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Teachers between authority and automation: professional agency and pedagogical decision-making in AI-mediated language education

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ABSTRACT

Background: AI-mediated language education has intensified debates about whether teachers remain authoritative pedagogical agents or become procedural supervisors of automated instructional systems. **Objective:** This study examines how teacher authority, professional agency, and pedagogical decision-making are represented in public documents on artificial intelligence in education and language learning. **Method:** Using qualitative corpus-assisted document analysis, this study analysed 18 public documents published between 2022 and 2026 through pedagogical decision episodes related to planning, feedback, assessment, language support, ethical governance, and curriculum implementation. **Results:** Findings indicate that teacher authority is not directly displaced by AI but redistributed through ethical oversight, human judgement, and AI literacy. Professional agency emerges as an institutional and ethical condition, shaped by policy frameworks, accountability expectations, professional learning, and teachers' capacity to evaluate or reject AI-generated output. **Implication:** Language-pedagogical alignment remains uneven, with stronger attention to writing support, feedback, translation, and implementation than to pragmatic appropriateness, cultural meaning, learner identity, and inclusive multilingual practice. **Novelty:** This study contributes a decision-centred framework for understanding AI-mediated language education as a professional negotiation space where automation must be governed through context-sensitive teacher judgement.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid institutionalization of artificial intelligence in education has shifted teaching from a primarily human-centred professional activity into a hybrid space where pedagogical decisions are increasingly mediated by automated systems. Since the public emergence of generative AI in late 2022, teachers have faced new pressures to use AI for lesson planning, feedback, assessment, translation, writing support, and learner interaction, while remaining accountable for outcomes they do not fully control. This condition is especially consequential in language education because language teaching depends not only on accuracy, but also on context, culture, learner identity, proficiency level, and communicative purpose. Ethical discussions in K-12 and higher education show that AI raises persistent concerns about transparency, data protection, bias, accountability, and human oversight [1], [2]. Thus, the crucial issue is no longer whether teachers use AI, but how professional authority survives when automation enters the core of pedagogical judgement.

Recent literature has examined AI in education through several important lenses. Reviews of AI in higher education have mapped its expanding role in assessment, personalization, prediction, tutoring, and institutional decision-making [3], [4], while studies on AI in language education have highlighted applications in writing instruction, translation, feedback, speaking practice, and second-language learning support [5], [6], [7]. Other scholars have emphasized the complementary relationship between teachers and large language models, arguing that ChatGPT-like systems should support rather than replace human teachers [8], [9]. However, much of this literature still privileges tool functionality, learner performance, or adoption readiness. What remains insufficiently examined is how teachers make situated professional decisions when AI output appears pedagogically useful, linguistically fluent, ethically uncertain, or institutionally encouraged.

This study addresses that gap by examining professional agency and pedagogical decision-making in AI-mediated language education. It asks how language teachers interpret their authority when AI participates in lesson design, feedback production, assessment preparation, learner support, and classroom communication. More specifically, this study investigates which decisions teachers retain, which decisions they delegate to AI, and which decisions become negotiated through human–algorithm interaction. This focus extends current work on AI literacy and teacher professional competence by moving beyond whether teachers possess technical familiarity with AI tools [10], [11], [12]. Instead, this study treats agency as a relational and professional capacity shaped by institutional policy, ethical responsibility, pedagogical knowledge, and language-specific judgement. In this sense, teacher agency is not reduced to individual confidence or digital skill, but understood as the ability to act responsibly within automated pedagogical environments.

This study advances the argument that AI does not simply weaken or strengthen teacher authority; rather, it redistributes authority across teachers, institutions, platforms, and algorithmic systems. Such redistribution can expand teachers' pedagogical resources when AI is critically appropriated, but it can also narrow professional judgement when automated suggestions become default decisions. This argument builds on scholarship that positions human oversight as central to responsible educational AI and warns against closing pedagogical loops without meaningful teacher intervention [13], [14]. It also resonates with research on professional digital competence, where teacher agency depends on both personal expertise and enabling institutional conditions [15]. The implication is that AI-mediated language education should not be evaluated only by efficiency, innovation, or technical accuracy. It must also be assessed by whether teachers remain capable of making context-sensitive, ethical, and pedagogically defensible decisions.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Professional agency

Professional agency refers to teachers' capacity to exercise informed judgement, negotiate institutional demands, and act responsibly within changing pedagogical conditions. In AI-mediated education, this concept cannot be reduced to individual autonomy or technological competence because teachers increasingly work through systems that recommend, generate, classify, and evaluate learning activities. Nagel, Guðmundsdóttir, and Afdal (2023) [15] frame agency as connected to professional digital competence, while Mouta, Torrecilla-Sánchez, and Pinto-Llorente (2024) [14] emphasize ethical decision-making in AIED. Barjesteh, Isaee, and Manoochehrzadeh (2026) [16] extend this issue to EFL professional development. Together, these works suggest that agency is relational, situated, and ethically constrained rather than merely personal choice.

Its main indicators include critical AI literacy, ethical responsibility, pedagogical discretion, institutional negotiation, and reflective adaptation. Studies on teacher preparation show that future teachers need more than operational familiarity with AI; they require evaluative judgement to decide when AI output is useful, misleading, biased, or pedagogically inappropriate [10], [11], [17]. Zou, Xie, and Kohnke (2025) [12] similarly argue for pedagogic AI competence, while Kalnina, Nīmante, and Baranova (2024) [18] stress benefits and challenges for pre-service teachers. Thus, teacher agency becomes visible when teachers can justify, revise, or reject AI-supported decisions.

2.2. Pedagogical decision

Pedagogical decision making concerns how teachers select goals, materials, methods, feedback, assessment tasks, and interactional strategies. In AI-mediated contexts, this process becomes hybrid because human judgement interacts with automated suggestions. Jeon and Lee (2023) [8] conceptualize large language models as complementary to teachers, whereas Fitria (2023) [19] questions whether AI may replace teacher roles. Ninaus and Sailer (2022) [13] argue that human participation remains necessary to "close the loop" in educational AI. However, replacement-versus-assistance debates often oversimplify classroom

practice. Pedagogical decision-making is better understood as a continuum of delegation, verification, adaptation, and resistance shaped by teacher expertise and institutional expectations.

Key aspects of AI-mediated decision-making include planning, feedback, assessment, learner support, content generation, and classroom orchestration. Labadze, Grigolia, and Machaidze (2023) [9] show that chatbots can support tutoring and interaction, while Luo, Xia, and Lu (2025) [7] identify AI roles in second-language writing education. Wang (2023) [21] discusses AI in English translation teaching, and Tolstykh and Oshchepkova (2024) [20] map multiple AI roles in English classrooms. Yet these studies also imply a limitation: functional efficiency does not guarantee pedagogical validity. Decisions about language level, cultural appropriateness, communicative purpose, and learner identity still require teacher interpretation rather than automated fluency alone.

2.3. AI-mediated language education

AI-mediated language education refers to language teaching and learning environments in which AI tools participate in instruction, feedback, translation, writing, assessment, or communication. Systematic reviews show that AI research in language learning has expanded across adaptive learning, automated feedback, speaking support, and writing assistance [5], [6]. Broader higher education reviews similarly note rapid diversification of AI applications [3], [4]. However, language education differs from general AI adoption because linguistic accuracy is only one dimension. Meaning, pragmatics, multilingual identity, sociocultural context, and discourse norms shape whether AI output is pedagogically defensible.

This field can be analysed through three indicators: linguistic alignment, ethical governance, and professional accountability. Ethical AI scholarship warns that educational AI involves privacy, bias, opacity, fairness, and responsibility distribution [1], [2]. Governance-oriented studies further show that institutional policy affects how educators interpret acceptable AI use [22], [23], [24]. Turvey and Pachler (2025) [25] sharpen this debate by examining convergence and divergence between human-mediated and algorithmically mediated pedagogy. Therefore, this study positions AI-mediated language education as a professional negotiation space where teacher agency, automated authority, and language-specific judgement intersect.

3. METHOD

The unit of analysis in this study is the pedagogical decision episode, defined as a textual segment in which teacher authority, AI mediation, ethical responsibility, or language-pedagogical judgement is explicitly or implicitly articulated. This unit was selected because AI-mediated language education does not operate only at policy level, but through concrete decisions about lesson design, feedback, assessment, translation, learner support, and classroom interaction. The corpus consisted of 18 deduplicated public documents published between 2022 and 2026. These documents were classified as primary, secondary, or contextual data to distinguish official normative guidance, field-facing synthesis, and broader implementation discourse.

This study employed qualitative corpus-assisted document analysis. This design was appropriate because this study did not measure teacher behaviour directly, but examined how public documents construct teacher roles, professional agency, and AI-mediated pedagogical responsibility. Corpus-assisted analysis allowed systematic comparison across policy guidance, competency frameworks, sector reports, curriculum documents, and implementation discourse without treating document frequency as causal evidence. The design also enabled interpretive attention to how authority is distributed across teachers, institutions, AI systems, and regulatory frameworks. Accordingly, this study combined structured metadata analysis with close reading of decision-related statements.

Information sources were selected from official institutions, reputable public bodies, and sector-specific educational organizations. Primary data consisted of official AI education guidelines, teacher competency frameworks, legal or curriculum-related documents, and policy reports. Secondary data consisted of systematic reviews, sector reports, and education outlook documents that synthesized emerging AI practices in language teaching and digital education. Contextual data included public education strategy texts and media reports used to situate Indonesian and global implementation discourse. This layered structure reduced conceptual overgeneralization by separating normative policy claims, research synthesis, and contextual implementation narratives.

Data collection followed a transparent documentary procedure. First, searches were conducted using keywords related to teacher agency, AI education, language teaching, ethical AI, AI literacy, automation, and pedagogical decision-making. Second, documents were screened by date, institutional credibility, public accessibility, and relevance to AI-mediated education. Third, metadata were recorded, including title, date, institution, region, source type, URL, language, retrieval date, and contextual relevance. Fourth, textual segments were extracted into a corpus text file. Fifth, duplicate entries were removed through title–URL comparison, and each retained document was assigned a unique code from AI-TAA-001 to AI-TAA-018.

Table 1. Composition of corpus dataset

Code	Data Type	Source	Location	Period	Quantity	Characteristics	Status
AI-TAA-001	Primary	UNESCO	Global	2023	1	Generative AI guidance for education and research	Unique
AI-TAA-002	Primary	UNESCO	Global	2024	1	AI teacher competency framework	Unique
AI-TAA-003	Primary	European Commission	Europe	2022	1	Ethical AI and data guideline for educators	Unique
AI-TAA-004	Primary	U.S. Department of Education	United States	2023	1	AI teaching and learning policy report	Unique
AI-TAA-005	Primary	OECD / Education International	Global/OECD	2023	1	AI opportunities, guardrails, and equity guidance	Unique
AI-TAA-006	Primary	TeachAI	Global	2023	1	School AI guidance toolkit	Unique
AI-TAA-007	Primary	LLDikti III / Kemdiktisaintek	Indonesia	2024	1	Generative AI guide for higher education learning	Unique
AI-TAA-008	Primary	Kemdikdasmen	Indonesia	2025	1	Academic policy text on coding and AI learning	Unique
AI-TAA-009	Primary	Kemdikdasmen	Indonesia	2025	1	Implementation guidance for coding and AI learning	Unique
AI-TAA-010	Primary	Kemdikdasmen	Indonesia	2025	1	Official coding and AI learning portal	Unique
AI-TAA-011	Primary	Kemdikdasmen / BPK	Indonesia	2025	1	Curriculum regulation metadata	Unique
AI-TAA-012	Secondary	British Council	Global ELT	2024	1	AI and English language teaching sector report	Unique
AI-TAA-013	Secondary	British Council	Global ELT	2022	1	Systematic review on AI in English language teaching	Unique
AI-TAA-014	Secondary	OECD	OECD/Global	2026	1	Digital education outlook and AI evidence	Unique
AI-TAA-015	Context	UNICEF Innocenti	Global/Inclusion	2025	1	AI and inclusive education strategy article	Unique
AI-TAA-016	Context	UNICEF	Global	2026	1	Digital education strategy report	Unique
AI-TAA-017	Context	Indonesia.go.id	Indonesia	2024	1	Public information on AI and IT learning	Unique
AI-TAA-018	Context	GovInsider	Indonesia	2025	1	Media report on AI learning challenges in Indonesia	Unique

Data analysis proceeded through three connected stages. The first stage identified pedagogical authority by coding decision domains, AI roles, and teacher actions such as retaining judgement, verifying output, adapting materials, supervising use, or requesting training. The second stage examined professional agency by coding ethical responsibility, institutional support, accountability, transparency, and automation risks. The third stage assessed language-pedagogical alignment by examining references to ELT, multilingual learning, translation, feedback, learner proficiency, and cultural appropriateness. Interpretation was conducted through cross-strand synthesis, with findings treated as documentary patterns rather than causal effects.

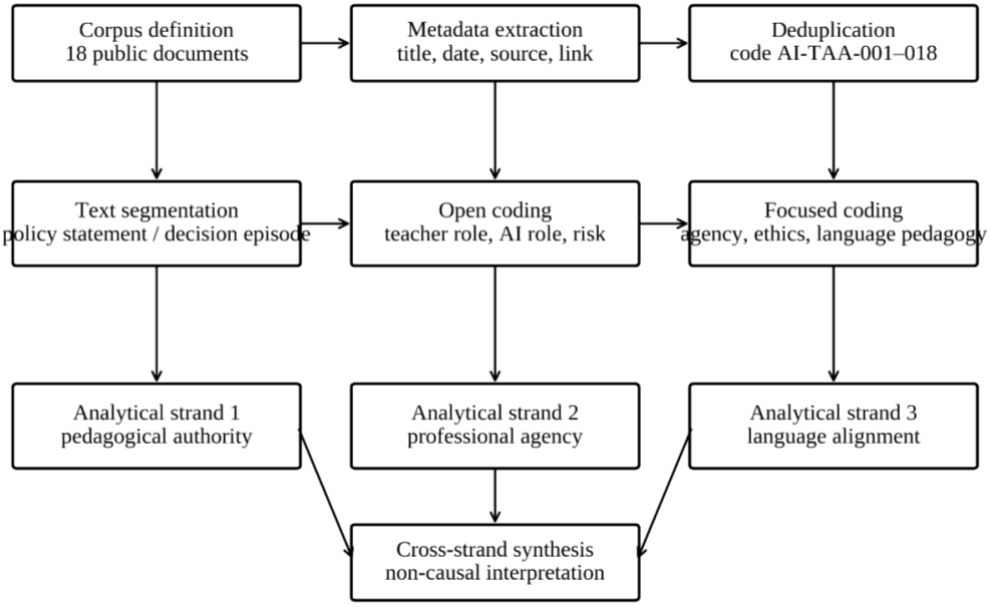

Figure 1. Operational matrix of analysis

4. RESULTS

4.1. Pedagogical authority and ai-mediated decision

AI-mediated language education presents teacher authority as a negotiated professional position rather than a fixed institutional status. The corpus indicates that authority is repeatedly attached to responsibility, oversight, and contextual judgement, not simply to teachers' formal role in classrooms. This pattern matters because AI tools increasingly appear in lesson planning, feedback, assessment design, translation support, and material adaptation, where decisions may seem technically efficient but remain pedagogically consequential. Current scholarship similarly warns that AI in education must preserve meaningful human intervention, ethical accountability, and professional discretion [2], [13], [14]. This evidence suggests that teacher authority is being reorganized through supervised delegation rather than displaced through direct replacement.

The most dominant pattern is ethical governance and accountability, appearing in 14 documents, followed by human oversight and final judgement in 13 documents. Teacher AI literacy and professional learning also appear strongly, with 12 occurrences, indicating that professional capacity is treated as a condition for responsible AI use. AI as a planning and material-design assistant appears in 11 documents, while automated feedback and assessment support appears in 9 documents. Language-pedagogical alignment appears in 8 documents, and institutional curriculum or implementation mandate appears in 7 documents. These distributions show that public AI education discourse gives greater attention to governance, oversight, and teacher competence than to language-specific pedagogical concerns. The pattern is therefore not anti-AI, but cautiously conditional.

Table 2. Pedagogical authority and AI-mediated decision

Main Category	Subcategory	Indicator	Frequency	Percentage	Data Variation	Representative Expression	Data Code	Interpretation
Ethical governance and accountability	Responsible use of AI in teaching	Human responsibility, transparency, data protection, bias awareness	14	77.8%	Policy guidance, ethical framework, institutional recommendation, implementation report	Teachers remain accountable for AI-supported educational decisions even when systems generate instructional output.	AI-TAA-001; AI-TAA-002; AI-TAA-003; AI-TAA-004; AI-TAA-005; AI-TAA-006; AI-TAA-007; AI-TAA-008; AI-TAA-009; AI-TAA-010; AI-TAA-011; AI-TAA-014; AI-TAA-015; AI-TAA-016	Teacher authority is framed less as unrestricted autonomy and more as accountable professional judgement under ethical constraints.
Human oversight and final judgement	Teacher as pedagogical verifier	Final decision, review, supervision, contextual correction	13	72.2%	AI policy, competency framework, school guidance, higher education guidance, curriculum-related document	AI may assist learning design, but final pedagogical judgement should remain with educators.	AI-TAA-001; AI-TAA-002; AI-TAA-003; AI-TAA-004; AI-TAA-005; AI-TAA-006; AI-TAA-007; AI-TAA-008; AI-TAA-009; AI-TAA-010; AI-TAA-012; AI-TAA-014; AI-TAA-016	Authority is retained through verification rather than complete rejection of automation.
Teacher AI literacy and professional learning	Capacity to evaluate AI output	AI literacy, prompt evaluation, ethical awareness, professional development	12	66.7%	Teacher competency framework, professional learning guide, curriculum document, sector report	Teachers require AI literacy to decide when AI output is pedagogically useful, incomplete, or risky.	AI-TAA-002; AI-TAA-003; AI-TAA-004; AI-TAA-005; AI-TAA-006; AI-TAA-007; AI-TAA-008; AI-TAA-009; AI-TAA-010; AI-TAA-012; AI-TAA-013; AI-TAA-014	Agency depends on professional learning, not merely access to AI tools.
AI as planning and material-design assistant	Delegated preparation work	Lesson planning, content generation, resource adaptation, classroom preparation	11	61.1%	Guidance text, implementation portal, ELT report, digital education report	AI is positioned as a support system for generating, adapting, or organizing instructional materials.	AI-TAA-001; AI-TAA-004; AI-TAA-006; AI-TAA-007; AI-TAA-008; AI-TAA-009; AI-TAA-010; AI-TAA-012; AI-TAA-013; AI-TAA-014; AI-TAA-017	Automation enters preparation work before it enters final classroom authority.
Automated feedback and assessment support	Assisted evaluation	Feedback generation, assessment design, learner diagnosis, progress monitoring	9	50.0%	AI education report, ELT review, teacher guidance, institutional guideline	AI tools can support feedback and assessment, but validity depends on teacher interpretation.	AI-TAA-001; AI-TAA-002; AI-TAA-004; AI-TAA-006; AI-TAA-007; AI-TAA-012; AI-TAA-013; AI-TAA-014; AI-TAA-016	Assessment authority becomes shared but cannot be fully automated without validity risks.
Language-pedagogical alignment	Sensitivity to language learning	ELT, translation, multilingual learning, writing support, cultural appropriateness	8	44.4%	ELT sector report, systematic review, Indonesian curriculum context, inclusive education text	AI-supported language teaching must address proficiency, discourse, multilingual context, and culture.	AI-TAA-012; AI-TAA-013; AI-TAA-015; AI-TAA-017; AI-TAA-018; AI-TAA-007; AI-TAA-008; AI-TAA-009	Language education requires more specific judgement than generic AI-in-education guidance usually provides.
Institutional curriculum and implementation mandate	Policy-driven adoption	Curriculum integration, official portal, national education strategy, implementation infrastructure	7	38.9%	National curriculum document, government portal, public policy communication, implementation report	AI is institutionalized through curriculum and policy before classroom practices are fully stabilized.	AI-TAA-007; AI-TAA-008; AI-TAA-009; AI-TAA-010; AI-TAA-011; AI-TAA-017; AI-TAA-018	Teacher authority is shaped by institutional mandates as much as by classroom-level decision-making.

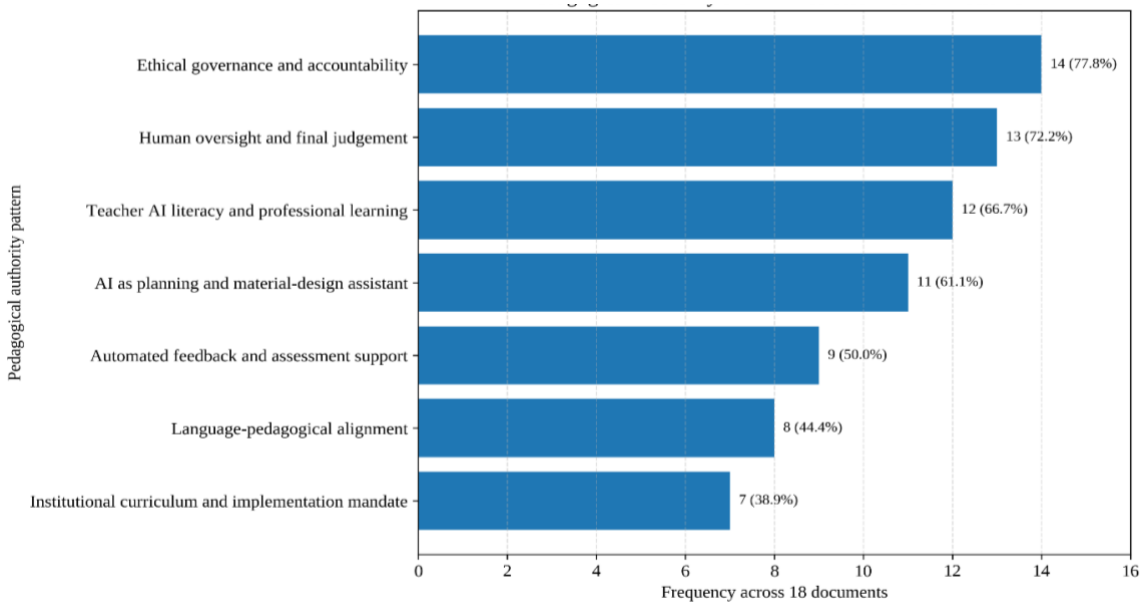

Figure 2. Pedagogical authority and AI-mediated decision patterns

Theoretically, these findings support a relational understanding of professional agency. Teacher agency is not located solely in individual autonomy, nor is it erased automatically by AI adoption. Instead, it emerges through teachers' capacity to evaluate, adapt, contest, and justify AI-mediated decisions within institutional and ethical constraints. This interpretation aligns with studies that connect professional agency to digital competence, ethical design, and human-in-the-loop educational AI [15], [10], [12]. In language education, such agency becomes more demanding because teachers must evaluate linguistic accuracy alongside pragmatic meaning, learner proficiency, cultural appropriateness, and communicative purpose. Thus, this study positions teacher authority as a situated capacity to govern automation pedagogically.

4.2. Professional agency under ethical and institutional conditions

Professional agency appears as a constrained and institutionally mediated capacity rather than a purely individual trait. Across the corpus, teachers are not positioned as autonomous users who freely decide whether AI is helpful; they are framed as professionals operating within policy expectations, ethical risks, curriculum mandates, and institutional infrastructures. This pattern extends the previous finding on pedagogical authority by showing that authority requires enabling conditions. Studies on teacher agency and AI-mediated education similarly argue that professional judgement depends on digital competence, ethical awareness, and institutional support [15], [14], [12]. Thus, this study treats agency as situated professional action within regulated and automated educational environments.

The dominant pattern is institutional framing of teacher responsibility, appearing in 9 documents or 50.0% of corpus. Ethical judgement and accountability appear in 6 documents, while professional learning as agency condition appears in 3 documents. Primary documents dominate ethical judgement, indicating that global and official AI guidelines place responsibility on educators to manage transparency, fairness, accountability, and data protection. By contrast, institutional responsibility is distributed across primary, secondary, and contextual sources, suggesting that teacher agency is shaped by policy, curriculum, sector reports, and implementation discourse. Professional learning appears less frequently, but remains analytically important because AI literacy determines whether teachers can exercise informed judgement rather than merely comply with institutional adoption.

Table 3. Professional agency under ethical and institutional conditions

Main Category	Subcategory	Indicator	Frequency	Percentage	Data Variation	Representative Expression	Data Code	Interpretation
Institutional framing of teacher responsibility	Responsibility structured by policy and implementation discourse	Official guidance, institutional mandate, curriculum framing, implementation infrastructure	9	50.0%	Primary policy, secondary synthesis, contextual implementation report	Teacher responsibility is framed through institutional rules, guidance, and curriculum expectations rather than individual initiative alone.	AI-TAA-007; AI-TAA-009; AI-TAA-011; AI-TAA-012; AI-TAA-013; AI-TAA-014; AI-TAA-015; AI-TAA-017; AI-TAA-018	Professional agency is institutionally conditioned; teachers act within frameworks that define acceptable AI use.
Ethical judgement and accountability	Agency as responsible evaluation of AI use	Human oversight, transparency, accountability, equity, data protection	6	33.3%	Global guidance, ethical framework, policy report, school toolkit	Teacher agency becomes visible when teachers evaluate AI output ethically before using it pedagogically.	AI-TAA-001; AI-TAA-002; AI-TAA-003; AI-TAA-004; AI-TAA-005; AI-TAA-006	Agency is not only technical competence but also ethical judgement over risk, bias, privacy, and validity.
Professional learning as agency condition	Capacity-building for AI-mediated teaching	AI literacy, teacher training, professional development, curriculum readiness	3	16.7%	Teacher competency framework, national curriculum portal, inclusion-oriented digital education text	Teachers require sustained professional learning to interpret, revise, or reject AI-generated pedagogical material.	AI-TAA-008; AI-TAA-010; AI-TAA-016	Agency depends on structured learning opportunities, not only access to AI platforms.

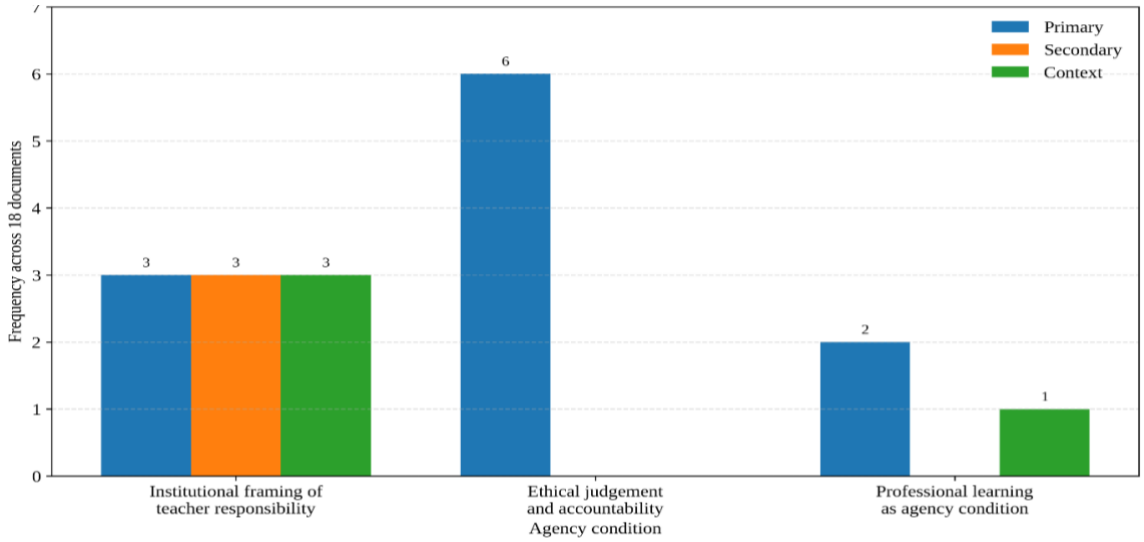

Figure 3. Professional agency conditions across corpus types

Theoretically, this pattern supports a relational model of teacher agency. Agency is neither an inherent psychological disposition nor an automatic outcome of technology access; it is produced through interaction among teacher competence, institutional governance, ethical responsibility, and pedagogical discretion. This interpretation aligns with Ayanwale et al. (2024) [10], Coşgun (2025) [11], and Kelley and Wenzel (2025) [17], who emphasize AI literacy as necessary for future teaching practice, but it also adds that literacy alone is insufficient without institutional conditions that authorize critical judgement. In language education, this becomes especially important because teachers must evaluate AI output for linguistic accuracy, learner readiness, cultural appropriateness, and communicative purpose. Professional agency therefore functions as a safeguard against procedural automation.

4.3. Language pedagogical alignment in ai-mediated decision episodes

AI-mediated language education becomes analytically distinct when AI use is assessed through language-specific pedagogical demands rather than general educational innovation. The corpus shows that AI is most visibly connected to curriculum implementation, writing support, feedback, translation, and differentiated learning. This pattern is significant because language teaching involves more than the delivery of correct information; it requires judgement about proficiency, discourse, pragmatics, multilingual background, and communicative purpose. Existing studies on AI in language education similarly show that AI has expanded into writing, feedback, translation, and classroom support, but still requires teacher interpretation to preserve pedagogical validity [5], [6], [7], [20]. Thus, language-pedagogical alignment becomes a crucial condition for responsible AI user.

The strongest category is curriculum and classroom implementation, appearing in 6 documents or 33.3% of corpus, followed by writing and feedback support with 5 documents. Translation and multilingual mediation, as well as learner proficiency and differentiation, each appear in 4 documents. Cultural and pragmatic appropriateness and inclusion/accessibility each appear in 3 documents. This distribution indicates that AI discourse is more developed around implementation and functional language support than around pragmatic, cultural, and inclusive dimensions. Primary documents dominate curriculum implementation and learner adaptation, while secondary ELT-oriented documents contribute more strongly to writing, feedback, and translation. Contextual sources mainly clarify implementation challenges and inclusive access concerns.

Table 4. Language-pedagogical alignment in AI-mediated language education

Main Category	Subcategory	Indicator	Frequency	Percentage	Data Variation	Representative Expression	Data Code	Interpretation
Writing and feedback support	AI-assisted language production	Writing support, feedback generation, revision guidance, text improvement	5	27.8%	ELT report, systematic review, policy guidance, digital education outlook	AI is positioned as a support mechanism for producing, revising, and responding to learner language.	AI-TAA-001; AI-TAA-004; AI-TAA-012; AI-TAA-013; AI-TAA-014	Language teaching is most clearly addressed when AI is connected to writing and feedback work.
Translation and multilingual mediation	AI as cross-linguistic support	Translation, multilingual interaction, language access, cross-language mediation	4	22.2%	ELT review, sector report, inclusive education text, Indonesian implementation context	AI can mediate multilingual learning, but translation accuracy alone does not guarantee pedagogical appropriateness.	AI-TAA-012; AI-TAA-013; AI-TAA-015; AI-TAA-018	Multilingual support requires teacher judgement over meaning, context, and learner needs.
Learner proficiency and differentiation	Adaptation to learner level	Proficiency level, scaffolding, personalized support, differentiated instruction	4	22.2%	Teacher competency framework, policy report, ELT synthesis, digital education strategy	AI-supported learning must be adjusted to learners' proficiency, readiness, and instructional goals.	AI-TAA-002; AI-TAA-004; AI-TAA-013; AI-TAA-016	Pedagogical validity depends on whether AI output matches learner level and learning purpose.
Cultural and pragmatic appropriateness	Context-sensitive language use	Pragmatics, cultural relevance, discourse norms, communicative purpose	3	16.7%	Global guidance, ELT report, contextual implementation narrative	AI-generated language needs contextual review before being used in communicative or culturally situated learning.	AI-TAA-001; AI-TAA-012; AI-TAA-018	Teacher authority remains necessary because language use is socially and culturally situated.
Curriculum and classroom implementation	AI within formal learning structures	Curriculum integration, classroom application, official learning portal, implementation guideline	6	33.3%	National policy, curriculum document, portal, implementation report, sector synthesis	AI-mediated language education becomes meaningful only when linked to classroom routines and curriculum expectations.	AI-TAA-007; AI-TAA-008; AI-TAA-009; AI-TAA-010; AI-TAA-014; AI-TAA-017	Institutional adoption must be translated into pedagogically usable classroom practice.
Inclusion and accessibility	Equitable language learning support	Accessibility, inclusive participation, learner diversity, digital access	3	16.7%	UNICEF strategy, inclusion article, teacher framework	AI may expand access, but inclusive language pedagogy requires attention to learners' unequal linguistic and digital resources.	AI-TAA-002; AI-TAA-015; AI-TAA-016	Inclusion is present but less developed than governance and implementation concerns.

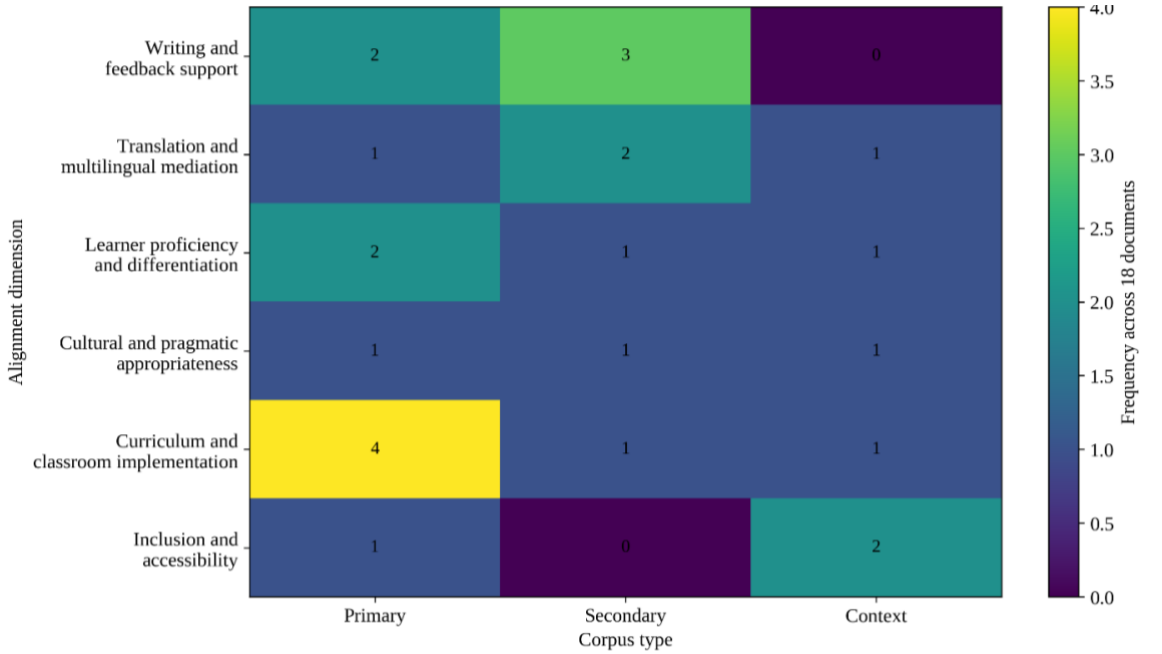

Figure 4. Language-pedagogical alignment across corpus types

Theoretically, this pattern shows that teacher agency in AI-mediated language education rests on language-sensitive interpretation. AI output may be fluent, rapid, and technically useful, but fluency does not automatically equal pedagogical suitability. This point supports Jeon and Lee's (2023) [8] view of large language models as complementary to teachers, while extending it by emphasizing that complementarity depends on teacher capacity to judge discourse, culture, proficiency, and classroom purpose. It also aligns with Ninaus and Sailer's (2022) [13] argument for maintaining human responsibility in AI-supported education. Therefore, this study positions language teachers as contextual arbiters who transform AI-generated content into pedagogically defensible language learning material.

5. DISCUSSION

The first finding shows that pedagogical authority in AI-mediated language education is not disappearing; it is being redefined as accountable oversight. This matters because the strongest pattern in the corpus links teacher authority to ethical governance, human judgement, and AI literacy rather than to unrestricted classroom autonomy. Such a configuration functions productively when it positions teachers as professional validators of AI-generated lesson plans, feedback, assessment items, and language materials. However, it becomes dysfunctional when oversight is reduced to procedural checking after AI has already structured pedagogical options. This finding supports Adams, Pente, Lemermeyer, and Rockwell (2023) [2], Akgun and Greenhow (2021) [1], and Ninaus and Sailer (2022) [13], who argue that responsible AI in education requires human accountability. It also complicates Fitria's (2023) [19] concern about teacher replacement by showing that replacement is less immediate than redistribution. The implication is that teacher authority now depends on the capacity to govern automation pedagogically.

This redistribution of authority is produced by a deeper structural tension between efficiency-oriented automation and responsibility-oriented professionalism. AI systems are attractive because they can generate content, summarize information, draft feedback, and support planning rapidly; yet these functions also shift the temporal location of teacher judgement. Instead of designing every pedagogical element from the beginning, teachers may increasingly judge, repair, or authorize outputs generated elsewhere. Jeon and Lee (2023) [8] describe this as a complementary relationship between teachers and large language models, while Bearman, Ryan, and Ajjawi (2022) [3] warn that AI discourse in higher education often normalizes system-led decision-making. Turvey and Pachler (2025) [25] similarly identify tension between human-mediated and algorithmically mediated pedagogy. Therefore, the issue is not whether AI assists teachers, but whether assistance narrows or expands the field of pedagogical choice. Authority is preserved only when teachers retain meaningful control over purposes, criteria, and contextual adaptation.

The second finding indicates that professional agency operates as an institutional and ethical condition, not simply as a personal disposition. This matters because the corpus frames teachers as responsible actors whose capacity to make AI-mediated decisions depends on policy, training, accountability structures, and professional learning. Functionally, such framing can protect teachers from being abandoned to individual experimentation with high-risk technologies. It recognizes that AI literacy, ethical awareness, and institutional guidance are necessary for responsible practice. Yet it can also become dysfunctional if institutions transfer accountability to teachers without providing time, resources, technical support, or decision-making authority. This finding aligns with Nagel, Guðmundsdóttir, and Afdal (2023) [15], who connect professional agency to digital competence, and with Mouta, Torrecilla-Sánchez, and Pinto-Llorente (2024) [14], who stress ethical professional learning for AIED. This study therefore suggests that agency is not merely exercised by teachers; it must also be structurally enabled.

The underlying structure behind this agency pattern is a governance gap between formal responsibility and practical preparedness. Teachers are increasingly expected to integrate AI into planning, assessment, communication, and learner support, but professional preparation often lags behind policy expectation. Ayanwale, Adelana, Molefi, Adeeko, and Ishola (2024) [10] show that AI literacy among pre-service teachers is an emerging requirement, while Coşgun (2025) [11] emphasizes AI literacy in assessment design. Kelley and Wenzel (2025) [17] further argue that teacher education requires professional partnership inquiry, not isolated technical training. These studies support this finding, yet some optimistic AI adoption literature tends to treat access to tools as a sufficient condition for innovation. This study challenges that assumption. Agency cannot be inferred from availability. It emerges when teachers are authorized and prepared to question AI outputs, revise them, reject them, and justify their pedagogical decisions within accountable institutional environments.

The third finding shows that language-pedagogical alignment is the most fragile dimension of AI-mediated education discourse. Its implication is significant: AI may be pedagogically acceptable in general education discourse while remaining insufficiently sensitive to language-specific demands. Writing support, feedback, translation, multilingual mediation, differentiation, and curriculum implementation appear in the corpus, but pragmatic appropriateness, cultural meaning, inclusion, and learner identity receive weaker attention. Functionally, AI can assist language teachers by expanding feedback options, generating examples, supporting translation, and adapting classroom materials. Dysfunctionally, fluent AI output may conceal pragmatic mismatch, cultural simplification, inaccurate scaffolding, or inappropriate register. This finding supports Liang, Hwang, Chen, and Darmawansah (2021) [5], Yang and Kyun (2022) [6], Luo, Xia, and Lu (2025) [7], and Tolstykh and Oshchepkova (2024) [20], who document AI's expanding role in language learning. However, this study adds that expansion does not automatically equal language-pedagogical validity.

The underlying reason for this fragility lies in the difference between linguistic fluency and pedagogical fitness. Large language models can produce grammatically acceptable text, but language education requires more than correctness; it requires attention to learner proficiency, discourse purpose, cultural norms, translanguaging realities, and communicative risk. Labadze, Grigolia, and Machaidze (2023) [9] show that AI chatbots can support education, while Wang (2023) [21] illustrates AI use in English translation teaching. Yet translation and chatbot interaction can become pedagogically problematic when they detach language from context. In multilingual classrooms, especially in Indonesian and EFL settings, teachers must decide whether AI-generated language is level-appropriate, culturally intelligible, and aligned with curriculum goals. This explains why teacher authority and professional agency converge most strongly in language-pedagogical alignment. AI can mediate language learning, but teachers remain necessary as interpreters of meaning, context, and educational purpose.

6. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that AI-mediated language education does not simply replace teacher authority; it redistributes pedagogical authority through new forms of ethical oversight, professional judgement, and institutional accountability. The most important lesson is that teacher agency becomes visible not when teachers reject AI, but when they critically evaluate, revise, contextualize, or refuse AI-generated pedagogical output. Its strength lies in reframing AI adoption from a technical problem into a professional and methodological question about decision-making, responsibility, and language-pedagogical validity. By using corpus-assisted document analysis, this study contributes a sharper analytical lens for examining how authority, automation, and professional agency intersect in contemporary language education.

This study is limited by its reliance on public documents rather than direct classroom observation, teacher interviews, or learner-produced data. Consequently, its findings explain how AI-mediated teacher authority is represented in policy, guidance, and sector discourse, but not how teachers actually negotiate AI in situated classroom practice. Further research should therefore combine document analysis with

ethnographic observation, teacher reflective journals, classroom interaction data, and comparative studies across multilingual educational contexts. Future studies may also examine how teachers evaluate AI-generated feedback, assessment rubrics, translation support, and writing assistance in real pedagogical episodes, particularly in EFL and Indonesian language education settings.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

Author states no conflict of interest.

AI USE DECLARATION

The author used artificial intelligence tools to assist with the generation of illustrative figures and with the formatting and layout of this manuscript. AI was not used to generate the substantive content, conceptualization, data, analysis, or conclusions of the research, all of which remain the sole responsibility of the author.

INFORMED CONSENT

Not applicable – this study did not involve direct human participants. Data consisted solely of publicly accessible documents on artificial intelligence in education.

ETHICAL APPROVAL

This research did not involve human or animal subjects; it analyzed publicly accessible documents on artificial intelligence in education, and therefore no institutional review board approval was required. Where research does involve human subjects, the author affirms that such research would be conducted in full compliance with all relevant national regulations and institutional policies, in accordance with the tenets of the Declaration of Helsinki, and would be approved by the author's institutional review board or equivalent committee.

DATA AVAILABILITY

The corpus of documents analyzed in this study are publicly accessible and available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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