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TECHNOLOGY AND AI INTEGRATION IN GRADE 7 EFL JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL CLASSROOMS: A NARRATIVE INQUIRY

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Abstract: The integration of technology and artificial intelligence (AI) has increasingly influenced English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching practices in secondary education. However, its classroom implementation remains uneven, particularly in public junior high schools with limited resources. This study aimed to explore the challenges faced by an English teacher in integrating technology and AI in Grade 7 EFL classrooms. Employing a qualitative narrative inquiry design, this study involved one Grade 7 English teacher from a public junior high school in Tangerang Selatan, using a pseudonym to protect institutional identity. Data were collected through semi-structured, in-depth interviews and were analyzed descriptively. The findings revealed that technology integration remained basic, relying mainly on projectors and PowerPoint presentations, while AI use was limited to question preparation by the teacher and translation support by students. Major challenges included limited internet access, unstable connectivity, and students' over-reliance on AI for completing written tasks. Although technology and AI were found to enhance learning efficiency and student motivation, they also raised concerns regarding reduced critical thinking and non-academic use of mobile devices. The study concludes that technology and AI function effectively as supportive tools rather than core instructional components when guided by strong teacher supervision. This study implies that sustainable AI integration in EFL classrooms requires adequate infrastructure, continuous teacher professional development in AI literacy, and clear school-level policies on responsible technology use.

Keyword: *Artificial Intelligence (AI) in education, Challenges in using AI, Technology in English teaching*

Abstrak: *Integrasi teknologi dan kecerdasan buatan (AI) semakin memengaruhi praktik pengajaran Bahasa Inggris sebagai Bahasa Asing (EFL) di pendidikan menengah. Namun, implementasinya di kelas masih belum merata, terutama di sekolah menengah pertama negeri dengan sumber daya terbatas. Studi ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi tantangan yang dihadapi oleh seorang guru Bahasa Inggris dalam mengintegrasikan teknologi dan AI di kelas EFL kelas 7. Dengan menggunakan desain penelitian naratif kualitatif, studi ini melibatkan seorang guru Bahasa Inggris kelas 7 dari sebuah sekolah menengah pertama negeri di Tangerang Selatan, menggunakan nama samaran untuk melindungi identitas institusional. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam semi-terstruktur dan dianalisis secara deskriptif. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa integrasi teknologi masih bersifat dasar, terutama bergantung pada proyektor dan presentasi PowerPoint, sementara penggunaan AI terbatas pada persiapan soal oleh guru dan dukungan terjemahan oleh siswa. Tantangan utama meliputi akses internet yang terbatas, konektivitas yang tidak stabil, dan ketergantungan siswa yang berlebihan pada AI untuk menyelesaikan tugas tertulis. Meskipun teknologi dan AI ditemukan dapat meningkatkan efisiensi pembelajaran dan motivasi siswa, keduanya juga menimbulkan kekhawatiran mengenai berkurangnya kemampuan berpikir kritis dan penggunaan perangkat seluler yang tidak bersifat akademis. Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa teknologi dan AI berfungsi secara efektif sebagai alat pendukung, bukan sebagai komponen instruksional inti, ketika dipandu oleh pengawasan guru yang kuat. Studi ini menyiratkan bahwa integrasi AI yang berkelanjutan di kelas EFL membutuhkan infrastruktur yang memadai, pengembangan profesional guru yang berkelanjutan dalam literasi AI, dan kebijakan tingkat sekolah yang jelas tentang penggunaan teknologi yang bertanggung jawab.*

Kata Kunci: *InggrisKecerdasan Buatan (AI) dalam pendidikan, Tantangan dalam penggunaan AI, Teknologi dalam pengajaran bahasa*

Digital technology has increasingly shaped English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction by transforming how learning activities are planned and delivered. The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) has further extended this transformation by enabling automated feedback, adaptive learning support, and instructional efficiency. Rather than functioning as a replacement for teachers, recent literature positions AI as a pedagogical aid that supports specific instructional processes. For instance, (Wafa et al., 2025) demonstrate that digital platforms such as Google Classroom and AI based language applications enhance learner motivation when integrated with clear pedagogical objectives. Similarly, (Jelita et al., 2025) argues that AI tools are most effective when aligned with curriculum goals and teacher guidance, suggesting that technology alone does not guarantee improved learning outcomes.

Empirical studies focusing on language skill development further clarify the specific contributions of AI in EFL classrooms. (Dja'far et al., 2024), through quasi experimental research, show that AI powered pronunciation tools improve learners' pronunciation accuracy by providing immediate corrective feedback that is difficult to replicate in large classrooms. This finding is reinforced by (Ramadilla, Surbakti, 2025), who report that AI based vocabulary and grammar applications support learning achievement by allowing repeated exposure and individualized pacing. (Taj et al., 2025) extend this discussion by showing that adaptive AI platforms strengthen vocabulary retention through contextualized feedback, highlighting how AI supports learning processes that require consistency and repetition.

While these studies demonstrate pedagogical benefits, research on generative AI highlights both its instructional promise and its limitations. (Huang et al., 2024) finds

that generative AI tools encourage speaking practice by reducing learners' anxiety and increasing participation, particularly in contexts where students are reluctant to speak. However, the study also notes that AI feedback often lacks pragmatic and contextual sensitivity, especially for idiomatic expressions. This limitation underscores the argument that generative AI functions best as a supportive speaking partner rather than an autonomous evaluator, reinforcing the continuing role of teacher mediation in language instruction.

Despite the demonstrated benefits of AI supported learning, classroom based studies reveal that AI implementation remains largely superficial in many school contexts. (Dewi, 2025) and (Tariq, 2025) observe that teachers primarily use AI for material preparation, while students rely on it for basic translation and grammar checking. (Mananay, 2024) further explains that this pattern reflects structural constraints rather than pedagogical resistance, as limited infrastructure and institutional regulations restrict more advanced instructional uses. Together, these studies suggest a persistent gap between the pedagogical potential of AI and its actual classroom application, particularly at the junior high school level.

Infrastructure related challenges emerge as a recurring explanation for this gap. (Karki et al., 2025) identify unstable internet connectivity and limited access to digital devices as primary barriers that prevent sustained AI integration. (Yan et al., 2024) complement this finding by emphasizing that inadequate institutional readiness limits teachers' ability to experiment with innovative instructional designs. (Vesna, 2025) situates these challenges within a broader discussion of the digital divide, arguing that unequal access to AI powered education reinforces existing educational inequalities. Collectively, these studies highlight that AI integration is deeply shaped by systemic conditions rather than individual teacher choice alone.

Beyond infrastructural concerns, ethical and cognitive implications have become central in discussions of AI assisted education. (Mallik et al., 2023) raise concerns about data privacy and algorithmic transparency, while (Al-zahrani, 2024) demonstrates how these ethical risks are interconnected with issues of equity and human centered pedagogy. (He, 2025) further warns that algorithmic bias in AI based assessment systems may disadvantage learners from specific cultural backgrounds. In addition to ethical risks, (Syafrayani et al., 2024) and (Yang, 2024) provide evidence that excessive reliance on AI can reduce learners' critical thinking and metalinguistic awareness. (Panmei, 2025) extends this concern by showing that dependency on generative AI may weaken learner autonomy, particularly in multilingual and multicultural contexts.

Given these challenges, the literature consistently emphasizes the mediating role of teachers in determining how AI functions in classroom practice. (Xiaofan et al., 2025) argue that teachers with stronger technological pedagogical knowledge are better equipped to integrate AI in ways that support instructional goals. However, (Doghonadze, 2022) notes that many teachers remain hesitant to adopt AI due to limited training and concerns about reduced classroom interaction. Narrative based studies by (Barkhuizen, Phil, 2025)and (Ma'rufa, 2021) further reveal that teachers' decisions about technology use are shaped by professional identity, pedagogical

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beliefs, and institutional expectations. These findings suggest that AI integration is not merely a technical process but a reflective pedagogical negotiation.

Narrative inquiry has therefore been increasingly employed to capture the complexity of technology integration in real classroom settings. (Gunder et al., 2023) demonstrates that narrative digital learning practices enhance engagement and relevance by situating learning within meaningful experiences. Similarly, (Hasby, 2025) shows that narrative approaches reveal affective and contextual dimensions of digital language learning that are often overlooked in quantitative studies. As emphasized by (Creswell, 1977), narrative inquiry foregrounds participants' lived experiences and meaning making processes within specific social and institutional contexts, making it particularly suitable for examining teachers' classroom practices.

Although existing research provides valuable insights into AI assisted language learning, much of the literature focuses on higher education or well-resourced environments. There remains limited qualitative research that examines how English teachers manage and regulate AI use within public junior high school classrooms characterized by limited infrastructure and strict institutional constraints. To address this gap, the present study adopts a narrative inquiry approach to explore the experiences of an English teacher integrating technology and AI in Grade 7 EFL classrooms. By foregrounding the teacher's perspective, this study seeks to illuminate how AI is negotiated as a supportive instructional tool within resource constrained educational settings.

METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Methods and Design

This study employed a qualitative narrative inquiry design. This design was selected to capture in depth the lived experiences of an English teacher in integrating digital technology and artificial intelligence (AI) into classroom instruction. Narrative inquiry was considered appropriate because the focus of the study was on how the teacher experienced, interpreted, and responded to the use of technology and AI within real instructional contexts, rather than on measuring effectiveness or learning outcomes.

The research was initially designed to involve three to five English teachers. However, during the research planning stage, the scope was narrowed to one participant to allow a more detailed and intensive exploration of classroom practices. Focusing on a single participant enabled the researcher to obtain rich narrative data regarding instructional decisions, classroom challenges, and pedagogical considerations related to technology and AI integration in a public junior high school context.

2.2 Participants

The participant of this study was one Grade 7 English teacher from a public junior high school in south Tangerang. To maintain confidentiality, the school was referred to using a pseudonym, and the teacher's real name was also replaced with a pseudonym. The teacher had several years of teaching experience and regularly used digital technology as part of her English instruction.

The school provided basic technological facilities, including projectors in classrooms and limited internet access. However, internet connectivity was unstable in certain areas of the school. The decision to involve only one participant was made to generate an in depth understanding of the teacher's experiences, instructional strategies, and challenges in integrating technology and AI within a resource limited environment.

2.3 Research Instrument

The main research instrument was a semi structured interview. An interview guide consisting of open ended questions was prepared to explore the teacher's experiences in using technology and AI in English language teaching. The questions addressed several aspects, including types of technology used in the classroom, perceived benefits and challenges, the teacher's role in guiding students' technology use, and strategies employed to manage the use of AI tools.

The semi structured format allowed the researcher to follow a consistent set of guiding questions while also providing flexibility for the participant to elaborate on relevant experiences and classroom situations.

2.4 Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected through a face to face in depth semi structured interview. The interview was conducted in a relaxed and informal setting to encourage open and reflective responses from the participant. The researcher documented the interview data through detailed manual note taking during the session.

The interview focused on classroom practices involving the use of digital technology and AI, including projectors, PowerPoint presentations, online translation tools, Grammarly, and ChatGPT in English language teaching. Issues related to technical limitations, classroom management, student behavior, and instructional challenges were also explored during the data collection process.

2.5 Data Analysis Techniques

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive qualitative analysis. The interview notes were reviewed repeatedly to gain a comprehensive understanding of the participant's responses. Relevant statements related to technology use, AI integration, instructional challenges, and management strategies were identified and organized systematically.

The data were then grouped into thematic categories to describe how technology and AI were used in daily teaching practices, how the teacher perceived their pedagogical impact, and how instructional decisions were made in the classroom. This analysis enabled the researcher to present a detailed and context sensitive account of the teacher's experiences in integrating technology and AI in English language teaching.

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RESULTS

This section presents the results of the study obtained from an in-depth interview with a Grade 7 English teacher at a public junior high school in south Tangerang. The findings report classroom practices related to technology and artificial intelligence use, infrastructural constraints, and teacher control strategies.

3.2 Use of Technology in Classroom Instruction

The teacher reported that digital technology was used regularly during English lessons. Projectors and PowerPoint presentations were the main tools employed in classroom instruction. All Grade 7 classrooms were equipped with projectors, which were used to display lesson materials, examples, and exercises.

PowerPoint slides were prepared by the teacher and used in almost every lesson. The teacher stated that the projector was primarily used for material explanation rather than for interactive digital activities.

3.3 Use of Artificial Intelligence in Teaching and Learning

The teacher stated that artificial intelligence was used occasionally and in limited forms. AI tools were used by the teacher to generate practice questions for classroom activities. Students were reported to use AI-based applications mainly to translate unfamiliar vocabulary.

AI was not used for lesson delivery, speaking practice, writing feedback, or assessment. The teacher described that AI use remained supportive rather than instructional in nature.

Table 1. Types of Technology and AI Use Reported by the Teacher

Tool / Technology	Purpose of Use	User
Projector	Display lesson materials	Teacher
PowerPoint	Present explanations and exercises	Teacher
AI question generator	Create practice questions	Teacher
AI translation tools	Translate unfamiliar vocabulary	Students
Grammarly / ChatGPT	Homework assistance	Students (outside class)

3.4 Technological and Infrastructural Constraints

The teacher identified internet access as the primary constraint in using technology and AI. Wi-Fi was available only in certain areas of the school. During online assessments, some students experienced difficulty accessing the internet from inside the classroom.

In several cases, students moved outside the classroom to obtain a stronger network signal. The teacher also stated that mobile phone use was restricted during school hours.

3.5 Classroom Control and Teacher Strategies

The teacher reported maintaining direct supervision during classroom activities involving technology. Students were monitored closely while using digital devices during lessons. Verbal instructions were given to regulate technology use.

At home, students were reminded not to rely on AI tools when completing assignments. The teacher stated that reminders were delivered during classroom sessions.

Table 2. Summary of Key Findings

Aspect	Description of Findings
Classroom Technology	Projectors and PowerPoint used in regular instruction
AI Use by Teacher	AI used occasionally for question generation
AI Use by Students	AI used mainly for vocabulary translation
Internet Access	Limited Wi-Fi availability and unstable connectivity
Assessment Issues	Internet problems during online exams
Classroom Control	Direct supervision and verbal instructions
Homework Monitoring	Reminders to limit AI use at home

DISCUSSION

This study provides insight into how technology and artificial intelligence are integrated into English language teaching within a public junior high school context characterized by limited resources. The findings indicate that the mere presence of digital tools in the classroom does not automatically lead to pedagogical transformation. Rather, technology and AI function primarily as supportive instructional resources whose use is shaped by infrastructural conditions, institutional regulations, and teachers' pedagogical judgment. This finding aligns with (Jaya et al., 2024), who argued that access to basic digital tools does not necessarily result in innovative pedagogy when institutional readiness and contextual support remain limited. In this context, pedagogical considerations consistently outweigh technological availability, underscoring that meaningful integration is not driven by tools alone.

The selective use of technology observed in this study reflects a pragmatic form of teacher agency in responding to contextual constraints. Instead of adopting technology for its own sake, the teacher exercised professional discretion in determining when and how digital tools could meaningfully support instruction. This pattern is consistent with (Wafa et al., 2025), who reported that technology integration in public schools often remains functional rather than transformative during early stages of adoption. Taken together, these findings suggest that technology integration in junior high school settings is a context-dependent process in which instructional relevance, feasibility, and classroom control guide decision-making more strongly than the availability of technological resources.

Within this broader context, the limited role of artificial intelligence identified in this study reflects patterns commonly reported in research on early-stage AI adoption in educational settings. AI was primarily used for vocabulary translation and question generation, indicating a practical and task-oriented function rather than a

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transformative instructional role. This finding supports (Tariq, 2025), who observed that teachers tend to employ AI to improve efficiency in routine pedagogical tasks rather than for higher-order instructional design or learner-centered activities. Similarly, (Wafa et al., 2025) and (Az-Zahra et al., 2024) noted that schools in the initial phases of AI integration often prioritize low-risk, easily controllable applications that require minimal infrastructural support and limited pedagogical restructuring.

The present study extends this line of research by illustrating how these adoption patterns unfold in a junior high school context where limited infrastructure and strict institutional regulations further constrain AI use. Importantly, the modest role of AI observed in this classroom should not be interpreted as a lack of pedagogical awareness or technological resistance. Instead, it reflects a strategic adaptation to contextual realities in which teachers balance technological possibilities with institutional expectations, student readiness, and classroom manageability. In this sense, AI integration emerges as a gradual and negotiated process shaped by both structural conditions and pedagogical priorities.

Concerns regarding students' critical thinking emerged as a central pedagogical consideration influencing the teacher's approach to AI use. The teacher's cautious stance reflects a deliberate effort to preserve students' cognitive engagement rather than resistance to technological innovation. In a junior high school context, where learners are still developing foundational reasoning skills and learning autonomy, unrestricted access to AI-generated responses may reduce opportunities for analytical thinking and problem-solving. This concern aligns with(Syafrayani et al., 2024), who reported that excessive reliance on AI-generated answers can weaken students' independence in processing learning materials. Similarly, (Yang, 2024) emphasized that overexposure to automated correction and instant feedback may diminish students' metalinguistic awareness by reducing attention to linguistic forms and error patterns.

Within this framework, restricting AI use functions as a pedagogical safeguard rather than an act of technological avoidance. The teacher's approach highlights an instructional priority that places cognitive effort, student agency, and learning processes above technological convenience. This finding underscores the importance of aligning AI integration with learners' developmental readiness and instructional goals, particularly in early secondary education where guided learning remains essential.

Infrastructure-related constraints further shaped how technology and artificial intelligence were implemented in the classroom. Uneven Wi-Fi access and unstable internet connectivity limited the feasibility of interactive digital activities and restricted the use of more advanced AI-based applications. Consequently, instructional practices tended to rely on tools that did not require continuous internet access, reinforcing a pattern of minimal and controlled digital integration. This finding supports previous studies identifying infrastructural inequality as a persistent barrier to technology-enhanced learning in public school contexts (Karki et al., 2025) and (Yan et al., 2024). Even well-designed digital tools lose their instructional value when basic technological infrastructure is unreliable.

These findings suggest that pedagogical decisions regarding AI use cannot be separated from material conditions. Teachers' instructional choices were shaped not only by pedagogical beliefs but also by practical realities such as connectivity, device

availability, and institutional regulations. This study contributes to the literature by illustrating how infrastructural limitations operate at the classroom level, influencing both the scope and form of technology use. While policy discourse often emphasizes innovation and digital transformation, the findings reveal a disconnect between such aspirations and the material conditions of everyday classroom practice, reinforcing the need for sustained infrastructural support alongside pedagogical readiness.

Despite these limitations, technology was perceived to contribute positively to student motivation. The presence of digital tools appeared to increase students' attention and interest, even when technology use was limited to basic applications. This finding is consistent with (Hastomo et al., 2025), who reported that low-level technology integration can enhance student engagement by introducing variation and visual support. However, increased motivation did not automatically translate into meaningful learning, as some students misused mobile devices for non-academic purposes. This reflects the dual nature of educational technology described by (Syafrayani et al., 2024), which can simultaneously promote engagement and generate distraction.

The findings further indicate that motivational benefits derived from technology require complementary pedagogical structures to remain effective. Clear guidance, classroom management strategies, and explicit boundaries are essential in preventing distraction and dependency, particularly among junior high school students who are still developing self-regulation and digital responsibility. Thus, technological access alone is insufficient; it must be accompanied by deliberate instructional management and digital literacy practices to support sustained cognitive engagement.

The central role of the teacher in mediating technology and AI use is strongly emphasized in this study. Teacher control did not function merely as technical supervision but as an instructional mechanism through which students' digital behavior was shaped and regulated. This interpretation aligns with (Feng et al., 2023), who emphasized the importance of teacher presence and continuous guidance in meaningful AI integration, as well as (Mohamed et al., 2025), who highlighted teacher readiness and institutional support as foundational elements of effective implementation. In this context, teacher mediation operates as a form of pedagogical authority that safeguards learning objectives rather than constraining innovation.

This perspective is further reinforced by the teacher's view that AI should function as an assistant rather than a substitute, reflecting principles articulated in the AIAS framework proposed by (Perkins et al., 2025). The framework emphasizes responsible integration through assessment, integration, application, and support, positioning AI as a complementary resource that enhances instruction without replacing teachers' professional judgment or students' cognitive effort. However, the findings demonstrate that implementing such frameworks in public junior high school contexts is constrained by limited infrastructure, device availability, and institutional regulations, resulting in selective and partial application.

This gap between theoretical guidance and classroom realities constitutes a key contribution of the present study. By documenting how AI frameworks are interpreted and adapted in a resource-constrained environment, this research challenges

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assumptions of infrastructural stability often embedded in AI-in-education literature. It highlights the need for contextualized implementation models that account for material conditions and teacher agency rather than relying solely on universal frameworks.

Although teacher self-efficacy was not directly measured, the teacher's confidence in regulating classroom technology and managing students' digital behavior suggests a functional level of pedagogical self-efficacy. This inference is consistent with (Doghonadze, 2022) and (Xiaofan et al., 2025), who identified self-efficacy as a key factor influencing technology acceptance and instructional decision-making. The findings further imply that targeted professional development focusing on AI literacy and pedagogical integration could strengthen teachers' confidence and capacity, supporting informed and context-sensitive AI use rather than unrestricted adoption.

Finally, this study contributes to the literature by shifting analytical attention from higher education and well-resourced contexts to junior high school settings, which remain underrepresented in AI-in-education research (Az-Zahra et al., 2024) and (Hastomo et al., 2025). At this developmental stage, students are still forming essential capacities related to self-regulation, critical thinking, and digital citizenship. Consequently, AI integration cannot be treated solely as a matter of efficiency or access but requires careful pedagogical mediation aligned with learners' cognitive and ethical readiness.

Overall, the discussion demonstrates that technology and AI integration in EFL classrooms is not a purely technical process but a complex interaction among infrastructural conditions, pedagogical decision-making, ethical considerations, teacher preparedness, and institutional control. While AI offers potential benefits in terms of efficiency and motivation, its educational value depends on how it is mediated within specific classroom contexts. In resource-limited junior high school settings, teachers play a decisive role in ensuring that AI functions as a supportive learning aid rather than a shortcut that undermines cognitive engagement, reinforcing the view that technology integration is fundamentally a pedagogical process rather than a technological one (Feng et al., 2023) and (Mohamed et al., 2025)

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the integration of technology and artificial intelligence (AI) in English language teaching at a public junior high school remains basic and supportive rather than transformative. Technology was primarily utilized through conventional tools such as projectors and PowerPoint presentations, while AI use was limited to question generation and vocabulary translation. These findings indicate that AI has not yet functioned as a core instructional component, but instead served as a supplementary aid within existing teaching practices.

A key contribution of this study lies in highlighting the central role of the teacher in regulating and mediating technology and AI use. Teacher supervision, clear classroom rules, and a principled stance toward AI as an assistant rather than a substitute were crucial in maintaining pedagogical balance. This reinforces the understanding that effective AI integration is shaped less by technological availability and more by teachers' pedagogical judgment, ethical awareness, and professional control.

Overall, the study demonstrates that AI implementation in EFL contexts is a complex process influenced by infrastructural limitations, student behavior, institutional regulations, and teacher professionalism. By focusing on a public junior high school with limited resources, this research provides context-sensitive insights that extend existing literature largely centered on higher education or well-resourced settings.

Despite its contributions, this study has limitations. The use of a single participant and a narrative inquiry approach limits the generalizability of the findings. However, the study offers analytical depth by capturing the lived experiences of a teacher navigating technology and AI integration in real classroom conditions.

Future research is recommended to involve multiple teachers across different schools or regions to provide comparative perspectives. Further studies may also explore students' experiences, classroom observations, or the impact of targeted AI-related professional development programs. Such research would enrich understanding of how AI can be integrated more meaningfully and responsibly in junior high school EFL classrooms.

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