This concern is supported by Ju (2023), who found that full reliance on AI for writing tasks led to a 25.1% drop in accuracy. The accessibility and convenience of AI tools may prompt students to shift their learning responsibilities entirely onto these platforms, fostering a dependency that undermines independent thinking. Adding to these concerns, several scholars (Cotton et al., 2024; Grassini, 2023; Rudolph et al., 2023) have argued that submitting AI-generated work can amount to plagiarism, thereby posing a serious threat to academic integrity.

Additionally, the interviews indicated that teachers viewed assessment as a process requiring personalized evaluation of students' strengths and weaknesses. In this respect, T4 remarked:

I don't accept students using AI for personal assessments because AI tools don't provide them with an accurate reflection of their abilities. I need to see their strengths and weaknesses clearly to adjust my teaching and help them improve. (T4)

A strong consensus emerged among teachers regarding final assessments. T7, T8, and T10 agreed that final evaluations should “maintain integrity” (their words) and “reflect genuine student performance” (their words), uninfluenced by AI assistance. This finding reflected that teachers prefer personalized assessment to accurately reflect students' strengths and weaknesses, as AI may not provide an authentic measure of their abilities. It was also emphasized that final evaluations should maintain integrity and genuinely reflect student performance, ensuring assessments are not influenced by AI tools to uphold academic standards and teaching effectiveness.

There was another concern about the role of AI in writing tasks, particularly in high-stakes contexts such as graduation reports. T10 expressed the need for students to engage in authentic brainstorming when preparing such documents. The student was requested to rewrite their reports if AI was used to “brainstorm for writing a graduation internship report” (T10).

However, this perspective did not align with the view that learners can use AI tools like ChatGPT to generate ideas and explore different perspectives for projects or essays provided that they ultimately take ownership and responsibility for developing and refining these initial ideas (Limna et al., 2023; Bozkurt et al., 2023). A possible explanation is that T10 emphasised the students' graduation internship report, which reflected their accumulated practical experience. Therefore, students were required to truthfully report their own internship experiences.

Teachers' concerns about decision making regarding violations by students

While sharing cases of students' unaccepted use of AI, the participants expressed their concerns when they needed to make decisions regarding violations by students, particularly in the context of AI use in out-of-class tasks. A key concern expressed by most of the participants was the lack of reliable tools to validate whether students had used AI inappropriately. They emphasized

that free-of-charge AI-detection tools often produced inconsistent results, which created uncertainty and made it difficult to provide fair and evidence-based judgments. For instance, some teachers pointed out shortcomings of “reliable tools as evidence for AI-index in students' out-of-class tasks” (T2, T4, and T5). This finding can be explained by Activity Theory in practice (Cong-Lem, 2021), showing that teachers' decisions are influenced by the technological tools they use, with those tools' limitations affecting their professional agency. It also aligns with an ecological perspective, emphasizing that broader structural and contextual factors can restrict teachers' ability to make well-informed, responsible choices (Biesta & Tedder, 2007).

This concern corresponded with recent studies highlighting the inconsistent performance of AI detection tools in identifying AI-generated content. Lieberman (2024) emphasized that traditional plagiarism checkers fail with generative AI due to the originality of outputs and shifts in tone or style. Weber-Wulff et al. (2023) reported detection accuracy as low as 50%, with tools struggling when texts are paraphrased. Similarly, Elkhatat et al. (2023) noted significant variability across tools, necessitating a more comprehensive approach to address academic integrity challenges.

This inconsistency not only complicated their decision-making but also left teachers vulnerable to complaints from students. T3 elaborated on this issue, stating “We may face students' complaints due to inconsistent results among the free-of-charge tools, possibly making unfair decisions from the teacher” (T3). In addition to technical challenges, T10 raised concerns about students' learning attitudes and honesty when using AI. Further complicating these challenges was the difficulty of “monitoring and controlling students' use of AI outside the classroom” (T8 and T10). Participants highlighted their inability to regulate how and when students used AI tools, which adds another layer of complexity to the decision-making process.

The findings for the first research question highlight the complex landscape of AI's integration into educational practices. While AI can enhance learning and support self-study, teachers remain cautious about its implications for student authenticity and assessment integrity. The challenges in monitoring AI use and the reliance on inconsistent detection tools further complicate decision-making in educational contexts.

L2 Teachers' Expectations of the Role of Educational Administrators in Response to the AI Technology Trend

Educational technology has become increasingly prevalent, necessitating the roles and responsibilities of educational administrators and relevant higher-level stakeholders. Teachers have been found to expect administrators in responding to emerging generative AI technological trends.

Providing reliable AI detectors

Most teacher participants emphasised the importance of the availability and access allowance to reliable AI detectors. The current lack of quality detectors for teachers to access has led to difficulties in evaluation, causing low-informed decisions on student performance. While the access to AI detectors among L2 teachers mainly came from the individual search, L2 teacher participants expected administrators to consider the funding to take initiatives in purchasing premium AI detection features for consistently institutional use. Participant T3 shared:

Currently, we tend to judge the AI percentage in students' work based on the complementary detectors we found on the internet. The problem is that each tool provides different results, making us confused and not confident. Therefore, we [teachers] need the faculty to provide us with access to a premium account of the

copyrighted AI detectors. A majority of current AI testing software, even the most popular one - Turnitin, stops at stating the percentage of AI in the students' work, without specifying which part of the essay AI was used and which type of AI misuse was committed.

Meanwhile, participant T6 discussed, "providing the quality AI detectors is not only beneficial for screening before the scoring, but also educational for self-directed learning. Students can use them to learn from mistakes."

Tools such as Grammarly and plagiarism detections have long supported academia. However, with the rapid evolution of AI in education, such as ChatGPT, Copilot, and Gemini, it emerges a challenge to detect students' unacceptable use of AI. As revealed, plagiarism and AI misconducts are believed to be distinctive, which requires the specialized tools for accurate and reliable detection and prevention. These findings resonate the unreliability of current complementary or low-cost detectors and the limitation even of more sophisticated ones such as Turnitin alike in detecting AI-generated content. The desire for reliable AI detection tools is a prominent concern in the current discourse along with the challenges of academic integrity in the age of readily available generative AI (University of Northern British Columbia, n.d.).

Providing AI-use policy, regulations and guidelines with clear communication

This expectation reflects the ongoing discourse on the importance of policy of educational technology integration (Rubin, 2024). Teachers believed that policies should be imposed to provide a framework for both teachers and students to follow. By that, it reduces ambiguity and plagiarism and enhances smart use of educational technology. L2 teachers expected administrators to develop and enforce regulations that standardize AI educational use to ensure consistency across classes and courses. Participant T6 claimed, "The Head of the school must provide an official document that specifies the allowed percentage of AI use. It should be performed as official regulations announced to students and teachers right from the beginning of the cohort".

Another participant added, "Training and testing department should provide specific instructions on how to handle the cases where students are found using AI in exams." The detection of AI use and that of plagiarism are critiqued by teachers. As these two concepts are believed to be two different misconducts, they should be clearly defined in the school policy.

In light of AI misconduct, there is a disagreement between participants T2 and T3 about the students' knowledge in using AI, which should be put into consideration when introducing the policy. While T2 firmly believed that AI is intentionally used by students, T3 mentioned a phenomenon where students used AI tools without fully understanding the implications, benefits, or potential drawbacks. T2 described:

Nowadays students are more likely to use AI in learning and testing. I don't believe a student saying that they were not using any AI for the tasks. Administrators should inform students of policy regarding AI use in testing from the beginning of the cohort. It should focus on how much AI is acceptable, which stage of the task AI is recommended, and what punishment they will get.

Meanwhile, T3 shared an insight about students' ignorance in AI use that occasionally students have no awareness that they have been using AI in their task:

I once dealt with a case where a student used AI to polish and paraphrase language. Only at the time being caught, he realised the website, Quilbot, which he relied on to improve language is AI. During policy development, besides the penalties provided by

the regulations, schools should clearly define what AI is and when AI is prohibited in tasks.

It is obvious to see that while promoting academic integrity through policy on AI detection, encouraging responsible and conscious AI use for active learning, skills demonstrations, and critical thinking is equally important. One policy from Chan (2023)'s discourse on the AI Ecological Education Policy can be taken as an example. This framework focuses on four dimensions including rethinking assessments and examinations, developing student holistic/generic skills, preparing students for the AI-driven workplace, and encouraging a balanced approach to AI adoption. Higher education is urged to take a proactive approach in addressing the influence of AI, particularly introducing policies and an updated pedagogy in teaching and learning.

Redesigning the assessment methods in consideration of AI use

Providing AI detectors is the forefront solution to deal with violations, while the long-term goals teacher participants expect from the faculty is the assessment redesign. There is a need to ensure consistency in assessments across the faculties. Participant T1 commented:

Besides publishing the official regulations on academic integrity and provision of AI detectors, I think we need another overall approach to deal with AI interventions in education. That is to redesign the assessment methods. There should be tasks requiring more creativity, critical thinking, and student autonomy.

"AI Assessment Scale (AIAS) should be put in effect to categorize the specific types of tasks in relevance with the extent of AI use. We cannot give an absolute prohibition but should seek ways to adapt AI in education", participant T2 suggested. It means that along with the assessment redesign, the provision of detailed rubrics, marking guidelines with the informed AI-use acceptance level should be considered. Participant T8 added:

The weights of formative and summative tests should be changed equally. More weights should be placed on on-going assessment and less go to the final ones. In this way, AI might be used as supportive for learning rather than for plagiarism.

This concern from the teacher participants resonates with the discussion by Farina (2024) on the potential risks of AI misuse towards critical thinking and ability to form genuine and original ideas in traditional forms of assessments. It is reported that students utilize searched information taken without knowing the context. Such misinterpretation not only violates academic ethics but also drains the true process of learning. For that reason, administrators are expected to generate an overall framework for AI adoption in assessment and evaluation.

Teacher training about AI detection and assessing students' submissions

The provision of training on AI detection and assessing students' work in which AI is integrated was highlighted as a critical expectation. L2 teachers expect administrators to offer comprehensive training programs that equip them with the AI-relevant necessary skills for teaching and assessment. Reflected from the current reality, teaching staff have been only trained how to use AI as a teaching supplement, leaving the significant gap in teachers' knowledge and competences in detecting AI and assessing students' work quality. T4 shared her critical viewpoint about the current situation:

Before considering whether students use AI in testing and assessment, teachers themselves must be familiar with AI. Currently, most teachers tend to self-discover, self-explore, self-research so every finding seems to be personal, not professional enough. Teacher voice is not sufficiently strong. It is clear that teachers in the social sciences field are not knowledgeable about AI.

Therefore, to evaluate learning and assessment accurately, and when schools provide sufficient tools, teachers need to be trained about AI equally.

Insufficient detectors and training have been reported in Quay-de la Vallee (2023) study exploring that not more than 20% of the survey teachers agreed that their AI tools are trustworthy for AI-generative content detection. Besides, only 23% of teachers who received training on their schools' policies and procedures regarding AI have gotten guidance on how to detect student use of ChatGPT. Therefore, offering teacher training and providing a budget for AI detection tools should be the priorities of faculty-level managers' action plans.

In general, the critical role of administrative leadership in facilitating the effective integration of AI in L2 education was underscored. It is believed among teachers that by ensuring the availability of reliable AI detector tools, providing policies and guidelines on AI use, and offering comprehensive training on AI-content detection, administrators can support teachers in leveraging the benefits of AI to enhance the learning experience.

These expectations are not isolated in a context but are part of a larger discourse on the role of leadership in educational technology (Karakose & Tülübaşı, 2024; Wang, 2021). Administrators are expected to be proactive in addressing the needs and urgency in addressing the backlog problems in AI use in education. Indeed, the administrative role extends far beyond operational management to encompass critical decision-making regarding data privacy, algorithmic bias, transparency, and accountability in AI applications (Polat, Karatas, & Varol, 2025). Proactive administrations are expected to navigate and address ethical pitfalls before they materialize instead of simply reacting to them after harm has occurred. It can be done by engaging in critical evaluation of AI tools and scrutinizing the underlying algorithms with the consultation of relevant experts to mitigate its bias and consequences from the outset.

Facing the dilemmas in AI-integrated learning and teaching unsolved, teacher participants strongly called for the faculty/program managers to raise their voice to the system-level authorities to develop solutions that offer technical, regulatory, and training support to teachers. There must be mutual communication and collaboration in all levels of the organization, varying from teachers, heads of departments, the deans of the faculty, to school leaders in tackling AI academic integrity and employing AI responsibly.

These findings reflect the increasing prevalence of educational technology in the interplay with the emerging roles of administrators which has been acknowledged in recent studies by Göçen et al. (2025) and Fullan et al. (2023). Research highlights that administrators are expected to lead the integration of AI, address ethical considerations, and ensure effective implementation. With that expectation, the insights shared by the participants in this study emphasises the significance and urgency in having administrative support to maintain teaching and learning quality. The involvement should vary from the initiative in proposing institutional investment in AI detection sources to ensuring the proper AI practice is consistent and ethical widely in the institution. They can achieve that by introducing and enforcing rules and regulations combined with usage training and professional development for teachers.

The reportedly collectable responses on administrative expectations for ethical AI implementation intersect with the concept of teacher agency. In the emergence of AI in everyday teaching practice, teachers in this study have made meaningful choices and influence over their pedagogy and classroom management (Calvert, 2016; Nguyen & Bui, 2016) to make a purposeful action to impact change in their professional environment. This reveals the existence and development of teacher agency in a positive way.

The integration of AI while offering potential benefits for teachers, it also presents significant challenges to teacher agency if not managed carefully by leadership (Tao & Gao, 2017). First of all, administrators are expected to ensure that AI tools augment, rather than supplant, the teacher's role as the major pedagogical decision makers. This notice resulted in the concern about the possibility of teacher autonomy erosion in the context where AI systems are allowed to dictate pedagogical choices, curriculum pacing, and assessment methods, causing a sense of feeling that professional judgment made by human teachers is sidelined. In addition, teacher expectations on acquiring AI literacy with the assistance at the institutional level, while reflecting the growing positive teacher agency in the early stage of generative AI, indicate the wake-up call for administrators to maintain and enhance teacher agency in the long run. It is necessary to invest in professional development that trains teachers not only to technically operate AI tools but also critically and wisely use AI in the thorough understanding of its strengths, limitations, and potential biases. Otherwise, the resistance to AI adoption and the feeling of disempowerment might be likely to happen that hinders the overall implementation of educational AI.

Educational Administrators' Responses to L2 Teachers' Conceptualizations and Expectations

Administrators' reactions towards teachers' identification of appropriate use of AI in class and outside class

The findings from the focus groups indicate that teachers would allow students' use of AI in broadly three circumstances in class: planning and finding ideas, working in pairs/groups to complete assignments, and cross-checking between self-generated and AI-generated written products. When asked whether they would advocate the use of AI in brainstorming and outlining activities, the administrators gave conflicting opinions. A4 said that she would accept this as a normal practice as "AI is a source of information such as Google or books, but superior since it can help synthesize information". She remarked that "as teachers accept this use, the faculty will do as well". However, A1 expressed an opposing view, explaining that this use 'would hinder critical thinking, initiation and creativity', and that "students should not use AI to perform the skills they are expected to acquire themselves". Her concern is supported by the findings from Zhai, Wibowo & Li's (2024) systematic review of 14 studies that "AI tools ... often lead to reduced critical and analytical thinking skills, especially when students become overly dependent on AI-generated content" (p.15). The only situation in which she would accept AI use by students is when they have to work on a strange topic. Taking a middle-ground, A2 and A3 advocated the use of AI for finding resources and ideas on one condition: students must first form the outline of the assignment and come up with preliminary ideas before resorting to AI for more information and support.

All the administrators seemed to be more reserved when considering the use of AI in collective activities, for example writing assignments in pairs or groups. Opinions range from partial agreement (by A2), encouraging students to discuss with each other before exploiting AI tools, to an uncertain attitude, reasoning that the decision depends on a number of factors such as the objectives of the assignment (A4), or the dynamic of the group, their responsibility and self-esteem (A1), which mostly relies on the teacher's subjective observation of the students' learning. Subjectiveness and even avoidance in decision making is also revealed when A4 said that 'the teachers at her school can decide the level of AI use until the release of official rules'.

Notably, A4 repeatedly insisted that she would leave the decision to the teachers, saying that they can "modify the learning objectives suitably, decide on the level of use, and then report their decisions to the faculty's manager". In contrast, there is a definite rejection by A3, who insisted that AI should be banned in this type of activity as students are expected to use their

own strengths to contribute to the collective product. She asserted, “Anything that cannot be controlled should be banned”. The difference in management styles among the administrator participants may account for their different attitudes and practices. A4 may want to allow more freedom for her faculty while A3 wants uniformity and consistency. Alternatively, she might want to avoid, or delay making her own decisions so as to have more time and wait for policies officially issued by higher level authorities, which Barrett & Pack (2023) claimed to be still in early stages.

The only instance in which all four administrators considered it legitimate to use AI in class is when students conducted cross-checking between self-generated and AI-generated versions of their assignments. A4 and A2 were very positive, claiming that “students can develop their ability and skills to recognize weaknesses and strengths in both their work and AI-generated version” and that “they would become more active in learning” while A3, as usual, was more cautious, and would only accept the submission of students’ works which have been modified based on their learning from the AI-created texts.

When the administrators were inquired about the teachers’ views of AI use outside class, it was interesting to witness a tendency to not make any definitive conclusion, or as Nguyen (2023) noticed, “they tend to avoid being assertive while being aware of existing problems”, thereby raising further issues. First, whether AI can be used to complete homework outside class really depends on “the nature of the tasks/assignments” (A1, A3). Second, the use of AI by students outside class is inevitable, so it should not be banned, or, it cannot be, as A3 admitted, “Now that you ban AI use, can you check / determine whether your students did use AI or not?”

Third, if it is impossible to ban AI use by students outside the classroom, then the question should be “how to design tasks in which AI use can be controlled, and students can’t use it to make the final product, just to evaluate and synthesize information” (A1). A3 emphasized that “depending on the nature of the exercises or activities, lecturers should be clear from the beginning to what extent students can use AI”. Fourth, one important step teachers should take is “clarify scoring criteria and specific instructions of appropriate use AI for assignments” (A2). In case there is any complication that arises, A4 suggested having a formal meeting with colleagues and the faculty so a final decision can be reached.

In general, the administrators in this study seem to expect the teachers to exercise more teacher agency, especially in the practical-evaluative dimension (Priestley et al., 2015) when they have to make their decisions based on the currently available policies and regulations as well as suggest future modifications to the authority. In this way, teachers are no longer the sole “objects of discourse” (Kennedy & Castek, 2025) but undertake a more active role in this digital transition.

Administrators’ reactions towards teachers’ identification of inappropriate use of AI

It was found in the focus groups that L2 teachers would never accept the following instances of AI use by their students: activities involving individual and summative assessments, individual assignments, and assignments requiring creativity and originality. The administrators’ responses display variations.

Regarding individual and summative assessments, A2 and A3 agreed with the teachers that AI use should be banned, reasoning that “the purpose of the evaluation is to check on the students’ performance. If students use AI, how can their true ability/level be assessed?” (A3). A2 added that “assessments have to reflect Ss’ true proficiency. Supportive factors should not exist in any assessments because reliability and validity cannot be ensured”. These justifications are rooted in the five principles of testing and assessment proposed by Brown & Abeywickrama (2019)

and so are undeniable. A4 supported this practice but only for in-class assessments. She argued that AI use should be allowed for assignments completed at home for a reason discussed earlier: It is impossible to ban it. However, A1 suggested a more open and flexible measure, explaining that the aid of AI can be accepted but “there must be well-designed rubrics to specify which skills are involved and which aspect can include AI use”.

Individual assignments are the instances in which the administrators mostly disagreed with the teachers. Except for A1, the other three managers were more open, saying that AI use should be allowed if these assignments are for learning, not for assessment and that specific levels of use, clear objectives and instructions must be provided. However, almost all of them supported the teachers’ decision not to allow the use of AI in activities that require creativity and originality, which is corroborated by the findings from the studies reviewed by Zhai, Wibowo & Li’s (2024).

In general, while L2 teachers tend to prefer more transparent and thorough practices and regulations, the administrators seem to expect more flexibility and tolerate more ambiguity. This can be explained by the nature of the work and responsibilities they have to perform. The former need to do the practical jobs on micro levels while the latter often observe and provide guidance on macro levels.

Administrators’ reactions towards teachers’ concerns about decision making regarding violations by students

The teachers in the current study expressed several major concerns when they have to make decisions regarding violations by students: the unavailability of quality tools for AI detection, the lack of policies and instructions, students’ appeals against teachers’ decisions, and students’ attitudes and responsibility. The administrators were asked whether they were aware of such concerns and their causes and if they considered them sensible or reasonable. Important findings have been found from their responses.

First, all of them considered the teachers’ concerns sensible and expressed some sympathy with the subordinates. A1 reported:

We understand what they [L2 teachers] are worried about and we have discussed the issues in every faculty meeting as they have contributed to reduced quality of learning: our students do not want to study; they just want to pass the courses by all means.

However, it seems that the managers were expecting the subordinates to be more active, critical and patient in reacting towards the issues. They suggested some procedures that should have been followed by the teachers:

If the teachers have any concerns, they should check whether all the policies and requirements have been informed from the beginning and then follow the procedures. Otherwise, they should follow the school protocol to determine the source of the errors before making a decision. (A3)

They also tried to explain the delay in issuing official instructions and regulations. A4 said that policies are being created but it may take time as “the school needs time to adapt and wait for MOET regulations, without which no policies can be set”. (A2 & A3)

One important finding from the interviews indicates that there seems to be a breakdown in communication between the teachers and the managers at some institutions, or to be more exact, there was no opportunity for the teachers to communicate their concerns to the managers. While the teachers in the focus groups raised a list of concerns, A3 reported never hearing about such concerns in her faculty. To add to this, A4 said that she had never received any appeals

from students with regard to teachers' decisions on cases of violation. She also admitted that in her school, there had been no formal meetings where teachers could voice their concerns and discuss solutions.

Administrators' reactions towards teachers' expectations of the administrators themselves

In the focus groups, the teacher participants agreed on three duties that the administrators are expected to perform: provision of reliable and quality tools, provision of policies, regulations and guidelines to ensure consistency across classes and courses, and provision of teacher training. The administrators honestly shared what they have been doing in response to those expectations, admitted what they have not been able to resolve and also described the obstacles they have encountered. Table 5 below summarizes the findings regarding the first two points.

Table 5

What has and has not been done by administrators

Teachers' expectation	What has been responded to	What has not been addressed
Provision of reliable and quality tools	- Obtaining Turnitin with AI detector (A4)	- Providing quality tools, esp. those that are reliable (A1, A2, A3)
Provision of policies, regulations and guidelines	- Updating course syllabi, providing guidelines, revising course assessments (A1), working on policy for AI detection (A4)	- Updating school policy in accordance with MOET regulations (A2)
Provision of teacher training	- Organizing training workshops and webinars in to help staff learn how to use AI (A1, A4), but mostly for teaching, material design, making sample speaking or writing answers (A2)	- Providing training on the university level and even on the department level

It can be seen from the summary that not much has been done in response to the teachers' expectations. For example, while the teachers asked for reliable and quality tools, only one tool - Turnitin - has been mentioned, and by only one participant. The other three admitted that even this tool is not available in their schools. In addition, the policies, regulations and guidelines that are already available seem to be only the administrators' individual efforts to address the issues. A3 asserted that 'as there has been no official documents or policy in her school regarding this matter (use of AI), none of these expectations have been attended nor responded to'. There is a vicious cycle in which the teaching staff waits for the instructions and policy from the administrators while these personnels are not ready to take actions, thereby leaving the decisions up to the teachers, whose resolutions may not be willingly approved by either the managers or their students. A2 shared a case in his school in which the teachers conflicted with each other about a student's submission of an assignment and the final decision was asking the student to submit another paper, which was obviously undesirable by anybody involved.

A number of obstacles have been quoted for the inability to meet the teachers' demands. On the organizational level, the key issues involve the budget available to equip the staff with appropriate and reliable tools (A2, A3), to recruit AI experts to provide training (A3, A4), and to organize productive training sessions schoolwide (A4), as well as the procedures and

documentations needed to establish consistent and applicable instructions and policies. At a time when technological advancements are taking place at a faster rate than their compatible and feasible legal and regulatory controls, there are more issues that need consideration behind the “wow” factor and all the stakeholders should be cautious in order to propose appropriate regulations (Nguyen, 2023). On an individual level, A1 admitted, “I desire to do many things, but my workload does not permit”. She was also upset that “the school does not have policies to satisfactorily recognize the efforts and labor needed to revise course syllabi and assessments”, so little progress has been made.

Implications and conclusion

This study explored L2 teachers’ perceptions of learners’ appropriate use of AI in language learning, their expectations of the role of educational administrators, and the administrators’ responses to teachers’ perception and expectations.

As for the first research aim, the key findings revealed that L2 teachers perceive appropriate AI use in language learning as task-dependent, with distinctions between in-class and out-of-class activities. In class, AI is seen as beneficial for brainstorming and group work, aiding idea generation and refinement. However, over-reliance on tasks requiring personal expression is discouraged. Outside the classroom context, most teachers accepted learners’ AI-driven self-learning, translation and lexical stock enhancement, but they themselves are required to fulfill their tasks without AI assistance initially. Some teachers found AI use in summative assessments and high-stakes writing unacceptable, highlighting their concerns about learners relying on AI to circumvent the learning objectives and violate academic integrity.

In reference with the second research aim, L2 teachers shared several expectations supported by explanations. Firstly, they expect to be equipped with reliable AI detection tools to ensure proper assessment of student submissions. Secondly, teachers states that ensuring consistency of AI-use evaluation is important across departments, so they desire to be exposed to clear policies and guidelines. Thirdly, some consent that to promote learners’ creativity and alleviate their AI misuse, administrators should consider redesigning assessment methods. Finally, L2 teachers express their wants for both extensive AI training; in this vein, they suggest that administrators, faculty, and AI experts can collaborate to foster academic integrity and effectively integrate AI into education.

In terms of the third research aim, the responses of educational administrators are mixed with some requiring flexibility from the teachers while other expressed concerns of restrictions. In one hand, they recognized the teachers’ concerns but expected teachers to be adaptive and proactive to discuss with them. They also acknowledge the importance of proactive leadership, possible preventing delays in decisions related to clear AI. In the other hand, some of them emphasized that there are constraints of budget and communication and institutional delays, hinderring decisions and clear guidelines or institutional support.

This research provides both definitive and administrative insights on the ethical application of AI in language learning. On a definitive scale, this study highlights the contextual nature of “inappropriate use” of AI from teacher and administrative perspectives, supporting contextual learning theories that prioritize relevance of tools and methods. This definition of appropriate use, shaped by technological, pedagogical and ethical concerns, reinforces the significance of teacher and institutional judgment. Moreover, this study challenges assessment theories by revealing a dilemma in evaluating students’ abilities amid the AI era. It also underscores the need for development based on teacher agency frameworks.

On an administrative scale, this study stresses the necessity for updated, comprehensive, and transparent AI-use policies for specific education environments. It also unpacks the complex interactions between teachers and administrators with regards to each other's roles. Regular and open communication between educators and administrators is vital to address challenges and enhance the learning and teaching efficiency. This cross-functional communication can be achieved by setting clear objectives, having a shared platform for discussion, maintaining regular and inclusive dialogues so that institutions can address proactively and collaboratively the AI practices.

Another key gap that this study has bridged is understanding the intricate dynamics between different professional stakeholders in education regarding the practical implementation and perceived values of AI in language learning. This study offers a nuanced, multifaceted picture of how educational administrators and teacher practitioners perceive, interact with, and negotiate the integration of AI.

The exploration of teacher viewpoint towards students' use of AI in this study contributes to the understanding of teacher agency in the AI developmental environment. Teacher agency has been impacted, enhanced, and constrained by the introduction of AI. This understanding delves deep into the socio-professional dimensions of how teachers assert their professional identity and decision-making power amid technological shifts.

Despite contributions to literature, this study cannot avoid limitations. Its findings originate from English language education, which cannot apply to other fields. Future research should investigate the ethical perspectives on AI use across disciplines in education and involve a broader range of participants, especially upper-level leadership, to provide a more comprehensive perspective.

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Biodata

Dr. Nguyen Anh Duc **Dao** is currently a lecturer at the School of Languages– International University (VNU – Ho Chi Minh City), Vietnam. She has experience working with learners of all ages and proficiency levels. Her research interests are teaching methodology, L2 pronunciation teaching and learning, and teacher education.

Thanh-My **Nguyen** is presently a Teaching Quality Manager at Vietnam-USA Society English Centers (VUS), Vietnam. She has working experience with learners aged from kindergarten to young adults in diverse learning environments. Her research interests include silence in learning, cognition and emotion in language learning, educational management and leadership.

Thanh Tan **Tran** holds a Master's degree in TESOL and is a lecturer at Ho Chi Minh City Open University, Vietnam. His research focuses on applied linguistics and teacher education. He has presented at specialized webinars and conferences and has published his work in international journals.

Anh **Phan** has over ten years of experience teaching English and business-related courses. Currently, he teaches at Ho Chi Minh University of Banking and serves as a Speaking Examiner at Ho Chi Minh City Department of Education and Training. His research focuses on technology-enhanced language teaching, assessment, methodologies, and pronunciation.