



## Exploring AI-Driven Language Teaching For English As A Foreign Language Teachers In Vocational High School In Karawang

Revina Pinkan Septiani\*, Sidik Indra Nugraha, Evi Karlina Ambarwati

English Language Education, Universitas Singaperbangsa, Karawang, 41361, Indonesia

### ARTICLE INFO

#### Article history:

Received: 22 May 2025

Revised: 10 June 2025

Accepted: 11 June 2025

Published online: 05 July 2025

#### Keywords:

Artificial Intelligence, Digitalization in Education, EFL Teaching, TPACK Framework, Vocational High School

#### \* Corresponding author:

E-mail: 2110631060104@student.unsika.ac.id

#### Article Doi:

<https://doi.org/10.31258/jes.9.4.p.2073-2084>

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### ABSTRACT

In today's rapidly digitalization educational landscape, Artificial Intelligence (AI) has emerged as a promising tool in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction. Despite its potential to improve teaching efficiency and learner engagement, the integration of AI in Indonesian vocational high schools remains limited and challenging. This study investigates how EFL teachers incorporate AI into their classroom practices, the obstacles they face, and strategies to optimize its use. Using a qualitative case study method, data were collected through open-ended questionnaires and semi-structured interviews with four English teachers at a vocational high school in Karawang, West Java. Thematic analysis was conducted using the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework. The results indicate that major barriers include inadequate infrastructure, poor internet access, limited digital device availability, and sufficient teacher digital literacy. Pedagogical issue such as dependency on AI, reduced creativity, and ethical concerns like plagiarism and decreased student autonomy also surfaced. The study highlights the importance of targeted professional development based on TPACK, improved technological access, and ethical digital literacy in school curricula. These findings offer valuable insights for enhancing AI integration in EFL teaching at the vocational level, with implications for teacher training, curriculum design, and education policy in Indonesia.

## 1. Introduction

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become a transformative force in the global educational landscape, especially in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching. Its adoption is reshaping traditional instructional models, offering tools that enhance personalization, facilitate student engagement, and support teachers in their instructional roles (Anugrah, 2023; Fattah et al., 2023). This shift reflects a broader trend in education where digital technologies, particularly AI-powered

systems like intelligent tutoring systems, chatbots, and adaptive learning platforms, are increasingly integrated into classroom environments (Kim & Sim, 2024). In the context of secondary education, such technological developments provide promising avenues for improving language acquisition at foundational stages.

Recent studies have illuminated the growing role of AI in facilitating real-time feedback, automating assessments, and offering data-driven insights into student learning (Jamshed et al., 2024). Widely used applications such as Grammarly and ChatGPT demonstrate AI's ability to assist learners in enhancing their writing skills and comprehension (Wei, 2023). However, the integration of AI in classroom instruction is not without challenges. Concerns persist about teacher readiness, student autonomy, and the ethical implications of AI use—such as data privacy and algorithmic biases (Nagpal & Kumar, 2024).

These issues are especially pertinent in traditional classroom contexts where the human element in teaching remains central. While substantial research has been conducted on AI use in higher education and online learning, limited attention has been given to its implementation in secondary school EFL classrooms, particularly from the teachers' perspectives (Huang et al., 2024; Crompton et al., 2024). Given the pivotal role teachers play in mediating the use of technology, understanding their views on AI, how they adopt, adapt, or resist its use, is essential. Therefore, this study aims to explore how EFL teachers utilize AI tools in their teaching practices within secondary schools and to identify the challenges they face in integrating these tools effectively into their instruction.

Addressing these questions is crucial for aligning AI advancements with pedagogical realities. Prior studies reflect diverse perceptions among educators and learners. Ali (2020) provides a foundational overview of AI applications in language education, noting both opportunities and reliability concerns. Similarly, Anugrah (2023) found that while students favored personalized AI-driven learning, educators feared its potential to supplant traditional methods. Fattah et al., (2023) emphasized AI's capacity to promote collaborative learning, while Kim & Sim (2024) demonstrated its ability to support learner autonomy, though not all students responded positively, underscoring the need for contextual adaptation.

Further studies by Alhusaiyan (2024) and Jamshed et al., (2024) reported generally positive attitudes toward AI in EFL settings, though they also highlighted the importance of reliability and teacher preparedness. Wei (2023) identified positive correlations between AI use, learner motivation, and self-regulation, while Anisah et al., (2024) detailed AI-enhanced learning management systems' potential in Indonesia. However, Ejaz & Jamil (2024) and Huang et al., (2024) noted that while AI supports task-based language teaching and differentiated instruction, implementation challenges persist, especially in under-resourced settings.

To better understand how teachers might successfully navigate these complexities, this study employs the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework. TPACK posits that effective technology integration requires a synergistic understanding of technological, pedagogical, and content knowledge

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(Schmidt et al., 2009). Within this model, Technological Knowledge (TK) involves understanding AI tools such as adaptive systems and chatbots (Abimanto & Mahendro, 2023), while Pedagogical Knowledge (PK) focuses on using AI to design engaging, collaborative learning experiences (Fattah et al., 2023). Content Knowledge (CK), in turn, emphasizes deep expertise in English language instruction, ensuring AI tools are aligned with curricular goals (Jamshed et al., 2024). The TPACK model is particularly relevant in examining AI integration because it underscores the interplay among technology, pedagogy, and content. Kim & Sim (2024) found that AI empowers student-centered learning, but their findings also suggest disparities in learner engagement—highlighting the need for adaptable pedagogical approaches. Wu et al., (2024) emphasized professional development as key to equipping teachers with the necessary competencies to harness AI tools effectively. Ethical considerations also emerge, with Sari et al., (2024) stressing the need for frameworks that safeguard data privacy and mitigate algorithmic biases.

By grounding this study in the TPACK framework and synthesizing insights from existing literature, this research aims to provide a nuanced understanding of how EFL teachers in secondary schools engage with AI. It seeks to uncover both the pedagogical benefits and the practical and ethical challenges of implementation. The findings will inform future policy and training programs, ensuring that the adoption of AI in language education enhances, rather than disrupts, the teaching and learning process. Ultimately, this study contributes to the ongoing discourse on digital transformation in education, advocating for evidence-based strategies that support teachers as pivotal agents in the successful integration of emerging technologies.

## **2. Methodology**

### ***Research Design***

This study employs a qualitative research method with a case study design to explore teachers' experiences and perceptions regarding the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction in secondary school. This approach enables an in-depth understanding of how AI is perceived, implemented, and utilized in EFL classroom practices, as well as the challenges and opportunities that arise from this integration (Creswell, 2014, as cited in Ishtiaq, 2019).

### ***Site and Participants***

The research was conducted at a Vocational High School in Karawang, West Java, Indonesia, where AI integration in EFL teaching was still in its early stages. Four English teachers participated, offering a range of perspectives on AI adoption in language instruction. Participants were selected based on the following criteria: aged between 25 and 50 years old, with a minimum of one year of English teaching experience, and basic knowledge of AI applications in education. Their diverse

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teaching backgrounds and varying levels of familiarity with technology contributed to a comprehensive understanding of AI integration in secondary EFL classrooms.

### ***Instruments***

The primary instruments used in this qualitative study were a combination of open-ended questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, adapted from validated research tools developed by Anugrah (2023), Fattah et al., (2024), and Jamshed et al., (2024). This combination was intended to capture both broad trends and nuanced individual perspectives. The questionnaires were administered via Google Forms for convenience and accessibility. Designed to prompt reflection, and challenges encountered. Subsequently, semi-structured interviews were conducted to gather deeper insights. These were held either online (via Zoom) or offline (at a location convenient for the participants). Interview questions were designed to explore themes that emerged from unique responses. Interviews were audio-recorded Zoom interviews using its built-in recording tool and offline sessions using a mobile device for accurate transcription and analysis.

### ***Data Analysis***

This study employs thematic analysis based on the six-phase model proposed by Braun and Clarke (2022), which enables the systematic identification, analysis, and interpretation of meaningful patterns within qualitative data. The process begins with familiarization, during which the researcher thoroughly reads and re-reads all questionnaire responses and interview transcripts to develop a deep understanding of the dataset. This is followed by generating initial codes, where relevant data segments related to AI integration in EFL instruction are systematically labeled. In the searching for themes phase, the researcher collates these codes into potential themes that capture recurring ideas, experiences, and challenges expressed by participants. These themes are then evaluated during the reviewing themes phase to ensure their accuracy, coherence, and alignment with the overall dataset; some themes may be refined, merged, or removed as necessary. Next, in the defining and naming themes stage, each theme is clearly defined and assigned a concise, descriptive label that encapsulates its core meaning. Finally, in the producing the report phase, the researcher presents the findings in a structured narrative, interpreting the themes in light of the research questions and comparing them with existing literature, including prior studies by Anugrah (2023), Fattah et al., (2023), and Jamshed et al., (2024). By following this rigorous approach, the analysis aims to provide a credible and comprehensive interpretation of secondary school EFL teachers' perceptions and experiences regarding the integration of Artificial Intelligence into language instruction.

## **3. Results and Discussion**

The findings of this study reveal four key aspects regarding the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in EFL teaching practices: 1) the use of AI tools in lesson planning, material development, and assessment creation; 2) teachers' generally

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positive but varied understanding and perception of AI as an educational aid; 3) significant challenges in implementation, including pedagogical issues such as limited digital pedagogical skills and technical barriers like unstable internet access and lack of infrastructure; and 4) effective integration strategies aligned with the TPACK model (Schmidt et al., 2009), highlight the importance of balancing technological knowledge, pedagogical technique, and content mastery. These results indicate that while AI holds promise for transforming EFL learning, its success depends on contextual readiness, teacher competence, and supportive policy environments

### *Integration of AI in EFL Teaching Practice*

The integration of AI into secondary EFL classrooms manifests through several pedagogical applications, ranging from lesson planning to interactive engagement strategies. Teachers employ various AI tools to enhance the design, delivery, and personalization of learning experiences. Table 1 summarizes the key findings related to how AI is integrated into teaching practices, indicating both the breadth and selectivity of implementation observed.

Table 1. Key Findings of AI Integration

| Teaching Practice Focus                                    | Key Findings   |
|--|--|
| AI integration in lesson planning and material development | Teachers used AI tools to design lesson plans, create teaching materials, and generate assessment questions.                     |
| Gamification as a strategy                                 | Tools like Quizizz and Wordwall were utilized to create interactive and engaging learning environments.                          |
| AI for personalization and engagement                      | AI was seen as a medium to personalize content and maintain student motivation.  |
| AI-enhanced content delivery                               | AI-supported multimedia, like Powtoon and videos, improved clarity and delivery of English lessons.                              |
| Selective and partial AI use                               | Some teachers integrated AI only in specific areas (e.g., material design), while others remained hesitant due to unfamiliarity. |
| Use of AI for language skill practice                      | Teachers used AI-driven grammar checkers and speaking tools to enhance language proficiency.                                     |
| AI as instructional support                                | Teachers recognized AI's role in assisting lesson delivery and making explanations more vivid.                                   |
| AI-supported student-centered learning                     | AI facilitated student-centered activities like discussions, games, and video-based learning.                                    |

The findings indicate that EFL teachers have begun integrating AI primarily in lesson planning, material development, and interactive learning strategies. Commonly used tools include ChatGPT, Canva, and Gemini, which support creativity in designing lesson content. One teacher shared, *“When creating materials or lesson plans to make them more interesting, I use Canva, Gemini, and ChatGPT.”* This aligns with Anugrah (2023), who highlights AI's role in improving instructional design. Gamification tools such as Quizizz and Wordwall were also employed to enhance engagement. As a participant stated, *“The material is created*

*in the form of games... to make it more interesting and efficient.*” These practices reflect Technological Pedagogical Knowledge (TPK) and are consistent with Kim & Sim (2024) and Wei (2023), who affirm the motivational benefits of game-based learning.

Despite these advancements, AI integration remains selective and uneven. Some teachers admitted they had *“never applied AI in learning,”* pointing to gaps in digital competence and institutional support. These findings echo Jamshed et al., (2024) and Crompton et al., (2024), who cite insufficient training and infrastructure as barriers to adoption. Interestingly, informal learning sources, such as the Kampus Mengajar program, contributed significantly to teacher readiness. One teacher noted, *“I learned Gamma AI from Kampus Mengajar Batch 8,”* highlighting the impact of peer-led initiatives in building confidence and encouraging experimentation, as also supported by Alhusaiyan (2024). While teachers are innovating with AI in creative ways, broader implementation still depends on structured training and systemic support.

### ***Teachers’ Understanding and Perception of Artificial Intelligence***

Understanding teachers' beliefs and attitudes towards AI is crucial for assessing readiness and shaping professional development efforts. The data reveal predominantly positive perceptions of AI’s educational value, tempered by varied levels of conceptual and technical understanding. Table 2 outlines the key dimensions of teachers’ beliefs and attitudes toward AI integration.

Table 2. Key Findings of Teachers Belief and Attitude

| <b>Belief and Attitude Category</b>         | <b>Key Findings</b>  |
|---|--|
| Perceived educational benefits of AI        | Teachers viewed AI as beneficial for boosting student engagement, streamlining material delivery, and simplifying teaching processes.                  |
| General functional understanding of AI      | Most teachers had a surface-level understanding of AI and its tools, typically learned through self-practice or peer-sharing.                          |
| Efficiency-centered view of AI in education | AI was appreciated for its efficiency in reducing manual effort in lesson planning and assessment tasks.   |
| AI as a supportive teaching assistant       | Teachers emphasized that AI can assist in delivery and administration, but cannot replace the emotional and moral guidance provided by human teachers. |

The findings show that EFL teachers hold generally positive attitudes toward AI, especially regarding its ability to increase student engagement, simplify tasks, and enhance instructional efficiency. One participant explained, *“AI is a technology that helps facilitate the learning process effectively and efficiently,”* while another added, *“It helps prepare materials quickly, before, I would take a long time to create worksheets manually.”* These perceptions reflect AI's role in supporting, rather than replacing, teacher functions, aligning with Anugrah (2023) and Wei (2023), who emphasized AI’s contribution to teacher productivity and learner

motivation. Teachers also recognized the pedagogical value of AI in organizing lessons and delivering content more clearly. However, they firmly stated that moral and emotional guidance remains the teacher’s domain. As one participant stated, “AI cannot provide moral advice like teachers do.” This aligns with the Pedagogical Knowledge (PK) domain in the TPACK framework and counters techno-utopian views (Alhusaiyan, 2024), suggesting AI could replace all instructional roles.

Despite these strengths, many teachers demonstrated only a surface-level understanding of AI, often acquired through self-study or peer-sharing. One participant described AI as “an application to help users find information or solutions,” reflecting a functional rather than conceptual grasp. This supports Crompton et al., (2024), who argued that limited understanding affects meaningful integration. The gap in Technological Knowledge (TK) signals a need for structured professional development, as informal learning alone may not equip teachers with the depth needed for effective AI use. Teachers value AI for its practical benefits in the classroom, but often lack a deeper understanding of its pedagogical or technical implications. This suggests a strong need for targeted training that bridges knowledge gaps and enhances strategic integration.

**Challenges in Integrating AI into Classroom Practice**

Despite the promising applications, integrating AI in classrooms is impeded by a range of technical and pedagogical challenges. These challenges must be addressed to ensure sustainable and effective use of AI.

**a. Technical Implementation Challenges**

Technical infrastructure, digital literacy, and network reliability remain significant hurdles. Table 3 details the key technical challenges identified by participants.

Table 3. Key Findings of Technical Challenges

| Technical Challenges                          | Key Findings  |
|---|---|
| Infrastructure limitations and unequal access | Some schools lacked adequate infrastructure such as stable internet, projectors, and student device access. |
| Technical competence challenges               | Teachers, especially those with limited digital experience, struggled to adapt to AI tools.                 |
| Network-related barriers                      | Poor connectivity hindered real-time implementation of AI-based learning activities.                        |
| Digital literacy demands                      | Effective AI use required higher digital competence, which some teachers had not yet developed.             |
| Inconsistent infrastructure support           | Infrastructure support varied across schools, affecting consistency in AI integration.                      |

Teachers reported that technical constraints, such as poor internet connectivity and a lack of digital tools, significantly hinder AI integration. For instance, one participant explained, *“There are obstacles with the network because the school’s Wi-Fi sometimes does not function optimally,”* while another added, *“Not all classrooms have Wi-Fi, projectors, or TVs.”* These limitations align with Crompton et al., (2024), who noted that infrastructural inconsistencies often impede the effective application of educational technology. In addition to infrastructure, low digital literacy and limited technical competence were recurring issues. A teacher shared, *“I forget easily how to operate the AI,”* indicating a lack of sustained training and confidence.

These issues reveal a gap in Technological Knowledge (TK) and Technological Pedagogical Knowledge (TPK), confirming findings by Nagpal & Kumar (2024) and Jamshed et al., (2024) that emphasize the role of ongoing teacher development in digital contexts. Although some schools provided supportive resources, disparities remained. One participant noted, *“My school supports the use of AI... they provide us with an in-focus and a laptop,”* while another pointed out the time-consuming nature of setting up equipment. This suggests that system-level readiness varies (Anisah et al., 2024), leading to inconsistent integration across institutions. In sum, technical barriers, ranging from infrastructure to digital skill gaps, limit the depth and sustainability of AI use in EFL classrooms.

## b. Pedagogical Implementation Challenges

Pedagogical concerns including creativity, ethics, and dependency issues emerge as significant factors influencing AI adoption. Table 4 summarizes the major pedagogical challenges highlighted by the study.

Table 4. Key Findings of Pedagogical Challenges

| Pedagogical Challenges                              | Key Findings  |
|---|---|
| Instructional benefit and teacher creativity loss   | Over-reliance on AI raised concerns about declining creativity in both teachers and students.                 |
| Pedagogical potential and ethical/technical concern | Teachers worried about AI enabling plagiarism and reducing students' critical thinking.                       |
| Productivity and creative dependency                | While AI helped productivity, some teachers feared dependency could weaken pedagogical depth.                 |
| Pedagogical risks and competencies                  | Concerns existed regarding teachers' ability to integrate AI without diminishing educational value or ethics. |

From a pedagogical perspective, teachers raised concerns over creativity loss, ethical risks, and diminished instructional quality. While AI was valued for efficiency and student motivation, participants cautioned against overreliance. One teacher reflected, *“AI helps in making lesson plans... but teachers become lazy to create their own ideas,”* and another warned, *“It’s great efficiency, but can make users lazy and uncreative.”* These insights echo Nagpal & Kumar (2024), who warned that excessive AI use may suppress teacher autonomy and spontaneity,

critical elements of Pedagogical Knowledge (PK) and TPK. Teachers also voiced ethical concerns, particularly regarding academic dishonesty and student dependency. A participant observed, “*Students may cheat using two phones,*” highlighting worries over uncontrolled AI use. This supports Kim & Sim (2024), who warned that AI tools, if unregulated, may compromise authentic learning and assessment, underscoring the importance of Technological Content Knowledge (TCK). Additionally, teachers expressed the need for new instructional strategies to adapt to AI tools. As one noted, “*Creating engaging Quizizz needs further learning,*” suggesting a knowledge gap between AI functionality and classroom pedagogy.

This aligns with Jamshed et al., (2024), who emphasized that meaningful integration requires more than access, it demands contextual pedagogical alignment and teacher adaptability. While teachers recognize the potential of AI to enhance learning, they also express valid concerns about its implications for instructional creativity, ethics, and student autonomy. These challenges emphasize the need for balanced, well-supported integration strategies that align AI tools with sound pedagogy.

### ***Effective Strategies of AI Integration***

Successful AI integration depends substantially on teacher mindset, ongoing professional development, and community support. The data underscore the importance of consistent practice, targeted training, and collaborative learning environments. Table 5 outlines the key strategies that facilitate effective AI adoption in secondary EFL instruction.

Table 5. Key Findings of Effective Strategies of AI Integration

| <b>Professional Development Pattern</b>  | <b>Key Findings</b>   |
|--|---|
| Teacher mindset and consistency          | Successful integration depended on teachers’ willingness to explore and regularly practice using AI.                              |
| Professional development for AI adoption | Training, workshops, and structured support were necessary to build teacher competence and confidence.                            |
| Continuous teacher tech-upskilling       | Teachers emphasized the need for ongoing skill-building to keep up with AI advancements.  |
| Community-based capacity building        | Collaboration with peers and program initiatives like <i>Kampus Mengajar</i> fostered shared learning and collective improvement. |

The effective integration of AI in vocational English language instruction hinges not only on access to technology but more critically on teacher readiness, mindset, and pedagogical adaptability (Fattah et al., 2023; Crompton et al., 2024). Consistent with prior research, participants emphasized the foundational role of mindset, where openness to learning and consistent use of AI tools were key. As one participant noted, “*We must be willing to learn AI and apply it consistently.*” This reflects early-stage development of Technological Knowledge (TK) within the TPACK model. However, contrary to Wei (2023), this study found that even

younger, tech-exposed teachers expressed hesitancy, indicating that positive disposition alone is insufficient without contextual support. A recurring theme was the need for structured and practical professional development. Teachers voiced a preference for training that not only introduces tools but also demonstrates how to use them pedagogically. One teacher stated, “*We need proper training on teaching methods and apps,*” echoing calls by Kim & Sim (2024) and Jamshed et al., (2024) for practice-oriented TPK development. Notably, participation in online AI workshops (e.g., via Zoom) was found to be inadequate for classroom application, suggesting a gap between theoretical exposure and classroom realities.

This supports Crompton et al., (2024), who argue that effective professional development should include modeling, feedback, and follow-up mechanisms. Participants also highlighted the urgency of continuous upskilling. One teacher asserted, “*Teachers must keep learning about educational technology to stay relevant,*” reinforcing Huang et al.,’s (2024) notion of lifelong digital literacy as essential for responsive teaching. This contrasts with findings by Fattah et al., (2023), who observed stagnation in teacher development once basic competency was achieved. The proactive attitudes observed in this study may be shaped by supportive school policies and professional cultures that encourage innovation. Importantly, collaborative learning communities were identified as crucial enablers of AI adoption.

Teachers valued peer discussions, mentoring, and informal exchanges, through programs like *Kampus Mengajar*, as impactful in overcoming technical and pedagogical barriers. A participant shared, “*We often discuss trends to match student needs,*” indicating how peer-led reflection fosters growth in both TK and TPK domains. Consistent with Crompton et al., (2024), peer modeling played a decisive role; some teachers only adopted AI tools like Powtoon after observing colleagues. This finding illustrates that tool access alone is insufficient without social and collaborative reinforcement. This study reinforces that AI integration requires more than tool familiarity. It involves nurturing a growth mindset, offering contextualized, practical training, ensuring ongoing digital competence, and supporting collaborative professional networks. These findings affirm the TPACK framework as a dynamic and context-sensitive guide for guiding AI use in education, while also revealing local challenges such as training quality and assumptions about digital-native proficiency that must be addressed for transformative, human-centered pedagogy.

#### **4. Conclusion**

This study investigated the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching at an Indonesian vocational high school. Addressing three research objectives, examining integration practices, identifying challenges, and providing strategic insights, the study revealed that while AI holds promise for improving instructional design and student engagement, its implementation remains limited by infrastructural constraints and pedagogical uncertainties. Teachers cited insufficient digital training, connectivity issues, and

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ethical concerns such as plagiarism and diminished student creativity as key barriers to effective use. Despite these challenges, the research identified promising practices among teachers who demonstrated openness to continuous learning and peer collaboration. Programs like *Kampus Mengajar* and informal discussion groups played a pivotal role in fostering collective growth. The TPACK framework proved useful in understanding the multifaceted nature of AI integration, emphasizing the need for a balanced development of technological, pedagogical, and content knowledge. The study underscores that successful AI adoption in EFL classrooms must be rooted in context-sensitive, ethically guided, and community-supported practices. This research contributes to the limited body of literature on AI in non-Western vocational education settings and offers practical implications for curriculum design, teacher training, and policy. While the scope was limited to one school and focused on teacher perspectives, the findings lay the groundwork for future studies to include broader school samples, incorporate student viewpoints, and assess the classroom impact of AI tools more comprehensively. In conclusion, the study successfully met its objectives and highlighted the critical role of teacher readiness and contextual adaptation in AI-driven educational innovation.

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How to cite this article:

Septiani, R. P., Nugraha, S. I., & Ambarwati, E. K. (2025). Exploring AI-Driven Language Teaching For English As A Foreign Language Teachers In Vocational High School In Karawang. *Journal of Educational Sciences*, 9(4), 2073-2084.