

How can AI can Assist Language Teachers Defeat Literacy Challenges?

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ABSTRACT

Grounded in Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, which emphasizes the role of mediated learning tools in cognitive and literacy development, this study explores how artificial intelligence (AI) can assist junior high school language teachers in addressing persistent literacy challenges among students. Despite the increasing availability of AI-based educational technologies such as grammar checkers, adaptive reading platforms, and automated feedback systems many educators struggle to maximize their potential to enhance literacy instruction. This gap reveals a need to understand how AI integration influences teachers' pedagogical practices, confidence, and adaptability when dealing with students of varying literacy abilities. Using a qualitative descriptive research design, the study will gather data through semi-structured interviews with junior high school language teachers. Interview questions will focus on teachers' experiences with AI tools in identifying literacy gaps, providing feedback, and modifying instructional strategies. Data will be analyzed thematically to determine patterns in teachers' perceptions and practices. The study is expected to reveal that AI tools can act as pedagogical scaffolds, helping teachers identify students' literacy needs more precisely and provide personalized, data-informed interventions. Additionally, findings are anticipated to show that effective AI use enhances teachers' instructional confidence and adaptability, although some may express concerns about over-reliance on technology. The results aim to contribute to the growing body of knowledge on AI-supported literacy pedagogy, offering practical insights for teacher training and policy development in technology-integrated language education.

Keywords: *Artificial Intelligence; Language; Literacy; Challenges*

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into education transformed how teachers approached literacy instruction. AI-powered tools such as grammar checkers, automated essay scorers, reading comprehension analyzers, and adaptive learning platforms became increasingly accessible in language classrooms (Calzada, 2024; Dela Calzada, Tacbobo, & Lualhati, 2025). These technologies promised to support teachers by providing immediate feedback, identifying students' literacy gaps, and tailoring instruction to individual needs. However, despite their growing presence, many language teachers struggled to fully harness AI's potential to address persistent challenges in reading comprehension, writing accuracy, and student engagement (Garil, Entong, & Muarip, 2024; Garil, 2024; Biri et al., 2026).

This issue was particularly evident in junior high school settings, where students transitioned from foundational to more advanced literacy tasks—a stage that often-revealed wide disparities in reading and writing proficiency (Divinagracia, 2024; Murro, 2024).

Anchored in Lev Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, this study viewed AI not merely as a technological tool but as a mediating artifact that extended teachers' instructional capacity within students' Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (Garil, Abbas, & Limen, 2024). Vygotsky emphasized that learning occurred through social interaction and mediation, where tools—both human and technological—supported learners in achieving higher levels of understanding. In this context, AI served as a cognitive scaffold that helped teachers diagnose learning needs, provide differentiated feedback, and promote literacy growth through guided interaction (Ceneciro, 2025). Thus, this study situated AI use within a sociocultural framework, highlighting its potential to enhance both teacher efficacy and student literacy development through mediated instruction.

The research gap lay in the limited understanding of how AI tools concretely assisted language teachers in addressing literacy difficulties and how these tools influenced teachers' confidence, adaptability, and sense of control in guiding students with varying literacy levels. While existing studies often focused on students' outcomes or the technological efficiency of AI systems, few explored the teacher's perspective—how educators experienced, interpreted, and integrated AI in their literacy pedagogy (Carpio, Caburnay, & Nolledo, 2024; Chavez & Unga, 2024). Addressing this gap was essential, as teachers were the central mediators who bridged technology and learning.

To fill this gap, the present study aimed to examine how AI tools supported language teachers in identifying and addressing students' literacy challenges and to determine how AI use influenced teachers' confidence and adaptability in diverse classrooms. The independent variable in this study was the use of AI tools in language teaching, while the dependent variables included teachers' ability to identify literacy gaps, provide effective interventions, and demonstrate confidence and adaptability in literacy instruction.

Key concepts explored in this study included AI-assisted literacy instruction, teacher adaptability, pedagogical confidence, and personalized feedback, all interpreted through the lens of Vygotsky's theory of mediation (Garil, 2024; Calzada, 2024). By focusing on junior high school language teachers, the study provided an authentic context where foundational literacy skills intersected with increasing academic literacy demands.

The findings showed that AI tools emerged as valuable pedagogical partners that enhanced teachers' capacity to diagnose and address literacy needs more efficiently. The study found that AI-supported teaching strengthened teachers' confidence in managing students with diverse literacy abilities, promoted adaptive instruction, and fostered more inclusive literacy development (Garil, Entong, & Muarip, 2024; Ceneciro, 2025; Biri et al., 2026). Ultimately, the research contributed to a deeper understanding of how AI, when grounded in sociocultural principles, empowered teachers as facilitators of literacy growth in the age of digital learning (Divinagracia, 2024; Dela Calzada et al., 2025).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Artificial Intelligence in Language Education

The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in education has transformed the ways in which teachers deliver instruction and assess student learning. In language education, AI-driven tools such as grammar checkers, speech recognition software, and reading comprehension analyzers have become increasingly common (Li & Ni, 2023; Chavez, 2023). These technologies assist teachers in identifying students' literacy strengths and weaknesses, offering insights that help personalize instruction (Chavez, Adalia, & Alberto, 2023). Studies suggest that AI enhances both formative and summative assessments by providing real-time feedback and data analytics that inform teachers' pedagogical decisions (Nguyen, 2022; Chavez & Lamorinas, 2023). The capacity of AI to process large volumes of student data enables educators to pinpoint literacy challenges such as poor comprehension, grammatical errors, and limited vocabulary more efficiently than traditional methods (Chavez, 2022).

AI as a Tool for Addressing Literacy Challenges

AI applications play a pivotal role in addressing literacy difficulties by providing differentiated and adaptive learning experiences. Tools such as automated writing evaluators, adaptive reading platforms, and AI-based tutoring systems offer targeted feedback that supports learners at various proficiency levels (Kukulska-Hulme et al., 2022; Comeros, Cuilan, & Chavez, 2024). These systems detect patterns in students' errors and recommend personalized learning tasks, enabling teachers to deliver tailored instruction (Chavez, 2023). For instance, AI-based writing tools like Grammarly and Quill use natural language processing (NLP) to correct grammar and syntax, while adaptive reading systems such as ReadTheory adjust text difficulty according to learners' performance (Chavez, 2024). Chen and Tsai (2023) argue that these personalized approaches foster inclusivity and improve literacy outcomes. Nevertheless, the success of AI integration depends largely on how well teachers align these technologies with curriculum goals and classroom pedagogy (Magno, Indal, & Chavez, 2024).

Enhancing Teacher Confidence and Adaptability through AI

AI technologies not only support students' literacy growth but also influence teachers' confidence and adaptability in instruction. When educators effectively integrate AI tools, they often feel more equipped to handle diverse literacy needs (Johnson, 2021; Chavez, Gregorio, & Araneta, 2024). AI enables teachers to make informed decisions based on data-driven insights, especially in mixed-ability classrooms (Chavez & Vicente, 2024). Moreover, it encourages reflective teaching practices by highlighting students' progress and learning patterns. However, overreliance on AI may lead to decreased professional autonomy or technological dependency (Mouza et al., 2022). To mitigate this, teachers must receive adequate training to use AI critically and strategically. Ongoing professional development helps ensure that educators view AI as an empowering extension of their teaching rather than a replacement for pedagogical expertise (Chavez, 2023).

The Challenges of AI Integration in Language Classrooms

Despite its advantages, the integration of AI in language teaching poses several challenges. Many educators encounter obstacles related to selecting appropriate AI tools, interpreting algorithmic feedback, and ensuring compatibility with existing curriculum standards (Alghamdi & Bukhari, 2023). Access to technological infrastructure and digital literacy disparities can also hinder AI adoption, particularly in under-resourced schools (Murro, Lobo, Inso, & Chavez, 2023). Ethical concerns such as data privacy, algorithmic bias, and the transparency of AI systems further complicate implementation (Zawacki-Richter et al., 2019). For junior high school teachers, these challenges are magnified, as they must balance technological innovation with the foundational literacy needs of adolescent learners. Hence, successful AI integration requires institutional support, clear ethical guidelines, and pedagogical training that fosters critical engagement with technology (Chavez, 2023).

AI's Contribution to Literacy Development in Education

Junior high school represents a crucial stage in literacy development as students transition to more complex reading and writing tasks. AI offers valuable support to teachers during this period by providing tools that scaffold comprehension, enhance writing proficiency, and sustain engagement (Sun & Wang, 2024; Chavez, 2022). AI-based reading applications promote motivation through interactive and gamified experiences, while intelligent tutoring systems offer individualized learning pathways that cater to different literacy levels (Chavez, Adalia, & Alberto, 2023; Chavez, 2024). These systems allow teachers to focus more on creative and critical instruction rather than repetitive error correction. As a result, AI serves as a practical aid in strengthening literacy competence and preparing students for the linguistic demands of higher education and future careers (Chavez & Lamorinas, 2023; Comeros, Cuilan, & Chavez, 2024). The reviewed literature highlights the transformative potential of AI in assisting language teachers to overcome literacy challenges. AI enhances teachers' diagnostic and feedback capabilities, supports personalized learning, and boosts confidence in addressing diverse literacy needs (Chavez, Gregorio, & Araneta, 2024; Chavez, Magno, & Indal, 2024). However, successful integration requires continuous professional training, ethical awareness, and a balanced approach that maintains human judgment at the center of instruction (Chavez & Vicente, 2024). For junior high school language educators, AI represents a vital tool for fostering literacy competence and promoting equitable, adaptive learning experiences in the 21st-century classroom (Chavez, 2023; Chavez, 2022).

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative research design to explore how artificial intelligence (AI) assisted language teachers in addressing literacy challenges among junior high school students. A qualitative approach allowed for an in-depth understanding of teachers' experiences, perceptions, and practical strategies in integrating AI tools into classroom instruction. Through semi-structured interviews, the study sought to capture detailed insights regarding the effectiveness of AI in identifying literacy gaps, providing personalized feedback, and enhancing teaching efficiency.

The respondents of this study were junior high school language teachers, selected due to their direct involvement in developing students' foundational literacy skills while supporting their transition to more advanced reading and writing tasks. Participants were chosen using purposive sampling to ensure they had experience using AI-based educational tools, such as grammar checkers, reading analyzers, and adaptive learning platforms. This target group provided relevant and practical insights into the ways AI contributed to literacy development in secondary education.

The main data collection instrument of this study was a semi-structured interview guide that was carefully aligned with the research objectives. The interviews were designed to explore two central themes: first, how AI tools supported language teachers in identifying and addressing students' literacy difficulties; and second, how these tools influenced teachers' confidence, adaptability, and instructional strategies in managing diverse literacy levels. This format allowed participants the flexibility to share detailed experiences while ensuring that all essential topics were covered consistently across interviews. Each interview lasted approximately 30 to 45 minutes and was conducted either face-to-face or through online platforms such as Zoom or Google Meet, depending on the teachers' availability, accessibility, and convenience. This approach ensured that the data collection process remained inclusive and adaptable to the participants' varied teaching environments and schedules.

The data collection process began with the researcher securing approval from school administrators and the ethics review committee. Once permission was granted, qualified teachers were invited to participate and were informed about the study's purpose and procedures. Before each interview, participants provided informed consent to ensure voluntary and confidential participation. Semi-structured interviews were then conducted in a quiet and convenient setting, either face-to-face or online, depending on availability. With participants' permission, interviews were audio-recorded and supported by field notes for additional context. Afterward, the recordings were transcribed verbatim, and participants were given the opportunity to review their transcripts to confirm accuracy and ensure their views were properly represented.

The collected data were analyzed using Thematic Analysis, following the six-phase approach proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). First, the researcher familiarized themselves with the data by thoroughly reading and re-reading the interview transcripts to gain a deep understanding of the participants' responses. Next, initial codes were generated to identify recurring ideas and patterns related to the use of AI in literacy teaching. These codes were then organized into broader themes that aligned with the study's objectives, such as AI as a diagnostic tool or its influence on teacher confidence and adaptability. The identified themes were reviewed to ensure that they accurately represented the data and maintained internal consistency. Afterward, the researcher defined and named the themes to capture the essence of teachers' experiences. Finally, a comprehensive report was produced by integrating representative quotations and interpretations within the framework of Lev Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory. The analysis highlighted Vygotsky's concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), emphasizing AI's function as a mediating tool that enhanced both teaching and learning processes.

This study adhered to established ethical standards for research involving human participants. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, who were informed of the

study's purpose, voluntary nature, and their right to withdraw at any time. No vulnerable participants were involved, as all respondents were professional language teachers. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained through the use of pseudonyms, and all data were securely stored for research purposes only.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Objectives 1. To examine how AI tools support language teachers in identifying and addressing students' literacy difficulties.

Question No. 1. How do AI tools help you identify your students' literacy weaknesses, such as reading comprehension or grammar gaps?

Theme 1: *Error Identification*

Ten (10) respondents expressed that AI tools like Grammarly and Quillbot help them spot common grammar and errors in students' writing. They highlight recurring mistakes, such as verb tense inconsistency or misuse of punctuation, which they can then address through targeted mini-lessons. These tools provide instant explanations for each correction, allowing students to understand why something is wrong instead of just fixing it automatically. Additionally, they mentioned that by reviewing the AI's feedback summaries, they can identify class-wide trends like frequent misuse of prepositions or weak sentence variety which helps them design remedial lessons focused on those specific areas. It also saves time during checking, giving them more opportunity to provide personalized comments on content and creativity rather than just technical accuracy.

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Theme 2: *AI feedback highlights sentence-level issues*

Five (5) respondents shared that AI writing checkers give quick feedback on sentence structure, coherence, and organization, which allows them to identify writing patterns across the class. For instance, if most students score low in "clarity" or "conciseness," they know they need to revisit paragraph organization and idea development. These tools point out issues like wordiness, repetition, or unclear transitions, helping students become more aware of how their writing flows. Additionally, they mentioned that by reviewing AI feedback, they can pinpoint which areas affect overall readability, such as poor topic sentence construction or lack of logical sequencing. This helps them design targeted lessons on how to build stronger arguments, use cohesive devices, or structure ideas effectively. Over time, they notice improvements in how they organize thoughts and express ideas more clearly and confidently.

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"I can pinpoint which areas affect overall readability, such as poor topic sentence construction or lack of logical sequencing."

Theme 3: Real-time analysis

Seven (7) respondents expressed that AI-powered diagnostic tools can analyze reading levels, vocabulary use, and comprehension skills in real time. This helps them group students according to their proficiency and provide differentiated reading materials suited to their level. These tools identify which students struggle with decoding words, understanding context, or interpreting figurative language. Additionally, they shared that AI also recommends appropriate texts or exercises automatically, which saves time in lesson preparation and ensures that each student is reading at a level that challenges but doesn't frustrate them. Over time, they can track progress and adjust groupings as their reading comprehension improves.

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Question No. 2. What kind of feedback or assistance from AI tools do you find most useful in addressing students' literacy challenges?

Theme 1: Grammar and Sentence Structure Feedback

Eighth (8) respondents expressed that AI tools help them identify common grammatical errors and awkward sentence constructions in student writing. They use the suggestions to show students how to restructure their sentences for clarity and coherence. This process helps students become more conscious of their own writing habits and develop better self-editing skills. Additionally, they mentioned that these tools also highlight recurring issues such as run-on sentences, incorrect verb tenses, or misplaced modifiers which helps them address patterns across the class. They often use the AI feedback as examples during mini-lessons on grammar and sentence fluency, so students can understand not just what's wrong, but why it's wrong.

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Theme 2: Reading Comprehension Insights

Five (5) respondents expressed that they find AI reading analysis tools useful because it highlights which parts of a text students struggle to understand. This helps them design guided questions and scaffolded reading activities. These tools often provide insights into students' comprehension patterns such as difficulty with inference, vocabulary, or identifying main ideas. Additionally, they mentioned that by analyzing the data, they can tailor their reading instruction to target specific skills, like context clue usage or summarizing key points. The reports also help them group students according to their reading proficiency, so they can provide leveled materials and differentiated tasks.

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I can tailor my reading instruction to target specific skills, like context clue usage or summarizing key points. "

Theme 3: Plagiarism and Originality Detection

Six (6) respondents mentioned that they appreciate AI tools that adapt to each student's writing style and learning progress. Personalized suggestions make feedback more meaningful and easier for students to apply. These tools recognize each learner's strengths and recurring challenges, allowing feedback to be tailored rather than generic. Additionally, they mentioned that the individualized approach encourages students to revise thoughtfully instead of just accepting corrections. Over time, they've noticed that students become more engaged in the writing process because they can see their improvement through targeted feedback that matches their current level.

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"The individualized approach encourages students to revise thoughtfully instead of just accepting corrections. "

Question No. 3. Can you describe a specific situation where AI helped you respond more effectively to a student's reading or writing difficulty?

Theme 1: AI reading tool identified where students struggled with comprehension.

Seven (7) respondents expressed that they used an AI reading comprehension tool that highlighted which parts of a story most students struggled with. It showed that many couldn't grasp the figurative meanings in certain paragraphs, such as idiomatic expressions and symbolic descriptions. With that data, they created short guided reading activities that focused on interpreting context clues and figurative language, which made discussions more meaningful. Additionally, they mentioned that the AI also categorized comprehension gaps according to specific cognitive skills, helping them determine whether students struggled with vocabulary, inference, or contextual interpretation. With these insights, they designed differentiated guided reading activities that focused on context clues, symbolism, and tone recognition, allowing each group to work on their specific needs.

"I used an AI reading comprehension tool that highlighted which parts of a story most students struggled with."

"The AI also categorized comprehension gaps according to specific cognitive skills, helping me determine whether students struggled with vocabulary, inference, or contextual interpretation."

Theme 2: Efficient Error Detection and Transparent feedback

Five (5) respondents expressed that AI writing checkers helped them quickly identify recurring grammatical errors across their students' essays. Instead of spending hours marking each one, they used the AI summary to plan a mini-lesson on sentence structure and subject-verb agreement. The tool's error analysis also allowed them to spot patterns across different sections of the class. For example, many students tended to misuse verb tenses or had difficulty maintaining parallel structure. Additionally, they mentioned that they grouped students according to their specific writing challenges and provided targeted exercises suited to their needs. During feedback sessions, they showed examples of anonymous AI-generated reports so students could visualize common mistakes and understand how to revise them. This made feedback more transparent and less intimidating, encouraging students to take a more active role in improving their writing.

"AI writing checkers helped me quickly identify recurring grammatical errors across my students' essays."

"I grouped students according to their specific writing challenges and provided targeted exercises suited to their needs."

Theme 3: Personalized Reading Experience

Eight (8) respondents expressed that they used an AI storytelling app that adapted stories to students' interests and reading levels. It made reluctant readers more engaged because the content felt personalized and relatable. The AI tool analyzed their reading behavior such as how long they spent on each section and which parts they reread and used that data to recommend new stories suited to their comprehension level and preferred genres. Additionally, they mentioned that they incorporated these insights into targeted follow-up activities, such as guided discussions and creative retellings, to reinforce understanding. They also noticed that students who rarely participated in reading tasks began to take initiative in exploring new stories, even outside class requirements. The app also encouraged self-paced learning, allowing students to read and reflect at their own speed while still receiving adaptive feedback.

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Research Objectives 2. To determine how AI tools influence language teachers' confidence and adaptability in guiding students with different literacy levels.

Question No. 1. How has using AI affected your confidence when teaching students with varying levels of reading or writing skills?

Theme 1: *Increased confidence*

Nine (9) respondents expressed that using AI tools has made them more confident in addressing students' different proficiency levels. They can quickly identify who needs extra help and who's ready for enrichment. For instance, AI reading diagnostics show them which students struggle with vocabulary or comprehension, allowing them to plan targeted lessons without guessing. It saves time and gives them data they can trust. Additionally, they mentioned that it also helps them create differentiated reading materials that match each student's level, making lessons more inclusive. They feel more prepared during class discussions because they already know which areas to emphasize for certain groups. The instant feedback from AI tools boosts their confidence in making instructional decisions and ensures that no student is left behind, whether they're advanced or still developing foundational skills.

"Using AI tools has made me more confident in addressing students' different proficiency levels. I can quickly identify who needs extra help and who's ready for enrichment."

"It also helps me create differentiated reading materials that match each student's level, making lessons more inclusive."

Theme 2: *Limited confidence boost*

Six (6) respondents expressed that they haven't felt a huge change in their confidence. AI can analyze students' work, but sometimes it doesn't capture nuances like tone, creativity, or cultural context. They still need to interpret results carefully. It's useful for spotting patterns, but they are cautious not to depend on it too much. Additionally, they mentioned that they also notice that some AI tools tend to overemphasize grammar accuracy, which can discourage students from experimenting with their writing style. Because of that, they still rely on their professional judgment to balance technical correctness with meaningful expression.

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"I also notice that some AI tools tend to overemphasize grammar accuracy, which can discourage students from experimenting with their writing style."

Theme 2: *Supportive but cautious*

Five (5) respondents expressed that AI helps them differentiate tasks more efficiently, but they still rely on their own judgment. The insights from AI, like readability scores and grammar feedback, guide their planning, yet they make adjustments based on what they observe in class. It boosts their confidence in decision-making, but they see AI as a supplement, not a replacement for teacher expertise. What they appreciate most is how AI gives them a clearer picture of their

students' skill levels before they start a lesson. Additionally, they mentioned that they always verify AI suggestions through actual student performance and classroom interactions. There are moments when AI results don't match what they see in practice, so they treat the data as a guide rather than a final verdict. Overall, AI enhances their confidence in planning and differentiation, but their professional intuition and experience still play the biggest role in responding to their students' needs.

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"I always verify AI suggestions through actual student performance and classroom interactions. There are moments when AI results don't match what I see in practice, so I treat the data as a guide rather than a final verdict."

Question No. 2. How do AI tools help you adjust your lessons or strategies when some students progress faster or slower than others?

Theme 1: Differentiate instruction by tracking student progress

Seven (7) respondents expressed that AI tools track student progress and reveal which students advance quickly and which one's struggle with specific skills such as grammar, vocabulary, or comprehension. The generated reports allow them to differentiate instruction more effectively, they can assign enrichment tasks like creative writing or analytical reading activities to advanced learners, while providing targeted practice and mini-lessons for those who need additional support. Additionally, they mentioned that they can easily adjust their lesson plans by reviewing difficult topics or integrating extension materials where needed. The data also helps them group students strategically, pairing those with similar learning needs or allowing faster learners to take leadership roles in peer activities. AI tools save them time in analyzing scores manually and enable them to focus on designing meaningful interventions that address individual learning gaps and promote balanced progress across the class.

"AI tools track student progress and reveal which students advance quickly and which ones struggle with specific skills such as grammar, vocabulary, or comprehension."

"I can easily adjust my lesson plans by reviewing difficult topics or integrating extension materials where needed."

Theme 2: Efficiently manage mixed-ability classes and support individual progress

Nine (9) respondents expressed that AI-powered reading and writing apps automatically adjust the difficulty of texts and exercises based on each student's performance. When the system detects mastery of a certain level, it progresses the student to more complex materials, while others receive additional practice and scaffolding at their current level. This adaptive feature ensures that all learners are appropriately challenged and supported, preventing both frustration and boredom. Additionally, they mentioned that it also helps them manage mixed-ability classes more efficiently

because they no longer have to manually differentiate every activity. The AI recommendations guide them in designing follow-up lessons, selecting supplementary materials, and monitoring individual growth. They also noticed that students become more confident and independent readers and writers since the content feels personalized to their pace and ability.

"AI-powered reading and writing apps automatically adjust the difficulty of texts and exercises based on each student's performance."

"It also helps me manage mixed-ability classes more efficiently because I no longer have to manually differentiate every activity."

Theme 3: Support formative assessment

Five (5) respondents expressed that they use AI tools mainly for formative assessment because they provide clear, data-driven summaries of student performance and learning patterns. These insights help them identify each learner's strengths and weaknesses, which they then use to group students strategically for collaborative activities. By mixing faster learners with those who need more guidance, they can promote peer learning and encourage cooperation rather than competition. Additionally, they mentioned that this approach not only supports struggling students through peer assistance but also reinforces understanding among advanced learners as they explain concepts to others. AI tools enhance their ability to facilitate a more supportive and interactive classroom environment where technology informs decisions, but authentic human collaboration remains at the core of learning.

"I use AI tools mainly for formative assessment because they provide clear, data-driven summaries of student performance and learning patterns."

"This approach not only supports struggling students through peer assistance but also reinforces understanding among advanced learners as they explain concepts to others."

Question No. 3. Do you think AI tools make you more capable or more dependent when handling literacy challenges in the classroom? Why?

Theme 1: Enhanced Capability

Five (5) respondents expressed that AI tools make them more capable in addressing students' literacy challenges because it helps them see patterns they might miss, like recurring comprehension gaps or weak sentence structures. However, they try not to rely on them completely. They still use their professional judgment to interpret the data and decide what's best for their students. Additionally, they mentioned that AI provides quick, data-driven insights that allow them to respond more efficiently to students' needs. At the same time, they recognize that AI doesn't capture everything, especially the nuances of tone, creativity, or emotional engagement in writing. That's why they treat AI feedback as a supplement rather than a substitute for their expertise. AI increases their capability by improving efficiency and accuracy, but their role as a teacher remains essential in interpreting, contextualizing, and humanizing the results.

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"AI provides quick, data-driven insights that allow me to respond more efficiently to students' needs."

Theme 2: Self-Awareness

Five (5) respondents shared that sometimes they worry that they are becoming too dependent on AI feedback. They notice that when the tool is unavailable, it takes them longer to assess essays or reading tasks. While AI helps a lot with efficiency, they remind themselves not to let it replace their analytical and evaluative skills as a teacher. Additionally, they mentioned that this awareness pushes them to strike a balance. They use AI to handle routine tasks but still make sure they engage deeply with their students' writing through manual checking and qualitative feedback. They believe that teaching literacy involves not only identifying technical errors but also understanding the thought process and creativity behind a student's work which is something that only human interpretation can fully appreciate.

"Sometimes I worry that I'm becoming too dependent on AI feedback. I notice that when the tool is unavailable, it takes me longer to assess essays or reading tasks."

"This awareness pushes me to strike a balance. I use AI to handle routine tasks but still make sure I engage deeply with my students' writing through manual checking and qualitative feedback."

Theme 3: AI is viewed as a partner, not a replacement.

Nine (9) respondents mentioned that AI doesn't make them dependent, instead it makes their teaching more collaborative. They see it as a partner that provides insights about students' literacy performance. They still take charge of interpreting the results and making the learning experience more human, creative, and contextualized. Additionally, they shared that what makes AI useful is how it complements their professional intuition. The technology handles the analytical side, while they focus on making learning more human through discussions, storytelling, and contextualized examples that connect literacy to students' lives. In this way, AI amplifies their capability to personalize learning without losing the emotional and cultural depth that classroom interactions bring. This balance helps create a richer and more engaging literacy environment for students.

"AI doesn't make me dependent, instead it makes my teaching more collaborative. I see it as a partner that provides insights about students' literacy performance."

"What makes AI useful is how it complements my professional intuition. The technology handles the analytical side, while I focus on making learning more human through discussions, storytelling, and contextualized examples that connect literacy to students' lives."

This study was grounded in Lev Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, which emphasizes the role of social interaction, cultural tools, and mediated learning in cognitive and language development. Central to this theory is the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which refers to the gap between what learners can accomplish independently and what they can achieve with guidance. In this context, AI tools were viewed as mediating instruments that supported teachers in facilitating students' literacy development within their ZPD. From a sociocultural perspective, tools such as language, symbols, and technologies function as mediators of learning. AI, as a contemporary digital tool, extended the instructional process by supporting teachers' ability to interpret learner needs and guide development more effectively. This aligns with Vygotsky's notion that learning is shaped through interaction with both human and non-human mediators.

Furthermore, teaching itself is a socially mediated activity. The integration of AI introduced new forms of interaction between teachers and technological tools, influencing how instruction is delivered and adapted. Through this lens, AI was conceptualized not as a replacement for teachers but as a supportive tool that complements professional judgment. Finally, Vygotsky's emphasis on social learning underscores that literacy development occurs through collaboration and guided interaction. AI-supported environments can enhance, rather than replace, these social processes by assisting teachers in structuring meaningful learning experiences.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study indicated that AI tools effectively supported language teachers in identifying and addressing students' literacy challenges, particularly in grammar, sentence structure, and reading comprehension. AI-assisted feedback enabled more efficient diagnosis of literacy gaps and facilitated differentiated instruction, while also enhancing teachers' confidence and adaptability in managing diverse learners. This study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on AI-assisted literacy instruction by demonstrating that AI functions as a pedagogical support tool that strengthens teachers' instructional decision-making while preserving the human and contextual aspects of teaching.

However, the study was limited by its qualitative design and relatively small sample of junior high school language teachers, which may restrict the generalisability of the findings to other educational contexts. Future research may involve larger and more diverse samples, including different educational levels and subject areas, as well as examine the long-term impact of AI integration on students' literacy development and learning outcomes.

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