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EXPLORING ENGLISH INSTRUCTORS' PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS THE USE OF GENERATIVE AI FOR DESIGNING LESSON PLANS IN AN ISLAMIC HIGHER EDUCATION CONTEXT

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ABSTRACT

This study explores English instructors' perceptions of using generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) in designing lesson plans within Islamic higher education, focusing on pedagogical benefits, challenges, and ethical implications. Employing a qualitative descriptive design, data were collected through semi-structured interviews with three English instructors at UIN Antasari Banjarmasin who had experience using AI tools such as ChatGPT, Gemini, and Meta AI. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings reveal that instructors hold positive yet cautious attitudes toward generative AI, perceiving it as a supportive tool that enhances efficiency, creativity, and instructional organization in lesson planning. However, instructors emphasize that AI cannot replace teachers' professional judgment, reflective thinking, and contextual understanding. Ethical concerns related to originality, overreliance, and alignment with Islamic moral values emerged as central considerations guiding AI use. The study highlights a human-centered and ethically grounded approach where generative AI functions as a complementary resource under teachers' critical supervision, with specific relevance to English Language Teaching (ELT) practices such as supporting speaking and writing skills and aligning with Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) frameworks. Overall, when guided by ethical awareness and pedagogical wisdom, generative AI enhances rather than diminishes the human essence of teaching and learning.

Keywords: *English instructors; Generative AI; Islamic higher education; Lesson plan*

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi persepsi instruktur Bahasa Inggris terhadap penggunaan kecerdasan buatan (AI) generatif dalam merancang Rencana Pelaksanaan Pembelajaran (RPP) di perguruan tinggi Islam, dengan fokus pada manfaat pedagogis, tantangan, dan implikasi etisnya. Menggunakan desain deskriptif kualitatif, data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara semi-terstruktur dengan tiga instruktur Bahasa Inggris di UIN Antasari Banjarmasin yang memiliki pengalaman menggunakan alat AI seperti ChatGPT, Gemini, dan Meta AI. Data dianalisis menggunakan analisis tematik. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa para instruktur memiliki sikap positif namun tetap berhati-hati terhadap AI generatif, serta memandangnya sebagai alat pendukung yang meningkatkan efisiensi, kreativitas, dan pengorganisasian pembelajaran dalam perencanaan pembelajaran. Namun demikian, para instruktur menegaskan bahwa AI tidak dapat menggantikan pertimbangan profesional, pemikiran reflektif, dan pemahaman kontekstual seorang pendidik. Kekhawatiran etis yang terkait dengan orisinalitas, ketergantungan berlebihan, dan kesesuaian dengan nilai-nilai moral Islam muncul sebagai pertimbangan utama dalam penggunaan AI. Penelitian ini menyoroti pendekatan yang berpusat pada manusia dan berlandaskan etika, di mana AI generatif berfungsi sebagai sumber daya pelengkap di bawah pengawasan kritis instruktur, dengan relevansi khusus bagi praktik Pengajaran Bahasa Inggris (ELT) seperti mendukung keterampilan berbicara dan menulis serta menyelaraskan dengan kerangka Pengajaran Bahasa Komunikatif (CLT) dan Pengajaran Bahasa Berbasis Tugas (TBLT). Secara keseluruhan, apabila dipandu oleh kesadaran etis dan kearifan pedagogis, AI generatif meningkatkan, bukan mengurangi, esensi kemanusiaan dalam proses belajar mengajar.

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Kata kunci: *instruktur Bahasa Inggris; kecerdasan buatan generative; perencanaan pembelajaran; perguruan tinggi Islam*

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INTRODUCTION

Artificial intelligence has reached an advanced stage and continues to transform global education. Through sophisticated machine learning, generative AI can generate complex, contextual responses based on user instructions. Developers release regular updates, signaling continued commitment to innovation. As noted by Frumin et al. (2026), generative AI integration in higher education has grown exponentially since the 2022 launch of Midjourney beta. Consequently, AI is now widely used to support learning, teaching, research, and administration.

AI has created a more adaptive learning ecosystem at all educational levels. In language learning, AI offers innovative pedagogical solutions. While educators remain divided due to ethical concerns, many recognize AI's potential to transform English language teaching (Rafael, 2025). AI also mitigates learners' fear of making mistakes in front of classmates (Cumming et al., 2018). Tools such as chatbots provide immediate feedback in a safe, judgment-free environment (Rohmiyati, 2025).

Simultaneously, generative AI plays a crucial role in mitigating educator burnout. Multiple studies highlight that AI systems can significantly reduce instructor workload by automating routine administrative tasks, generating student progress reports, and developing instructional materials (Acevedo, 2025). Beyond administrative relief, generative AI systems measure student performance and provide constructive, timely feedback. For example, Sohail et al. (2025) and Yavariabdi et al. (2025) found that such feedback allows instructors to devote more time to meaningful pedagogical interactions. AI-driven personalized learning has grown rapidly, using deep learning and reinforcement systems to tailor content to individual needs (Hariyanto et al., 2025; Strielkowski et al., 2025). This adaptability is especially impactful in lesson plan design (Nesari & Heidari, 2014). Recent studies indicate a paradigm shift: integrating AI tools changes how teachers prepare materials, helping them achieve learning objectives accurately and build confidence (Alreiahi and Alrwaished,2025; Rahayu et al., 2025).

Despite these benefits, concerns regarding the ethical implications of AI in education persist. Integrating AI requires continuous updates in teaching methods and systematic professional development to ensure responsible use. Cinganotto and Montanucci (2025) and Rahayu et al. (2025) both highlight this need. Marlin et al. (2023) argue that an ethical pedagogical framework must be prioritized to enhance students' critical thinking and create a balanced digital learning

ecosystem. These ethical considerations are exceptionally prominent within Islamic educational contexts. While AI integration improves the efficiency of English language learning and offers personalized interactions (Efrizal, 2024), its implementation must strictly adhere to Sharia principles and local values (Hermawan et al., 2025; Suncaka, 2024). Studies by Alrumayh et al., (2025) indicate that while teachers view AI as a useful resource, human intervention remains crucial to maintain contextual relevance and align generated content with Islamic educational principles.

The broader impacts of AI on language education range from conversation simulation to multilingual applications (Albedah, 2025; Kyaw and Jie, 2025). However, existing literature predominantly focuses on technical capabilities and learning outcomes. A methodological lacuna exists: previous research is dominated by quantitative approaches that fail to delve deeply into the perceptions of key actors. Specifically, no studies examine how English instructors at Islamic universities negotiate the trade-off between AI efficiency and incorporating Islamic values into lesson plans.

While the literature outlines a dichotomy between AI's transformative potential (Alreiahi and Alrwaished, 2025) and the persistent need for contextual and ethical caution (Asrori and Setyaningsih, 2025; Djazila et al., 2024). These debates have not been empirically tested in the daily practices of lesson plan design at Islamic higher education institutions. Although teachers generally view generative AI favorably after training, they remain cautious about contextual accuracy and specific cultural appropriateness. Asrori and Setyaningsih (2025) and Hutauruk and Daulay (2024) both report such caution. Yet, current studies do not explain why this wariness persists, what forms of human intervention are actually practiced, or how instructors perceive Sharia principles, whether as supporting or limiting AI use.

This research is vital because it addresses the inevitable tension between technological efficiency and value authenticity. Instructors face daily pressures to produce innovative lesson plans using AI while ensuring these plans do not violate Sharia principles, maintain local cultural relevance, and foster critical thinking (Marlin et al., 2023). Without a deep exploration of how instructors navigate these tensions, policy and training programs will remain disconnected from field realities.

Furthermore, this study offers an alternative to the prevailing technocratic and positivist approaches that measure AI effectiveness solely through efficiency metrics. For instance, Rafael (2025), Strielkowski et al., (2025), and Yavariabdi et al., (2025) employ such approaches. By prioritizing qualitative exploration, this research elevates the subjective, cultural, and spiritual dimensions central to Islamic higher education. Ultimately, exploring the lived experiences, pedagogical benefits, and ethical dilemmas faced by instructors when designing AI-assisted lesson plans will provide an empirical foundation for developing highly contextual, effective, and sustainable professional development models.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Use of Generative AI in Education

The rapid development of generative Artificial Intelligence has significantly transformed educational practices across various levels of instruction. Generative AI refers to AI systems capable of producing human-like text, feedback, and instructional content based on user prompts. In higher education, its integration has expanded rapidly, particularly since 2022, reshaping teaching, learning, and assessment practices (Frumin et al., 2026). Research indicates that AI tools offer practical benefits such as automating repetitive tasks, generating instructional materials, and providing personalized feedback to learners (Cardona et al., (2023) Yavariabdi et al., (2025).

In language education specifically, AI has been recognized as a supportive tool that enhances learning engagement and instructional efficiency. Crompton et al. (2024) highlighted both the affordances and challenges of AI in English language teaching, emphasizing that AI can facilitate language practice, automated feedback, and adaptive learning opportunities. Similarly, Rohmiyati (2025) argued that AI enhances English language learning by providing immediate and contextualized responses, which can increase student motivation and participation. These developments suggest that generative AI has the potential to expand pedagogical possibilities when used thoughtfully.

However, alongside its advantages, the integration of generative AI also raises pedagogical and ethical concerns. Overreliance on AI may reduce teachers' critical engagement and intellectual autonomy (Crompton and Burke, (2023). Marlin et al., (2023) emphasized that AI implementation in education should be grounded in an ethical pedagogical framework that prioritizes critical thinking and responsible use. Therefore, AI should function as a supportive instrument rather than a replacement for educators' professional judgment. This human-centered perspective has become central in discussions of AI integration in higher education (Richter et al., 2024).

In Islamic educational contexts, the adoption of AI requires additional ethical consideration. Djazila et al. (2024) argued that AI implementation in Islamic education must align with moral values and institutional principles. Similarly, Mufid and Muassomah (2025) found that lecturers in Islamic higher education recognize AI's pedagogical benefits but emphasize the need for ethical awareness and curriculum alignment. These studies collectively indicate that while generative AI offers transformative opportunities, its integration must remain context-sensitive and ethically guided.

Lesson Planning in Higher Education

Lesson planning is a foundational component of effective teaching and learning processes. It involves systematic preparation of instructional objectives, materials, methods, and assessments to ensure coherent and meaningful learning experiences. Nesari and Heidari (2014) defined a lesson plan as a structured description of teaching activities that helps educators manage time, resources, and instructional flow efficiently. Beyond its technical function, lesson planning also requires reflective thinking and pedagogical judgment.

In higher education, lesson planning becomes particularly important because instructors must align learning objectives with curriculum standards, students' proficiency levels, and institutional expectations. Effective lesson planning supports instructional coherence and enhances teachers' confidence in delivering material systematically. It also helps instructors anticipate potential challenges and adjust strategies according to students' needs.

Research suggests that lesson planning is not merely procedural but intellectual and reflective in nature. It requires educators to integrate theoretical approaches, contextual knowledge, and pedagogical principles. For example, language instructors must ensure that lesson activities align with communicative goals and appropriate teaching methodologies. This reflective dimension highlights that lesson planning demands professional expertise rather than mechanical content generation.

In the context of Islamic higher education, lesson planning carries additional moral and ethical responsibilities. Instructors are expected not only to achieve academic objectives but also to nurture students' character and align instruction with religious values. Hermawan et al. (2025) emphasized that educational innovation in Islamic institutions must maintain adherence to ethical and religious principles. Similarly, Suncaka (2024) proposed that technological integration in Islamic education should bridge spirituality and modernity, ensuring that technological advancement does not undermine spiritual development. These perspectives underscore that lesson planning within Islamic higher education involves both pedagogical competence and moral awareness.

Generative AI in Lesson Plan Design

The intersection between generative AI and lesson planning has increasingly attracted scholarly attention, particularly in language education contexts. Recent studies indicate that AI tools can assist educators in generating lesson outlines, instructional materials, and assessment tasks efficiently. Rahayu et al., (2025) found that Indonesian EFL teachers perceive AI as helpful in structuring lesson plans and generating teaching ideas. Similarly, Asrori and Setyaningsih (2025) reported that teachers view generative AI as a useful support tool for lesson preparation, although contextual adaptation remains necessary to ensure alignment with specific classroom needs.

Empirical evidence from practicum-based lesson study contexts further demonstrates how generative AI can support lesson design. Kilickaya and Kic-Drgas (2025) found that pre-service language teachers frequently used generative AI for activity creation, material personalization, and collaborative design. Participants highlighted that AI tools allowed them to tailor reading texts and vocabulary exercises for different proficiency levels, thereby saving time and supporting differentiated instruction. However, the study also revealed limitations, including challenges in simplifying texts meaningfully and ensuring cultural appropriateness. These findings underscore that while generative AI enhances flexibility and efficiency in lesson planning, teacher evaluation and contextual modification remain essential.

In a broader university context, ALzubi and Alelaiwi (2025) reported that EFL teachers perceived AI-generative tools most positively in material design and planning compared to teaching methods and assessment. Teachers noted that AI facilitated the creation of instructional scripts, lesson plans, and culturally relevant materials while reducing preparation time. This efficiency enabled educators to allocate more time to interactive and creative classroom activities. Nevertheless, the study also cautioned against the risk of standardization and mechanization of teaching practices if AI-generated content is adopted without critical adaptation.

AI-generated lesson plans can therefore enhance efficiency by producing initial drafts that instructors can modify and refine. Alreiahi and Alrwaished (2025) observed that integrating AI tools in teacher education significantly influenced lesson planning practices by introducing new perspectives and structured formats. Similarly, Hutauruk and Daulay (2024) reported that teachers appreciate AI for creating learning materials but emphasize that human intervention is essential to ensure contextual accuracy and pedagogical validity.

Despite these benefits, concerns regarding dependency, originality, and theoretical alignment persist across recent studies. While Kilickaya and Kic-Drgas (2025) highlight that instructor may rely heavily on AI-generated lesson plans raising issues of professional identity and authorship, Crompton and Burke (2023) emphasize the pedagogical risks of such reliance, particularly the potential reduction of teachers' reflective engagement and intellectual autonomy. This contrast indicates that although AI enhances efficiency, it may simultaneously weaken critical pedagogical practices if used uncritically. Therefore, AI integration in education requires active teacher mediation rather than passive adoption.

In addition to ethical concerns such as transparency, bias, and intellectual responsibility, a critical issue lies in the alignment between AI-generated content and established pedagogical frameworks in ELT. While AI tools are capable of producing structured lesson plans, they do not consistently reflect language teaching approaches such as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), which emphasize meaningful interaction and task-based learning (Richards, (2006). This misalignment presents a significant pedagogical concern, as lesson planning is a fundamental stage that determines how language skills are developed in the classroom. As a result, instructors must actively evaluate and adapt AI-generated outputs to ensure their pedagogical appropriateness.

Although research on AI in English Language Teaching (ELT) has grown rapidly (Kyaw and Jie, (2025), most existing studies primarily focus on classroom implementation and student learning outcomes, rather than the lesson planning stage that shapes instructional design. In addition, many studies employ quantitative or survey-based approaches, which provide general trends but offer limited insight into instructors' lived experiences and decision-making processes. Consequently, there is still a lack of in-depth qualitative understanding of how teachers critically engage with AI in their pedagogical practices.

More importantly, there is a lack of context-specific research examining how AI integration is influenced by educational settings where pedagogical practices are closely intertwined with

ethical and religious values, such as Islamic higher education. Existing studies have not sufficiently explored how these moral considerations shape instructors' decisions in using generative AI for lesson planning. Therefore, this study addresses this gap by exploring English instructors' perceptions of AI-assisted lesson design within an Islamic higher education context, with particular attention to its pedagogical relevance to ELT and its ethical implications.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research adopted a qualitative descriptive design to explore how English instructors perceive the use of generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) in creating lesson plans within Islamic higher education institutions. A qualitative approach was considered suitable because it focuses on understanding participants' lived experiences, viewpoints, and the meanings they attach to specific phenomena (Creswell, (2007). The descriptive nature of this design enables the researcher to present a clear and detailed portrayal of instructors' experiences without manipulating any variables (Sandelowski, 2000). Through this lens, the study aims to capture authentic insights from instructors regarding how generative AI tools support, challenge, and shape their professional practices in lesson planning. As Merriam and J. Tisdell (2016) emphasize, qualitative description seeks to produce rich, straightforward, and participant-centered accounts of real-world experiences.

The study was carried out in UIN Antasari Banjarmasin, where English is taught as a compulsory subject. This University were intentionally chosen because they combine academic rigor with ethical and religious principles, aligning with the study's emphasis on the responsible integration of AI in education. Participants included English instructors who had previously used or experimented with generative AI applications, such as ChatGPT, Gemini, or Meta AI, when designing their lesson plans. Using a purposive sampling technique, participants were selected based on their experience and relevance to the research focus (Palinkas et al., (2015). In total, three instructors took part in the study.

Although the sample size was relatively small, it is considered appropriate for qualitative research, which prioritizes depth of understanding rather than generalizability (Creswell, 2007). The selected participants were information-rich cases who had direct and meaningful experience with the use of AI in pedagogical practices. Data collection continued until thematic saturation was achieved, where no new significant insights emerged from the interviews (Guest et al., 2006). The participants had diverse teaching backgrounds, with teaching experience ranging from approximately 3 to 10 years in English language instruction within Islamic higher education. This variation provided a range of perspectives, from relatively early-career instructors to more experienced educators. Their participation was entirely voluntary, and informed consent was obtained to ensure confidentiality and adherence to ethical standards.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, which allowed participants to freely express their ideas while keeping the discussion aligned with the research objectives. All interviews were conducted to provide flexibility for participants. Each session lasted about 15-45 minutes and was carried out in English and Indonesian. With participants' permission, the

interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. To maintain anonymity, pseudonyms were assigned and all identifiable information was removed.

The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis following the framework proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). This approach involves a systematic process of identifying, analyzing, and interpreting patterns within qualitative data.

- First, the researcher engaged in data familiarization by reading and re-reading the interview transcripts to gain a comprehensive understanding of the participants' responses. During this stage, initial notes were also taken to capture emerging ideas.
- Second, initial coding was conducted by systematically labeling meaningful segments of the data related to instructors' perceptions and use of generative AI in lesson planning. These codes reflected recurring ideas, such as efficiency, creativity, challenges, and ethical concerns.
- Third, the codes were grouped into broader categories to facilitate theme development, where patterns across participants' responses were identified. At this stage, similar codes were combined to form potential themes representing shared experiences.
- Finally, theme refinement was carried out by reviewing and revising the themes to ensure coherence, clarity, and alignment with the research objectives. The final themes were then defined and organized to reflect participants' perspectives on the pedagogical use of generative AI.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the analysis, several strategies were employed. Credibility was enhanced through member checking, where participants were invited to review and confirm the accuracy of the findings (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). In addition, peer debriefing was conducted to validate the interpretation of the data and minimize researcher bias. These steps were taken to ensure that the findings accurately represent participants' perspectives and maintain the rigor of qualitative research.

FINDINGS

This section presents the thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews with three English instructors (Participants A, B, C) at UIN Antasari Banjarmasin. Three main themes emerged: (1) perceptions of generative AI as a supportive but limited tool, (2) perceived benefits and challenges, and (3) ethical and religious moral considerations.

Instructors' Perceptions of Using Generative AI in Lesson Plan Design

All three instructors viewed generative AI positively but cautiously. They described AI as a tool that enhances efficiency and idea generation, yet they consistently emphasized that AI cannot replace professional pedagogical judgment.

AI as a helpful assistant. Participant B stated: "*AI helps divide lessons into clear sections, introduction, main activities, conclusion. It's very helpful*." Participant C added: "*AI is a place to seek enlightenment, but not to rely on completely. I use it about 50%. If used fully, who is actually*

teaching? It is me, the teacher." Participant A noted: "*AI helps come up with game ideas and formulate questions*."

Limits and cautions. All instructors warned against overreliance. Participant C explained: "*If we keep asking AI to instantly make things for us, our brains will eventually stop working. We will become dependent*". Participant A described the negative effect as "*brain fog" or "a block in thinking, where creativity stops*." Participant B acknowledged that AI output often had to be "*manually edited*" because it did not always align with learning theories like Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT).

Participants unanimously agreed that AI-generated outputs require human revision. Participant C emphasized: "*AI does not understand the students. It works from general popular patterns. We must design it ourselves.*"

Perceived Benefits, Challenges, and Ethical Considerations of AI Integration

Benefits

Instructors identified several concrete benefits of using generative AI in lesson planning. The most frequently mentioned benefit was time efficiency. Participant A noted: "*If you ask for full AI, it definitely saves time*." Participant C added that AI helps him prepare teaching materials quickly, especially when deadlines are tight. He explained: "*For a moderate deadline, not too long and not too close, I sometimes ask AI for help. I might ask it to show an example of an efficient lesson plan framework.*"

Another important benefit was idea generation and creative stimulation. Participant C used AI to find "*sample questions*" and "*new methods*" when he felt stuck. He said: "*When I make a teaching schedule for one semester, I ask AI to find examples for beginners, and it gives me many options. From that, I know what my students are like, how long I will be teaching, and how I should teach*." Participant A similarly reported that AI helped her "*come up with game ideas*" and that student "enjoyed" the games produced by AI. She gave a concrete example: "*I asked ChatGPT to create a Taboo style game for vocabulary review. It gave me the rules and word lists. The students were very engaged*."

Instructors also reported that AI provided support for specific language skills, particularly speaking and writing. Participant B explained: "*For speaking, I ask AI to create role play scenarios based on real life situations, like ordering food or asking for directions. Then I adapt them for my class*." Participant C used AI for writing support: "*I sometimes ask AI to check sentence structures in student writing samples. It gives quick feedback on grammar and word choice*." However, he cautioned that such feedback must be reviewed by the teacher for accuracy.

Challenges

Despite the benefits, instructors also faced notable challenges. One major challenge was content unreliability and inconsistency. Participant A admitted having to "*adapt the material*" because AI results were often "*slightly different from the textbook*." She did not trust AI for

summarizing content: "*Sometimes it was right, sometimes it was wrong, and sometimes the grammar was wrong.*" Participant C echoed this concern: "*AI can be wrong. For example, when I asked for a jumble text activity, the output was strange and incorrect. I had to fix it manually*." He also noted that AI's suggestions are often too general: "*AI only gives average, general ideas. It doesn't know my specific class situation.*"

Another significant challenge was pedagogical misalignment. Participant B reported that AI generated lesson plans sometimes failed to align with established teaching methods. He said: "*I tried to get AI to make a lesson plan using TBLT, but the result was more like PPP. The tasks weren't really communicative. I had to rewrite the whole sequence*." This indicates that AI's training data over represents traditional, teacher centered formats, making it difficult to obtain task based or communicative designs without extensive manual revision. Participant C added that AI "*tends to return the most commonly used examples or top search results, which are not always effective for every classroom*."

Ethical and Religious Moral Considerations

All participants expressed strong concerns about originality, plagiarism, and alignment with Islamic values. Regarding originality and plagiarism, instructors emphasized that they do not copy AI outputs verbatim. Participant A stated: "*I always develop the lesson plan in my own language so that it is considered my own*." She explained that even when AI provides a good draft, she rewrites it completely to avoid plagiarism and to add her personal teaching style. Participant B acknowledged that the ownership status of AI generated content remains "*unclear, it's a grey area*." He noted: "*For images or text fully generated by AI, you cannot claim copyright. But for lesson plans where I give the content and methods and AI just organizes it, maybe there is still my contribution. It's not clear*." This uncertainty leads instructors to err on the side of caution, always modifying AI outputs significantly.

Instructors also described how Islamic values function as a filter for AI generated content. Participant C explained: "*AI output must be reviewed to ensure it does not conflict with religious principles. We must filter. For example, if AI gives an example about gambling or alcohol, I have to remove it or change it*." He added that teachers can prompt AI to focus on Islamic content: "*You can tell AI, 'I teach in an Islamic university, please give examples that are appropriate.' But you still have to check.*" Participant A admitted "*there are concerns*" about content appropriateness but believed students are mature enough to distinguish right from wrong. However, she still felt responsible for screening materials before class.

A further ethical concern was dependency and the loss of creativity. Instructors viewed excessive dependence on AI as not only a practical risk but a moral failing. Participant C firmly stated: "*If lecturers fully utilize AI, then why be a lecturer? It's better to have students learn from AI*." He argued that teachers have a responsibility to model critical thinking and effort. Participant A added that "*if we keep asking AI to instantly make things for us, our brains will eventually stop working. We will become dependent, and that is what is difficult for students nowadays*." This concern extends to students as well: Participant C said he does not allow students to use AI

translation during class because "*if they rely on AI translation, they will not learn the target language. They need to build vocabulary themselves*."

Finally, participants offered suggestions for institutional practice. Participant C recommended holding "seminars and sharing among teachers about AI ethics," because "those who understand AI should share knowledge with others." He emphasized that "*ethics should be the main focus so people do not become dependent. AI should be a tool to enhance human capability, not to replace thinking.*" Participant A called for "*self-control*" and "*training to quickly analyze and filter AI output so that evaluation becomes second nature*."

DISCUSSION

The findings reveal that English instructors in Islamic higher education adopt a human-centered and ethically grounded approach to generative AI in lesson planning. Three main themes emerged: (1) instructors perceive AI as a supportive but limited tool, (2) they identify specific benefits (efficiency, creativity, skill support) alongside challenges (content unreliability, pedagogical misalignment), and (3) they apply ethical and religious filters to AI outputs. This discussion interprets these findings in relation to English Language Teaching (ELT) theory and prior research, directly addressing the two research questions: instructors' perceptions of generative AI, and the associated benefits, challenges, and ethical considerations.

1. Instructors' Perceptions of Generative AI

a. Positive Yet Cautious Perception: Pedagogical Boundary Setting

Instructors in this study viewed generative AI as a helpful tool but deliberately limited its role in lesson planning. Participant C stated, "AI is a place to seek enlightenment, but not to rely on completely"; Participant A warned that using AI for everything would cause "brain fog" and "creativity stops." This cautious positivity reflects a strong sense of professional identity and pedagogical ownership, teachers insist on remaining the primary instructional designers, not mere editors of machine-generated content.

Theoretically, this finding aligns with Richter et al. (2024), who argue that AI should function as a cognitive partner rather than a replacement for human judgment. It also resonates with sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978), which emphasizes that meaningful learning design requires human mediation, contextual understanding, and reflective adaptation, capacities that AI does not possess. Unlike studies that celebrate AI primarily for reducing teacher workload (Cardona et al., 2023), this study foregrounds the deliberate boundary that teachers erect to protect their professional autonomy.

This boundary-setting perception directly shapes how instructors later manage benefits and challenges: they accept AI only as a subordinate assistant, not an autonomous planner. Without this deliberate limitation, the very benefits that instructors value (e.g., creative stimulation, time efficiency) could degenerate into overreliance.

b. The Perceived Threat to Critical Thinking and Creativity

All participants expressed concerns that overreliance on AI would weaken their analytical skills and creativity. Participant C explained, "If we keep asking AI to instantly make things for us, our brains will eventually stop working." Participant A described the negative effect as "brain fog" or "a block in thinking." These fears are not merely pragmatic but also ethical: in the Islamic context, maintaining intellectual effort is tied to *amanah* (trustworthiness), teachers are morally responsible for their own professional development.

This finding challenges the techno-optimist narrative that AI universally enhances human capability (Cardona et al., 2023). Instead, it supports reflective practice theory (Schon, (1983), which holds that professionals learn through deliberate, critical reflection on their own actions. When teachers outsource too much of the planning process to AI, they lose opportunities for the very reflection that sustains pedagogical growth. Some studies have noted that AI can reduce burnout by automating routine tasks (Acevedo, 2025), but this study adds a cautionary dimension: efficiency gains must be weighed against potential losses in cognitive engagement.

This fear of cognitive erosion explains why instructors refuse to delegate high-stakes tasks (evaluation, objective-setting) to AI, a pattern that becomes evident in the challenges section. The perceived threat to creativity reinforces the pedagogical boundary already established.

c. AI as a Divergent Thinking Tool, not a Final Decision-Maker

Instructors consistently reported using AI to generate ideas, methods, and game suggestions, but they retained final decisions for themselves. Participant B used AI to "divide lessons into sections," but then manually edited the output. Participant C used AI to find "sample questions" and then "sorted them according to students' level." This division of labor mirrors the creative cognition framework (Finke et al., (1992), which distinguishes between divergent thinking (generating multiple possibilities) and convergent thinking (selecting, evaluating, and refining). Instructors treat AI as a tool for divergent thinking, expanding the range of possibilities, while keeping convergent thinking (evaluation, adaptation, contextualization) as their exclusive domain. This finding also aligns with the notion of AI as a cognitive partner (Richter et al., (2024), but adds specificity: the partnership is asymmetric. AI generates; the teacher evaluates. AI proposes; the teacher disposes.

2. Benefits, Challenges, and Ethical Considerations

a. Benefits: Efficiency, Creative Stimulation, and Support for Language Skills

Efficiency in routine tasks. Instructors reported that AI saved time on drafting initial lesson plans and generating activity ideas. Participant A noted that "if you ask for full AI, it definitely saves time." From a cognitive load theory perspective (Sweller, 1988), reducing extraneous cognitive load (e.g., formatting, basic content generation) frees working memory for deeper instructional design, such as differentiation, personalization, and alignment with learning objectives.

Creative stimulation and engagement. AI generated games, varied question types, and interactive activities. Participant A observed that students "enjoyed" the games produced by AI, and Participant B noted that AI helped "come up with game ideas." This aligns with Game-Based Learning principles (Plass, Homer, and Kinzer, (2015) and can support Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) when AI-generated tasks are appropriately adapted. Instructors used AI not as a substitute for their own creativity but as a creative stimulus, a source of raw material that they then refined.

Speaking and writing are two English skills that can be supported by AI. Instructors used AI to generate dialogue prompts, role-play scenarios, and interactive questions. This supports Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) (Richards, (2006), which emphasizes meaningful communication in realistic contexts. AI can provide a rich set of communicative scenarios, though instructors must adapt them to fit cultural and religious norms.

Participant C reported using AI to obtain immediate feedback on grammar, vocabulary, and sentence structure, which helped students revise independently. This aligns with process writing theory (Hyland, (1996), where continuous feedback and revision are central to skill development. It also promotes learner autonomy (Benson, (2013), as students learn to reflect on and improve their own writing with AI as a supportive tool. A key insight is that teachers trust AI for low-stakes, generative tasks (producing examples, generating drafts) but not for high-stakes interpretive tasks (evaluating student work, setting learning objectives). This distinction explains why instructors readily adopt AI for material development but resist using it for assessment or goal-setting.

These benefits are realized only because instructors maintain the boundary established in RQ1, AI is used selectively, always under teacher supervision. Without that boundary (e.g., if teachers allowed AI to also evaluate students or set objectives), benefits would turn into overreliance and loss of professional control. The cautious perception enables productive, not pathological, use of AI.

b. Challenges: Content Unreliability and Pedagogical Misalignment

Inconsistent or incorrect content. Instructors reported that AI sometimes produced grammar errors, inappropriate method applications, or summaries that were "sometimes right, sometimes wrong" (Participant A). This reflects the well-documented hallucination problem in large language models (Kyaw and Jie, 2025): AI generates text that is plausible but not guaranteed to be factually or pedagogically correct. Because AI lacks contextual awareness and pedagogical reasoning, it predicts words, not truth, teachers cannot assume accuracy without verification.

Misalignment with TBLT. Participant B explicitly noted that AI-generated lesson plans often failed to align with Task-Based Language Teaching, defaulting instead to Presentation-Practice-Production (PPP) structures. Why does this happen? Generative AI models are trained on vast corpora of publicly available lesson plans, which historically over-represent PPP. Without explicit prompting for TBLT, the model returns the most statistically common pattern. This finding has a direct implication for ELT practice: prompt engineering becomes a new

pedagogical skill. Instructors must learn to craft prompts that specify not only content but also methodological frameworks (e.g., "Design a task-based lesson where students solve a problem in pairs using target vocabulary"). Kilickaya and Kic-Drgas (2025) reported similar challenges among pre-service language teachers, who struggled to align AI outputs with theoretical frameworks.

These challenges reinforce the necessity of the cautious perception seen in RQ1. Teachers who ignore the boundary and rely fully on AI would be unable to detect or correct content errors or methodological misalignments. The very limitations of AI, its lack of contextual and pedagogical understanding, demand that teachers remain critically engaged. Thus, the challenges are not merely obstacles; they are justifications for the human-centered approach.

c. Ethical and Religious Moral Considerations

Originality and plagiarism. All participants emphasized that they rewrite AI outputs in their own words. Participant A stated, "I always develop the lesson plan in my own language so that it is considered my own." Participant B acknowledged that the ownership status of AI-generated content remains "unclear, it's a grey area." This reflects an ethical commitment to academic integrity, reinforced by Islamic values of honesty and trustworthiness. The principles require transparency and attribution when using AI; these instructors go further by actively transforming AI outputs to ensure originality.

Islamic values as an evaluative filter. Instructors did not reject AI on religious grounds; instead, they described a process of reviewing, modifying, and sometimes rejecting AI outputs that conflict with *akhlaq* (Islamic ethics). Participant C explained: "AI output must be reviewed to ensure it does not conflict with religious principles. We must filter." This aligns with Culturally Responsive Teaching (Gay, 2002), which holds that materials must fit students' cultural and moral frameworks. Religious values function not as barriers but as active evaluation criteria, teachers prompt AI for Islamic-friendly content and reject examples involving gambling, alcohol, or inappropriate gender mixing. This extends prior work by Mufid and Muassomah (2025), who noted that Islamic educators balance technological benefits with religious standards, by showing how this filtering is operationalized in daily practice.

Dependency and the erosion of creativity as ethical concerns. Instructors viewed excessive dependence on AI as not only a practical risk but a moral failure. Participant C insisted: "If lecturers fully utilize AI, then why be a lecturer? It's better to have students learn from AI." This perspective connects to the Islamic concept of *itqan* (excellence), striving for one's best effort, not taking shortcuts. Creativity is seen as a moral responsibility: to develop students' higher-order thinking, teachers must model intellectual effort themselves.

The ethical filter is the logical extension of the pedagogical boundary. Just as teachers limit AI's role to protect their professional judgment, they also filter AI's content to protect their moral and religious values. Together, these form a context-sensitive model of AI integration: technology

supports teaching only when it remains under continuous human oversight guided by professional, ethical, and religious standards.

This overall study demonstrates that generative AI is accepted by English instructors in Islamic higher education as a supportive tool, but only under strict teacher control guided by professional and religious ethics. Instructors perceive AI as a useful assistant for low-stakes, generative tasks (drafting, idea generation, basic feedback) but refuse to delegate high-stakes interpretive tasks (evaluation, objective-setting, value alignment). They actively filter AI outputs through pedagogical frameworks (CLT, TBLT) and Islamic moral values (*akhlaq*). This context-sensitive model of AI integration contributes to ELT by showing how technology can be adopted in religiously affiliated settings without compromising either pedagogical effectiveness or moral integrity. Limitations include the small sample size (n=3), which prioritizes qualitative depth over generalizability, and the reliance on self-reported perceptions rather than classroom observations. Future research should explore students' perspectives, observe actual classroom implementation, and compare practices across different Islamic institutions.

CONCLUSION

This study reveals that English instructors in Islamic higher education hold positive yet cautious perceptions toward the use of generative AI in lesson plan design. The findings indicate that instructors perceive AI as a supportive pedagogical tool that enhances efficiency, creativity, and instructional organization. At the same time, they emphasize that AI cannot replace teachers' professional judgment, reflective thinking, and ethical responsibility. Rather than viewing AI as an autonomous solution, instructors position it as a complementary resource that requires human evaluation, contextual adaptation, and pedagogical control.

The findings highlight that instructors view AI as a useful support tool for lesson planning, particularly in generating initial ideas and drafts, while emphasizing the need for critical evaluation to ensure pedagogical alignment, contextual relevance, and meaningful learning outcomes. Concerns about overreliance and reduced creativity reinforce the importance of maintaining educators' intellectual autonomy. Within Islamic higher education, AI adoption is further shaped by ethical and religious values, as lesson planning is regarded as both a pedagogical and moral responsibility guided by principles of integrity, responsibility, and moderation. Consequently, AI use must be carefully monitored to avoid plagiarism, misinformation, and excessive dependency. In the context of English Language Teaching, AI can support speaking and writing instruction and complement approaches such as Communicative Language Teaching and Task-Based Language Teaching when teachers actively adapt and mediate its outputs.

Based on these findings, it is recommended that Islamic higher education institutions provide continuous professional development focused on the ethical and pedagogical use of generative AI. Training programs should equip instructors with skills to critically evaluate AI-generated content, design effective prompts, and integrate AI tools without compromising Islamic values or instructional quality. Additionally, institutional guidelines are needed to regulate responsible AI use and prevent overreliance. Future research may explore students' perspectives and classroom-

level implementation to further illuminate how generative AI influences teaching and learning dynamics in Islamic educational contexts.

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