

Unveiling the Macro-Micro Paradox: A Hermeneutic Phenomenology of Pre-Service English Teacher's Digital Praxis in a Micro-Class of a Rural Indonesian Islamic College

Ayu Meiratnasari¹⁾, Ema Wilianti Dewi²⁾

¹Tadris Bahasa Inggris, Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Ilmu Keguruan, Institut Agama Islam Hasyim Asy'ari Ogan Komering Ilir

²Tadris Bahasa Inggris, Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Ilmu Keguruan, UIN Syekh Nurjati Cirebon

Email Correspondence : ayumeiratnasari@gmail.com

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Communicative Language Teaching
Digital Praxis
Generative AI
Hermeneutic Phenomenology
Language Teacher Identity
Macro-Micro Paradox in
Rural EFL Context

Article History:

Received : 21-07-2026
Revised : 08-08-2026
Accepted : 13-08-2026
Published: 20-08-2026

ABSTRACT

The integration of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) is transforming English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teacher education, yet empirical accounts examining how teacher candidates navigate digital tools within under-resourced contexts remain limited. This study investigated the lived experiences of pre-service English teachers at a rural, faith-based higher education institution in South Sumatra, Indonesia, as they utilized GenAI platforms during lesson preparation for microteaching. Framed within van Manen's hermeneutic phenomenological tradition, data were gathered through triangulated sources, comprising structured written reflections and GenAI-assisted lesson plan (RPP) artifacts from a naturally bounded micro-cohort. The thematic analysis indicates four interconnected essential structures within this micro-cohort: (1) an epistemological realignment from grammar-heavy instruction toward Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) principles, accompanied by un-proofread artifact glitches in AI-generated lesson designs; (2) the role of GenAI as a conditional preparation scaffold that revealed an internal digital asymmetry during live delivery, where participants bifurcated into digital distribution via mobile messaging and tactile, non-digital workarounds; (3) the Macro-Micro Paradox, wherein optimizing technical lesson blueprints (*techne*) accentuated live classroom frictions (*phronesis*) amid teacher target-language anxieties and learner passivity; and (4) a professional identity reconfiguration from rigid knowledge transmitters toward adaptive, empathetic facilitators. Rather than operating as an all-encompassing equalizer, these findings suggest that GenAI serves as a context-dependent scaffold whose pedagogical utility relies on personal digital readiness, material access, and critical engagement. Ultimately, the study indicates that cultivating practical wisdom

(*phronesis*) and digital empathy remains essential when translating digital lesson preparation into live classroom enactment in under-resourced teacher training settings.

1. Introduction

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction is increasingly shaped by global connectivity and the growing availability of digital tools (Gruenhagen et al., 2024; Laoha et al., 2025). Alongside these developments, pedagogical approaches have increasingly incorporated Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and student-centred inquiry, both of which place greater emphasis on interaction, collaboration, and learner participation (Adler & Shani, 2026; Tao et al., 2026). These developments also place new demands on pre-service English teachers, who are expected to develop pedagogical flexibility and to design learning experiences that encourage active engagement (Akyıldız, 2026). Micro-learning and other concise instructional formats have likewise attracted attention as teachers respond to changing patterns of digital media use (Kohnke & Moorhouse, 2026). At the same time, initial teacher education cannot be reduced to the acquisition of technical skills, because prospective teachers must also develop a professional identity and the practical judgment needed to respond to classroom situations (Zhang & Darwin, 2025). This issue may be particularly relevant in faith-based institutions, including Islamic colleges, where student teachers negotiate professional expectations alongside the particular institutional and educational contexts in which they learn to teach (Ashari et al., 2023).

Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) has become increasingly visible in teacher education as a tool for supporting lesson preparation and other instructional tasks (Alam et al., 2026; Lo, 2025). The educational literature has identified several possible affordances of GenAI, including conversational role-play, personalized feedback, and support for language-learning activities (Khlaif et al., 2025; Kusuma et al., 2024; Tao et al., 2026). In teacher-candidate workflows, however, its use has often centred on practical tasks such as lesson planning, quiz generation, and the adaptation of teaching materials (Moorhouse et al., 2024; Omidvar & Meihami, 2025). AI-supported simulations may also provide relatively low-risk spaces in which novice teachers can rehearse pedagogical tasks (Gao et al., 2026; Zhuang & Zhang, 2025). Nevertheless, much of the existing literature has examined relatively well-resourced urban, Global North, or East Asian educational settings (Fathi, 2026; Gao et al., 2026; Kohnke et al., 2025; Moorhouse, 2024; Moorhouse et al., 2024; Wei et al., 2026; Wulandari & Purnamaningwulan, 2024). Less is known about how teacher candidates in digitally under-resourced settings incorporate GenAI into their preparation and subsequently translate AI-assisted plans into classroom practice (Brown, 2025; Davin et al., 2025; Li et al., 2026; Tan et al., 2025).

Translating academic preparation into classroom practice in rural contexts can be complicated by material constraints and uneven access to educational resources (Kristjánsson, 2024; Tsao, 2025). Pre-service teachers in rural settings may work with unstable internet connections, limited hardware, and inadequate classroom facilities, creating conditions in which digital resources cannot always be used as originally planned

(Boymau & Sari Hidayati, 2025; Hikmah & Astuti, 2025; Syuhra et al., 2025). Rural EFL learners may also have limited opportunities to encounter English beyond the classroom, while test-oriented and grammar-focused instruction can influence their participation and motivation (Boymau & Sari Hidayati, 2025; Carr, 2023; Hikmah & Astuti, 2025; Mandasari et al., 2025; Ramadhani & Fithriani, 2025; Tutyandari, 2022). These conditions may intersect with novice teachers' concerns about pronunciation, vocabulary, and the management of mixed-ability classrooms (Andriani & Subekti, 2022; Ashari et al., 2023; Kawengian & Subekti, 2023; Tutyandari, 2022), which are also related to teachers' capacity to adapt their instructional decisions (Dongying et al., 2026). Thus, possessing theoretical knowledge of digital tools does not necessarily mean that pre-service teachers can enact those tools smoothly in the unpredictable conditions of live classroom interaction (Klimova et al., 2023) (Klimova et al., 2023).

Despite increasing scholarship on digital integration in Indonesian English language teaching, several empirical, methodological, and conceptual gaps remain. Empirically, some Indonesian studies have focused on urban settings or have examined digital integration through relatively narrow indicators such as readability tools (Basori et al., 2024; Wulandari & Purnamaningwulan, 2024). Qualitative research involving rural pre-service teachers has also tended either to give limited attention to AI tools (Maningo et al., 2026) or to rely on quantitative designs that provide less insight into participants' situated experiences over time (Boonmoh & Kulavichian, 2025; Makrakis, 2026; Sperling et al., 2024). Conceptually, rural teacher preparation is sometimes treated primarily as a contextual condition rather than as a setting in which the relationship between technical preparation and classroom enactment can be examined more closely (Karina & Kastuhandani, 2024; Kusuma et al., 2024).

To engage with this gap, the present study uses the term "Macro-Micro Paradox" as a contextually grounded conceptualization rather than as a new theoretical paradigm. The concept draws on the classical distinction between technical skill (*techne*) and practical wisdom (*phronesis*), with the Macro dimension referring to AI-assisted lesson planning, institutional expectations, and available material conditions, and the Micro dimension referring to moment-to-moment classroom interaction, teacher linguistic anxiety, learner participation, and spontaneous pedagogical adjustment. The concept is used here to examine how technically well-structured preparation may coexist with difficulties that emerge during classroom enactment. Within this framing, GenAI may support aspects of technical preparation while leaving the situated interpersonal and pedagogical demands of teaching to be addressed by the teacher.

To address these issues, this study employs a hermeneutic phenomenological approach to explore the lived experiences of pre-service English teachers at Institut Agama Islam Hasyim Asy'ari Ogan Komering Ilir during microteaching. Specifically, the study addresses two research questions:

- a. How do pre-service English teachers in a rural Islamic college utilize GenAI and non-digital tools during the lesson preparation phase (Macro dimension)?
- b. How do these pre-service teachers navigate the Macro-Micro Paradox when translating AI-assisted lesson designs into live classroom interactions (Micro dimension), and how does this experience shape their pedagogical beliefs and professional identity?

2. Methods

This study employed a hermeneutic phenomenological research design (Van Manen, 2016) to interpret the lived experiences of pre-service English teachers as they incorporated generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) into microteaching. Hermeneutic phenomenology assumes that human experience is interpreted rather than simply observed and therefore recognizes the researcher's pre-understanding (*Vorverständnis*) as part of the interpretive process. This approach was appropriate for examining how novice teachers made sense of the relationship between academic preparation, AI-assisted planning, and classroom enactment in a resource-constrained setting. The analysis therefore focused not only on what participants did, but also on how they understood and interpreted their experiences.

The primary researcher was the course lecturer for the TEFL microteaching from which the participants were recruited. This position provided contextual familiarity with participants' learning trajectories but also created a potential power imbalance between researcher and participants. To reduce the possibility of socially desirable responses, data collection was anonymized and managed independently, and analysis was conducted only after final course grades had been submitted to the institutional registrar. These procedures were intended to separate participants' academic assessment from their participation in the study and to support the credibility of their accounts.

The study was conducted in the English Education (*Tadris Bahasa Inggris*) Study Program at Institut Agama Islam Hasyim Asy'ari Ogan Komering Ilir, a rural, faith-based higher education institution in South Sumatra, Indonesia. The setting has limited material and digital infrastructure. Participants did not generally have access to personal laptops and relied mainly on mobile devices, while the campus had limited access to classroom projectors. As a result, student teachers sometimes shared instructional documents and media through class WhatsApp groups and, when necessary, used physical and tactile materials instead of projected digital presentations.

Rather than using statistical sampling, the study recruited the entire bounded cohort of four pre-service English teachers enrolled in the TEFL Class during the academic year through criterion-based purposive sampling. The cohort was treated as a naturally bounded group rather than as a sample intended for statistical generalization. The small cohort size reflects the local context, in which foreign-language anxiety and other contextual factors may contribute to limited enrolment in English education. All four participants met the inclusion criteria and reported using GenAI platforms, including ChatGPT, to obtain instructional ideas, develop lesson plans (RPPs), and prepare teaching materials during the planning phase. Differences in classroom implementation were observed between participants who used tactile physical media and those who used digital materials through WhatsApp. These differences were considered in relation to participants' device access and classroom infrastructure rather than interpreted as differences in whether they used AI during preparation. The demographic and contextual profile of the participants is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic, Material, and Contextual Profile of Participants

Participant Code	Gender	Age	Academic Semester	Targeted Grade	Primary Pedagogical Approach	GenAI Planning Tool (Macro)	Live Instructional Tool Employed (Micro)
P1	Male	20	4th Semester	Junior High School	Project-Based Learning (PBL) & Dialogue Creation	Generative AI (ChatGPT) for PBL syntax & rubrics	Conventional Tactile Media / Board & Paper LKPD
P2	Male	20	4th Semester	Junior High School	Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) & Interactive Roleplay	Generative AI (ChatGPT) for scenario & dialogue design	Physical Interactive Media (Cardboard "Expression Dice")
P3	Female	20	4th Semester	Junior High School	Grammar Translation Method (GTM) & Deductive Grammar	Generative AI (ChatGPT) for GTM RPP & rule-based materials	Generative AI Content via Class WhatsApp Group & Whiteboard
P4	Female	20	4th Semester	Junior High School	CLT & Authentic Materials Use	Generative AI (ChatGPT) for PBL/CLT lesson design	Generative AI Tools & Digital Multimedia via WA Group (Video/Music)

To examine participants' experiences beyond self-reported reflections, data were collected from two complementary sources:

- Structured Written Reflections:** Participants completed end-of-microteaching reflective journals guided by open-ended prompts concerning their affective experiences, expectations, pedagogical decision-making, perceived changes in professional identity, and encounters with classroom difficulties.
- Pedagogical Artifacts (GenAI-Assisted Lesson Plans/RPPs):** Official lesson plans/teaching modules, and instructional materials produced by the four participants were collected as physical artifacts. These materials were examined to identify how AI-assisted planning was translated into technical lesson structures (*techne*) during the preparation phase.

Data were analyzed using Van Manen's (2016) four-stage interpretive phenomenological approach: holistic reading, selective reading, detailed line-by-line reading, and thematic clustering, within an ongoing hermeneutic circle. The process involved movement between individual

excerpts and the dataset as a whole, while the researcher's contextual understanding of rural English language teaching was treated as part of the interpretive process.

First, the researchers conducted a holistic reading of all written reflections and RPPs/teaching modules artifacts to develop an overall understanding of each participant's experience. Second, selective reading identified phrases associated with technical preparation (*techne*) and difficulties during classroom enactment (*phronesis*). Third, line-by-line reading was used to identify statements concerning teacher anxiety, adaptations to limited resources, classroom interaction, and developing professional identity. Finally, related statements were clustered into four themes. The interpretation was developed through repeated comparison between participants' AI-assisted lesson plans, the physical characteristics of their teaching artifacts, and their accounts of classroom implementation (Rony et al., 2024).

To support methodological trustworthiness, the study maintained an audit trail and used member checking. After final course grades had been submitted and published, all four participants took part in a member-checking session. Each participant received a summarized matrix of the thematic interpretations, anonymized quotations, and artifact analyses. Participants were invited to assess whether the interpretations represented their experiences and pedagogical realities accurately. All four participants confirmed the interpretations and did not request substantive changes. This procedure was used as one source of support for the credibility of the researchers' interpretations rather than as a claim of objective verification.

3. Result

The hermeneutic phenomenological analysis of participants' written reflections and GenAI-assisted lesson plans (RPPs), following van Manen's (2016) interpretive approach, resulted in four themes. Taken together, the findings describe a movement from changing conceptions of English teaching, through differences between AI-assisted preparation and classroom implementation, to difficulties in live interaction and emerging changes in professional identity. The findings also include variations within the bounded cohort, particularly in the use of digital and non-digital instructional materials. Table 2 summarizes the themes, their interpreted meanings, artifact evidence, and representative participant statements.

Table 2. Matrix of Emergent Themes, Essences, and Empirical Data

Core Themes	Emergent	Thematic (Lived Meaning)	Essence	Physical Evidence (RPPs)	Artifact (GenAI)	Representative Statements	Meaningful
Theme Epistemological Realignment and Techne-Related Artifact Issues	1:	Shifting from grammar memorization to CLT, alongside un-proofread artifact glitches.	static CLT, un-GenAI	• P2: Header/footer labeled "BAHASA INDONESIA SMP FASE D KELAS VII" on an English module. • P3: Unformatted LaTeX code ($\rightarrow$) and Class XI label for Class VII. • P4: Cover typo "PAST TANSE" and SMA Class XI reference for SMP VIII.		<i>"The most important thing I learned... is that learning English is not just about memorizing grammar formulas, but how to make students able to use it to communicate in reality..."</i> (Participant 3) <i>"Here I just realized that learning English is not just about memorizing grammar formulas... We can use authentic materials, for example, watching YouTube, songs..."</i> (Participant 4)	

Theme 2: GenAI Scaffolding and Non-Digital Adaptation: Internal Digital Asymmetry	An internal digital divide where all used AI for planning, but split into digital vs. tactile pathways in execution.	• P1 & P2: Paper LKPD, whiteboard, and physical cardboard "Expression Dice". • P3 & P4: Slide decks and videos distributed via class WhatsApp groups.	"Bikin lesson plan dan nyari ide aktivitas kelas jadi gampang dan cepat karena dibantu AI." (Participant 4) "Kekuatan: mampu menyusun lesson plan yang terstruktur dan adaptif dengan bantuan teknologi." (Participant 3) "Dengan cara dadu expressions... students mengguncang dadu dan mendapat expressions apa ya; itu yang mereka praktikkan..." (Participant 2) "...kurang pemahaman saya terhadap kosakata dan kalimat-kalimat bahasa Inggris lainnya... Bahasa yang kurang dipahami terkadang disertai pelafalan yang kurang tepat..." (Participant 1) "Yang kurang optimalnya... cara menyusun kata saya belum jelas, jadi saya bingung menjelaskannya... banyak yang takut sama grammar." (Participant 4) "Guru zaman sekarang bukan lagi sekadar pemberi materi, tetapi juga harus mampu menjadi fasilitator yang memanfaatkan teknologi AI..." (Participant 3) "...menjadi guru bukan sekadar mentransfer rumus/materi, melainkan bagaimana kita bisa membaca kebutuhan, karakter, serta emosi siswa..." (Participant 1)
Theme 3: The Macro-Micro Paradox: Teacher Anxiety and Learner Passivity	Friction between AI-optimized planning (<i>techne</i>) and live delivery (<i>phronesis</i>) due to mutual linguistic anxieties.	• Highly detailed PBL and GTM lesson plans containing advanced linguistic structures.	
Theme 4: Professional Identity Reconfiguration: Developing Adaptive Facilitation	Reconstructing identity from a rigid knowledge transmitter to an empathetic, tech-adaptive facilitator.	• Inclusion of Social Emotional Learning (SEL) rubrics and empathetic reflection sheets.	

3.1 Theme 1: Epistemological Realignment and *Techne* Artifact Glitches

The participants described a shift from viewing English primarily as a set of grammatical rules toward greater attention to communication and classroom use. Microteaching appeared to provide an opportunity for participants to reconsider how English could be taught through activities that encourage students to use the language in meaningful contexts. Participant 3 described this learning as a movement beyond memorizing grammar formulas toward enabling students to use English for communication:

"Hal terpenting yang saya pelajari dari mata kuliah TEFL adalah bahwa belajar bahasa Inggris bukan hanya menghafal rumus tata bahasa (grammar), tetapi juga tentang bagaimana membuat siswa mampu memakainya untuk berkomunikasi secara nyata..."

(The most important thing I learned from the TEFL course is that learning English is not just about memorizing grammar rules; it is also about helping students use English to communicate meaningfully in real-life situations.)

(Participant 3)

Participant 4 echoed this realignment, noting that authentic digital media (e.g., YouTube videos and songs) generated real-world communicative practice:

"Di sini saya baru ngeh kalau belajar bahasa Inggris itu bukan cuma soal menghafal rumus grammar atau teori di buku. Tetapi bagaimana caranya supaya siswa bisa langsung mempraktikkan bahasa tersebut secara nyata". (That was when I realized that learning English isn't just about memorizing grammar rules or textbook theories. It's about helping students actually use the language in real-life situations)

(Participant 4)

Analysis of the lesson-plan artifacts, however, indicated that the use of GenAI did not always result in materials that were ready for classroom use without further review. Several artifacts contained inconsistencies or formatting and language errors. These observations are important because they show that AI-assisted preparation still required human checking and contextual adaptation. The examples below illustrate the types of issues identified in the collected materials:

- a. Participant 2: A module for interpersonal dialogue retained document headers and footers labelled "BAHASA INDONESIA SMP FASE D KELAS VII", despite being prepared for English instruction.
- b. Participant 3: A Grammar Translation Method (GTM) module contained raw LaTeX coding symbols (`\rightarrow`) in the reading material and labelled the student LKPD as Class XI rather than Class VII.
- c. Participant 4: A PBL-SEL module contained a cover typo ("PAST TANSE") and referred to a Senior High School (SMA XI) textbook for a Junior High School (SMP VIII) class.

3.2 Theme 2: GenAI as an Operative Scaffold vs. Non-Digital Adaptation: Revealing Internal Digital Asymmetry

Course records indicated that all four participants used GenAI, particularly ChatGPT, during lesson preparation to generate ideas, structure activities, and develop assessment rubrics. Participants described the tool as useful for organizing and accelerating aspects of planning. Participant 4 stated:

"Bikin lesson plan dan nyari ide aktivitas kelas jadi gampang dan cepat karena dibantu AI." (With the help of AI, it became much easier and faster to create lesson plans and come up with ideas for classroom activities)

(Participant 4)

Participant 3 similarly connected her perceived planning confidence to AI-assisted customization, identifying her primary strength as being *"mampu menyusun lesson plan yang terstruktur dan adaptif dengan bantuan teknologi"*. (Technology helped me develop lesson plans that were both well-structured and adaptable).

Although all participants used AI during preparation, their classroom implementation differed. This variation suggests an internal asymmetry between AI-assisted planning and the resources available for classroom delivery. Differences in device access and the limited availability of classroom projection facilities were associated with two broad implementation pathways:

- a. Digital Distribution Pathway (P3 & P4): Participants 3 and 4 shared AI-assisted slide decks, reading materials, and video links with students through class WhatsApp groups.
- b. Tactile Non-Digital Pathway (P1 & P2): Participants 1 and 2 relied more heavily on physical materials. Participant 1 used printed LKPDs and board writing, while Participant 2 developed a cardboard "Expression Dice" to support oral interaction.

"Dengan cara dadu expressions, students mengguncang dadu dan mendapat expressions apa ya; itu yang mereka praktikkan dengan pasangannya." (Using the Expression Dice activity, students rolled the die and then practiced the expression indicated by the result with a partner)
(Participant 2)

The difference between these pathways suggests that AI-assisted planning does not necessarily lead to the same form of digital classroom implementation. Within this cohort, the translation of AI-assisted preparation into practice was shaped by available devices, classroom infrastructure, and the instructional choices made by individual participants.

3.3 Theme 3: The Macro-Micro Paradox: Intersecting Teacher Linguistic Anxiety and Learner Passivity

The transition from AI-assisted preparation (Macro dimension) to live classroom delivery (Micro dimension) brought challenges that were less visible during lesson planning. Participants described difficulties related to English vocabulary, pronunciation, public speaking, classroom management, and student participation. These experiences suggest that a technically structured lesson plan does not remove the need for situated judgment during classroom interaction.

"...kurang pemahaman saya terhadap kosakata dan kalimat-kalimat bahasa Inggris lainnya... Bahasa yang kurang dipahami terkadang disertai pelafalan yang kurang tepat..." (...I still had limited vocabulary and struggled to understand some English expressions. When I was unfamiliar with certain words or phrases, I sometimes pronounced them incorrectly as well...)
(Participant 1)

Participant 2 similarly identified vocabulary limitations and limited experience with public speaking as challenges during implementation: *"Kekurangan kosa kata dan belum terbiasanya dalam public speaking... Aspek yang paling menantang... adalah cara*

menyampaikannya...".(One of the challenges was my limited vocabulary and lack of experience with public speaking. The most challenging part was figuring out how to deliver the material effectively...)

Participants also described limited student participation and concerns about grammar. Participant 4 explained that uncertainty in her own delivery coincided with students' limited engagement:

"Yang kurang optimalnya, saat saya praktik mengajar cara menyusun kata saya belum jelas, jadi saya bingung menjelaskannya, dan teori saya kurang seru, jadi muridnya pada diam... Tantangan terbesarnya adalah kurangnya motivasi dan rasa percaya diri murid... Ditambah lagi, banyak yang takut sama grammar." (What didn't go as well as I had hoped was the way I expressed my ideas during the teaching practice. I wasn't always clear when explaining the material, and my explanation of the theory wasn't engaging enough, so the students mostly stayed quiet. The biggest challenge was that many of the students lacked motivation and confidence. On top of that, a lot of them were afraid of making grammar mistakes)
(Participant 4)

Participant 3 reported a related difficulty in classroom management, noting that although AI had supported lesson design, she still found it difficult to encourage active participation among students who were relatively passive. These accounts indicate a distinction between preparing an instructional sequence and responding flexibly to interaction as it unfolds.

3.4 Theme 4: Professional Identity Reconfiguration: Shifting from Knowledge Transmitters to Adaptive Facilitators

The challenges encountered during teaching also appeared to influence how participants understood their developing professional roles. Rather than describing teaching solely as the transmission of subject knowledge, participants increasingly emphasized adaptation, facilitation, and attention to learners' needs. These accounts suggest an emerging professional identity in which technological competence was considered alongside interpersonal and situational responsiveness.

"Guru zaman sekarang bukan lagi sekadar pemberi materi, tetapi juga harus mampu menjadi fasilitator yang memanfaatkan teknologi AI untuk menciptakan pembelajaran yang lebih interaktif, adaptif, dan berpusat pada siswa." (Today's teachers are no longer merely providers of knowledge; they are also expected to serve as facilitators who harness AI technology to create learning experiences that are more interactive, adaptive, and student-centered.)
(Participant 3)

Participant 4 redefined effective teaching as an empathetic, communicative experience prioritizing learner enjoyment over rigid textbook coverage: *"Dari mata kuliah ini saya sadar bahwa menjadi guru Bahasa Inggris zaman sekarang tidak bisa cuma bermodal bisa Bahasa Inggris dan pakai metode ceramah, tetapi... harus adaptif, bisa memanfaatkan AI,*

dan kreatif... esensi ngajar itu tidak semudah memindahkan buku ke dalam pikiran siswa. Tetapi bagaimana agar mereka bisa enjoy dan paham". (This course made me realize that being an English teacher today is about much more than simply knowing English and relying on traditional lecture-based methods. Teachers need to be adaptable, creative, and able to make meaningful use of AI. Teaching is not simply about transferring information from a textbook into students' minds; it is about creating learning experiences that help students enjoy the process, engage with the material, and truly understand what they are learning)

(Participant 4)

For Participant 1, reflective teaching cultivated an identity grounded in situational awareness and emotional connection: *"Pelajaran berharga yang saya dapatkan... adalah bahwa menjadi guru bukan sekadar mentransfer rumus/materi, melainkan bagaimana kita bisa membaca kebutuhan, karakter, serta emosi siswa di kelas dan menempatkan posisi saya sesuai dengan keadaan yang ada."* (One of the most valuable lessons I have learned is that being a teacher is not simply about transferring knowledge or teaching formulas. It is about understanding students' needs, personalities, and emotions in the classroom, and knowing how to adapt my approach to the situation and meet them where they are)

4 Discussion

The hermeneutic phenomenological interpretation offers a contextual account of how pre-service English teachers experienced GenAI-assisted preparation in a resource-constrained rural Islamic higher education setting. The findings are particularly relevant to three interconnected issues: the conditional nature of AI-supported preparation, the relationship between technical lesson design and classroom enactment, and the development of professional identity. Because the study involved a bounded cohort of four participants, these interpretations are situated rather than intended to represent rural teacher education more generally.

4.1 GenAI as a Conditional Scaffold vs Universal Equalizer: Internal Digital Asymmetry

While educational technology literature has increasingly identified Generative AI as a useful tool for supporting administrative tasks and lesson preparation (Alam et al., 2026; Khlaif et al., 2025; Omidvar & Meihami, 2025), the present findings suggest that its usefulness is shaped by the material and contextual conditions in which it is used. Rather than functioning as a universal equalizer that can independently overcome geographical or infrastructural disparities, GenAI appeared in this study as a conditional scaffold whose classroom application depended on participants' access to devices, available institutional infrastructure, and their capacity to adapt AI-generated materials to local conditions. This interpretation is consistent with the broader digital divide literature, which emphasizes that access to digital technologies alone does not necessarily result in equivalent opportunities for educational use (Brown, 2025; Davin et al., 2025; Syuhra et al., 2025).

The variation within the present cohort further illustrates this contextual dimension. Although all four participants reported using ChatGPT during the lesson preparation phase (Macro dimension), their classroom implementation (Micro dimension) followed different pathways. Participants 3 and 4 used digital materials, including slides and videos distributed through WhatsApp, whereas Participants 1 and 2 relied more heavily on non-digital resources such as paper-based LKPDs, whiteboard activities, and the cardboard "Expression Dice." This variation suggests that AI-assisted lesson preparation does not necessarily translate into comparable forms of digital classroom practice. Instead, the transition from preparation to implementation was mediated by the resources available to individual participants and by the material conditions of the classroom. In this sense, the findings point to an internal dimension of digital inequality within the small cohort: differences in access to devices and classroom facilities shaped how AI-assisted preparation could be enacted in practice. Accordingly, the instructional value of GenAI in this context appears to depend not only on the capabilities of the technology but also on teachers' ability to evaluate, adapt, and translate its outputs within the material conditions of their teaching environment.

4.2 Epistemological Realignment and Risk of Uncritical Techne

The participants' accounts suggest a shift from an exclusively grammar-focused view of English teaching toward greater attention to Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) principles. This shift was reflected in their recognition of the importance of authentic communication and meaningful language use, as well as in their use of multimedia resources such as YouTube videos and songs. Such experiences appeared to broaden participants' understanding of how English could be taught through more student-centred and communicative activities. This reflection is consistent with previous research highlighting the potential of authentic digital resources and communicative approaches to support more interactive forms of language learning (Adler & Shani, 2026; Gruenhagen et al., 2024; Kohnke & Moorhouse, 2026; Laoha et al., 2025; Tao et al., 2026; Akyıldız, 2026). In the present context, these experiences provide a situated perspective on how pre-service teachers in a rural, faith-based institution interpreted and incorporated such approaches into their developing teaching practices (Basori et al., 2024; Kusuma et al., 2024).

At the same time, analysis of the physical lesson-plan artifacts revealed several limitations in the use of GenAI-generated materials. These included Indonesian-language headers in an English module (Participant 2), raw LaTeX coding symbols (`\rightarrow`) and grade-level inconsistencies (Participant 3), and typographical errors alongside a mismatch between the cited textbook level and the intended junior high school class (Participant 4). These examples suggest that AI-assisted generation did not eliminate the need for careful proofreading and contextual evaluation. In this sense, GenAI appeared to support the technical organization of lesson materials (techne), while the evaluation of accuracy, relevance, and pedagogical appropriateness still required teacher judgment.

The artifact produced by Participant 3 provides a further illustration of this issue. Although her reflection expressed an orientation toward CLT, the corresponding AI-generated module was structured around the Grammar Translation Method (GTM). Rather than interpreting this discrepancy as evidence that GenAI necessarily reproduces traditional pedagogy, it may be understood as an indication that AI-generated instructional materials can reflect different pedagogical orientations from those intended by the teacher. This discrepancy highlights the importance of critically reviewing and adapting AI-generated content. Thus, the findings suggest that GenAI may facilitate the technical aspects of lesson preparation, but its pedagogical implications depend on how teacher candidates evaluate, modify, and contextualize the materials it produces.

4.3 The Macro-Micro Paradox: Disentangling Techne from Phronesis

The Macro-Micro Paradox is used in this study to describe the tension between technical lesson preparation and situated classroom enactment. Drawing on the distinction between *techne*, understood as technical or rule-based knowledge, and *phronesis*, understood as practical judgment in particular situations (Carr, 2023; Kristjánsson, 2024; Makrakis, 2026; Sperling et al., 2024), the concept helps interpret why a well-structured lesson plan may still require substantial adaptation during teaching. The present findings suggest that AI-assisted preparation can strengthen the technical organization of a lesson while leaving unresolved the interpersonal and contextual demands that arise during live interaction.

During classroom implementation, participants' AI-assisted lesson structures were accompanied by concerns about vocabulary, pronunciation, public speaking, and classroom interaction (Andriani & Subekti, 2022; Ashari et al., 2023; Kawengian & Subekti, 2023; Tutyandari, 2022). Participants also described limited learner participation and concerns about grammar (Boymau & Sari Hidayati, 2025; Hikmah & Astuti, 2025; Mandasari et al., 2025; Ramadhani & Fithriani, 2025). These experiences illustrate a distinction between what can be prepared in advance and what must be negotiated during teaching. Rather than indicating that AI preparation is ineffective, the findings suggest that its usefulness is partial: it can support lesson design, while situated pedagogical judgment remains important when teachers respond to learners and classroom conditions in real time. This interpretation complements research on the relationship between digital adoption and situated professional knowledge (Li et al., 2026) and adds a qualitative perspective to studies that have examined rural AI use through other methodological approaches (Boonmoh & Kulavichian, 2025; Maningo et al., 2026).

4.4 Reconfiguring Language Teacher Identity through Digital Empathy

The participants' reflections also provide insight into the development of their professional self-concepts in a rural, faith-based higher education context. Previous studies have examined changes in Language Teacher Identity (LTI) across different institutional and technological settings, including contexts with greater access to digital resources (Fathi, 2026; Guan et al., 2025; Wei et al., 2026). In the present study, participants described their emerging professional identities in relation to the material

conditions of their teaching practice and their experiences of using technology alongside more accessible instructional resources (Ashari et al., 2023; Zhang & Darvin, 2025). These accounts suggest that professional identity development was closely connected to how participants responded to the practical and interpersonal demands they encountered during classroom teaching.

The classroom difficulties described by participants also appeared to influence how they understood the role of the English teacher. Rather than viewing teaching primarily as the transmission of knowledge, participants increasingly emphasized facilitation, adaptability, and attention to learners' needs. Participant 1, for example, emphasized the importance of recognizing students' needs, characteristics, and emotions, while Participant 4 highlighted the importance of helping students understand and enjoy the learning process. These reflections indicate an emerging understanding of teaching as a relational and situational practice rather than solely as the delivery of subject matter. The participants' experiences therefore suggest that their developing professional identities involved not only subject and technological knowledge but also the capacity to respond to learners and classroom conditions.

This interpretation also offers a more nuanced perspective on the relationship between digital competence and teacher identity. The findings do not suggest that technological proficiency alone determines professional identity development. Instead, within this small cohort, participants associated effective teaching with the ability to combine available technological resources with interpersonal awareness and pedagogical adaptation. As Participant 1 reflected, being a teacher involves understanding students' needs, characteristics, and emotions and adjusting one's position according to the classroom situation. Similarly, Participant 4 emphasized that teaching cannot be reduced to transferring information but involves helping learners engage with and understand the material. These accounts suggest that, in this particular resource-constrained context, the development of a digitally informed teacher identity was intertwined with adaptability, empathy, and situated pedagogical judgment (Alam et al., 2026; Brown, 2025).

5 Conclusion

This hermeneutic phenomenological study examined how four pre-service English teachers in a rural, faith-based higher education institution experienced GenAI-assisted lesson preparation and classroom teaching. The findings suggest a movement in participants' reported understandings from predominantly grammar-focused views of English teaching toward greater attention to communication and authentic language use. GenAI was also described as a useful resource for organizing lesson plans, generating activities, and preparing instructional materials. However, its classroom use was shaped by material and infrastructural conditions, with participants adopting different combinations of digital and non-digital resources. The findings therefore indicate that AI-assisted preparation should be understood as a contextual support rather than as a guarantee of effective classroom implementation.

The study also uses the concept of the "Macro-Micro Paradox" to interpret the relationship between technical lesson preparation (techne) and situated classroom judgment (phronesis). In this bounded context, AI-assisted planning could provide structure and efficiency, but classroom implementation still involved language anxiety, learner participation, classroom management, and adaptation to available resources. Several lesson-plan artifacts also contained errors or inconsistencies, indicating the importance of critical review and contextualization. Taken together, the findings suggest that the development of professional digital competence involves more than access to AI tools. For these participants, it also involved learning to evaluate AI-generated materials, adapt instructional plans to local conditions, and respond to learners during live interaction. These findings are context-specific and should be interpreted as an account of the experiences of this small rural cohort rather than as a basis for broad generalization.

References

- Adler, I., & Shani, Y. (2026). Hybrid Human-GenAI cognitive apprenticeship: Encouraging pre-service teachers to implement instructional practices to support students' self-regulated learning. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 169, 105268. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2025.105268>
- Alam, M. M., Farhaz, S., Haq, S. M. A., & Ferdous, M. (2026). Generative Artificial Intelligence integration in higher education: A constructivist learning theory approach. *Computers and Education Open*, 10, 100378. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.caeo.2026.100378>
- Andriani, R., & Subekti, A. S. (2022). *Indonesian Pre-Service English Teachers' Teaching Anxiety in Teaching English for Occupational Purposes Classes*.
- Ashari, A., Hamiddin, H., Ainiyah, I., Diana Khalidah, N., Ubaidillah, M. F., & Mac Donald, K. (2023). Pre-Service English Teachers' Anxiety in Speaking English: A Case from an Indonesian Islamic College. *Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan*, 29(1), 25. <https://doi.org/10.17977/um048v29i1p25-31>
- Basori, B., Wihardini, D., Rofiki, I., & Maharany, E. R. (2024). Investigating pre-service teachers' perceptions on readability tools: A case study in Indonesia. *International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education (IJERE)*, 13(1), 589. <https://doi.org/10.11591/ijere.v13i1.26333>
- Boonmoh, A., & Kulavichian, I. (2025). Self-directed professional development of Thai pre-service English teachers in rural Thailand: Adapting to limited resources and technology integration. *Australian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 8(4), 103076. <https://doi.org/10.29140/ajal.v8n4.103076>
- Boymau, L. T. & Sari Hidayati. (2025). Unpacking Rural English Teachers' Perspectives on Digital Learning Tools. *JPI (Jurnal Pendidikan Indonesia)*, 14(1), 101–110. <https://doi.org/10.23887/jpiundiksha.v14i1.84506>
- Brown, J. R. (2025). *Marginalized Pre-Service Teachers' Digital Competence: An Exploration of Epistemic Beliefs and Lived Experiences* [Old Dominion University]. <https://doi.org/10.25777/XT0D-7421>
- Carr, D. (2023). The Practical Wisdom of *Phronesis* in the Education of Purported Virtuous Character. *Educational Theory*, 73(2), 137–152. <https://doi.org/10.1111/edth.12570>
- Davin, K., Kissau, S., Haudeck, H., Ade-Thurrow, B., Gómez-Pereira, D., Oon, P. T., & Dornburg, A. (2025). *Global and Educational Disparities in AI Integration: A Study of*

- L2 Teacher Training and Usage Patterns*. SocArXiv. https://doi.org/10.31235/osf.io/c5u8r_v1
- Dongying, S., Gai, M., & Simayilijiang, A. (2026). Cognitive load and teachers' innovative behavior in AI-enhanced English language instruction: A mediation analysis of technological adaptability. *PLOS One*, 21(3), e0343002. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0343002>
- Fathi, J. (2026). Becoming with the algorithm: A posthumanist narrative of EFL teacher identity in the age of AI. *System*, 140, 104069. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2026.104069>
- Gao, A., Yu, A., Xu, G., Trainin, G., & Luo, X. (2026). Developing an AI-assisted learning flow framework for pre-service teachers of Chinese as a second language: Investigating the influence of teacher educators' support on AI-flow and self-efficacy in teaching. *System*, 139, 104025. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2026.104025>
- Gruenhagen, J. H., Sinclair, P. M., Carroll, J.-A., Baker, P. R. A., Wilson, A., & Demant, D. (2024). The rapid rise of generative AI and its implications for academic integrity: Students' perceptions and use of chatbots for assistance with assessments. *Computers and Education: Artificial Intelligence*, 7, 100273. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.caeai.2024.100273>
- Guan, L., Zhang, Y., & Gu, M. M. (2025). Pre-service teachers preparedness for AI-integrated education: An investigation from perceptions, capabilities, and teachers' identity changes. *Computers and Education: Artificial Intelligence*, 8, 100341. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.caeai.2024.100341>
- Hikmah, W. N., & Astuti, I. W. (2025). EFL pre-service teachers' challenges in teaching English to young learners during Kampus Mengajar program in rural areas. *English Learning Innovation*, 6(1), 37–48. <https://doi.org/10.22219/englie.v6i1.38340>
- Karina, B. D., & Kastuhandani, F. C. (2024). Pre-Service English Teachers' Lived Experience in Using AI in Teaching Preparation. *Edunesia : Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan*, 5(1), 550–568. <https://doi.org/10.51276/edu.v5i1.767>
- Kawengian, G. E., & Subekti, A. S. (2023). Thesis writing anxiety among Indonesian pre-service teachers of English: A survey study. *Englisia: Journal of Language, Education, and Humanities*, 11(1). <https://doi.org/10.22373/ej.v11i1.18940>
- Khlaif, Z. N., Hamamra, B., Bensalem, E., Mitwally, M. A. A., & Sanmugam, M. (2025). Factors Influencing Educators' Technostress While Using Generative AI: A Qualitative Study. *Technology, Knowledge and Learning*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10758-025-09885-z>
- Klimova, B., Pikhart, M., Polakova, P., Cerna, M., Yayilgan, S. Y., & Shaikh, S. (2023). A Systematic Review on the Use of Emerging Technologies in Teaching English as an Applied Language at the University Level. *Systems*, 11(1), 42. <https://doi.org/10.3390/systems11010042>
- Kohnke, L., & Moorhouse, B. L. (2026). Principles of GenAI-assisted microlearning: Perspectives of pre-service language teachers. *Elt Journal*, 80(1), 148–159. <https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccaf066>
- Kohnke, L., Zou, D., Ou, A. W., & Gu, M. M. (2025). Preparing future educators for AI-enhanced classrooms: Insights into AI literacy and integration. *Computers and Education: Artificial Intelligence*, 8, 100398. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.caeai.2025.100398>
- Kristjánsson, K. (2024). Aristotelian Practical Wisdom (Phronesis) as the Key to Professional Ethics in Teaching. *Topoi*, 43(3), 1031–1042. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11245-023-09974-7>

- Kusuma, I. P. I., Roni, M., Dewi, K. S., & Mahendrayana, G. (2024). Revealing the potential of ChatGPT for English language teaching: EFL preservice teachers' teaching practicum experience. *Studies in English Language and Education*, 11(2), 650–670. <https://doi.org/10.24815/siele.v11i2.34748>
- Laoha, R., Chomthong, W., & Pongpanich, W. (2025). Artificial Intelligence and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Teachers' Competencies: A Systematic Review. *Higher Education Studies*, 15(3), 262. <https://doi.org/10.5539/hes.v15n3p262>
- Li, B., Exter, M., Feng, W., Tang, G., & Xu, K. (2026). A systematic review of language educators' practices and development with GenAI. *International Journal of Artificial Intelligence in Education*, 36(1-2), 100010. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijaiied.2026.100010>
- Lo, A. W. T. (2025). The educational affordances and challenges of generative AI in Global Englishes-oriented materials development and implementation: A critical ecological perspective. *System*, 130, 103610. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2025.103610>
- Makrakis, V. (2026). Aristotle and AI in Education: Virtue, Wisdom, Human Flourishing and the Common Good. *Encyclopedia*, 6(6), 116. <https://doi.org/10.3390/encyclopedia6060116>
- Mandasari, B., Basthomi, Y., Hastomo, T., Afrianto, Hamzah, I., & Aminatun, D. (2025). The Snapshots of Indonesian Pre-Service English Teachers' Perspectives on Integrating Technology-Based Tools to Rural Schools. *Voices of English Language Education Society*, 9(1), 42–57. <https://doi.org/10.29408/veles.v9i1.27965>
- Maningo, M. P. S., Ochotorena, C., Catalbas, V. B., Empeynado, M., Recamara, J., & Anito, J. (2026). Agency at the margins: How pre-service teachers navigate poverty, care, and community leadership. *Social Sciences & Humanities Open*, 14, 103175. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2026.103175>
- Moorhouse, B. L. (2024). Beginning and first-year language teachers' readiness for the generative AI age. *Computers and Education: Artificial Intelligence*, 6, 100201. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.caeai.2024.100201>
- Moorhouse, B. L., Wan, Y., Wu, C., Kohnke, L., Ho, T. Y., & Kwong, T. (2024). Developing language teachers' professional generative AI competence: An intervention study in an initial language teacher education course. *System*, 125, 103399. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2024.103399>
- Omidvar, S., & Meihami, H. (2025). Exploring the “what” and “how” of opportunities and challenges of AI in EFL teacher education. *Computers and Education: Artificial Intelligence*, 9, 100443. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.caeai.2025.100443>
- Ramadhani, P. F., & Fithriani, R. (2025). Breaking Barriers: Indonesian EFL Pre-Service Teachers' Challenges and Solutions in TEFL. *Jurnal Ilmiah Global Education*, 6(2), 493–510. <https://doi.org/10.55681/jige.v6i2.3708>
- Rony, M. K. K., Numan, S. Md., Akter, K., Tushar, H., Debnath, M., Johra, F. T., Akter, F., Mondal, S., Das, M., Uddin, M. J., Begum, J., & Parvin, Mst. R. (2024). Nurses' perspectives on privacy and ethical concerns regarding artificial intelligence adoption in healthcare. *Heliyon*, 10(17), e36702. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2024.e36702>
- Sperling, K., Stenberg, C.-J., McGrath, C., Åkerfeldt, A., Heintz, F., & Stenliden, L. (2024). In search of artificial intelligence (AI) literacy in teacher education: A scoping review. *Computers and Education Open*, 6, 100169. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.caeo.2024.100169>

- Syuhra, M. N., Chandra, N. E., & Rosalina, E. (2025). Artificial Intelligence in English Language Teaching: A Systematic Literature Review of Tools, Impact, and Challenges. *Voices of English Language Education Society*, 9(1), 193–205. <https://doi.org/10.29408/veles.v9i1.29745>
- Tan, X., Cheng, G., & Ling, M. H. (2025). Artificial intelligence in teaching and teacher professional development: A systematic review. *Computers and Education: Artificial Intelligence*, 8, 100355. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.caeai.2024.100355>
- Tao, L., Song, Y., & Fu, J. (2026). Exploring students' self-regulated learning behavioural patterns and perceptions in an English speaking task within a generative AI-supported immersive VR environment. *Computers & Education*, 242, 105515. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2025.105515>
- Tsao, J. (2025). Trajectories of AI policy in higher education: Interpretations, discourses, and enactments of students and teachers. *Computers and Education: Artificial Intelligence*, 9, 100496. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.caeai.2025.100496>
- Tümen Akyıldız, S. (2026). Prompt engineering and creative pedagogical thinking: Insights from a qualitative study with teacher candidates. *Thinking Skills and Creativity*, 60, 102105. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tsc.2025.102105>
- Tutyandari, C. (2022). English Language Pre-Service Teachers' Sense Of Preparedness For Teaching: An Indonesian Case. *Teflin Journal - A Publication on the Teaching and Learning of English*, 33(2), 367. <https://doi.org/10.15639/teflinjournal.v33i2/367-385>
- Van Manen, M. (2016). *Researching lived experience: Human science for an action sensitive pedagogy* (Second edition). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315421056>
- Wei, X., Yang, J., & Yuan, R. (2026). Evolving EFL teachers' professional identities in AI-mediated teaching: A longitudinal narrative inquiry. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 181, 105630. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2026.105630>
- Wulandari, M., & Purnamaningwulan, R. A. (2024). Exploring Indonesian Efl Pre-Service Teachers' Experiences In Ai-Assisted Teaching Practicum: Benefits And Drawbacks. *Llt Journal: A Journal on Language and Language Teaching*, 27(2), 878–894. <https://doi.org/10.24071/llt.v27i2.8690>
- Zhang, Y., & Darvin, R. (2025). Negotiating gender ideologies and investing in teacher identities: The motivation and investment of EFL pre-service teachers. *System*, 133, 103669. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2025.103669>
- Zhuang, Y., & Zhang, S. (2025). Integrating ChatGPT in Mathematics Teacher Education: AI-Based Simulation Role-Playing To Support Practice-based Teaching. *International Journal of Artificial Intelligence in Education*, 35(6), 3873–3895. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40593-025-00519-0>