



Reclaiming Meaning in the Age of Intelligent Machines: Spiritual Intelligence and Human-Centered AI in English Language Teaching

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Abstract:

Background: The rapid expansion of artificial intelligence (AI) in English language teaching (ELT) has increased opportunities for personalized learning, automated feedback, and instructional efficiency. However, growing reliance on AI raises concerns regarding meaning-making, ethical-responsibility, human-agency, and the preservation of educational purpose. Although research on AI-mediated ELT and spiritual intelligence (SI) has expanded, the relationship between these domains remains underexplored.

Aims: This conceptual paper aims to 1) examine major theories of SI and their educational relevance, 2) analyze the ethical and human limitations of AI in ELT, and 3) propose a human-centered framework for spiritually intelligent AI-mediated language teaching.

Methods: The study adopts a conceptual–integrative methodology drawing on interdisciplinary scholarship from SI, AI ethics, psychology, educational technology, and language education. Relevant literature was analyzed through concept extraction, thematic synthesis, and cross-disciplinary comparison to identify convergent themes and theoretical tensions.

Results: The synthesis suggests that SI provides a valuable lens for understanding meaning-making, ethical sensitivity, self-awareness, reflective judgment, and learner agency in AI-supported learning environments. It indicates that while AI can simulate communication, it operates without subjective consciousness, lived experience, or autonomous moral accountability. The paper proposes a conceptual framework in which SI mediates the integration of AI into ELT through reflective pedagogy, ethical communication, teacher agency, and learner sense-making.

Conclusion: The proposed framework highlights the importance of preserving human-centered values in AI-mediated language education. By connecting SI with AI-supported ELT, the study contributes a novel conceptual perspective for promoting responsible, ethical, and meaning-oriented uses of AI in educational contexts.

Keywords: AI-mediated Learning, Artificial Intelligence, ELT Pedagogy, English Language Teaching, Ethics in Education, Human-Centered AI, Learner Agency, Spiritual Intelligence

1. INTRODUCTION

Artificial intelligence (AI) is becoming increasingly common in educational settings, including English language teaching (ELT). AI-powered tools such as automated writing evaluation, adaptive learning systems, chatbots, and intelligent tutoring platforms are now widely used in language classrooms (Isaee et al., 2026).

These technologies are often praised for improving efficiency, personalization, and accessibility. Many

educators and institutions view AI as a practical solution to long-standing challenges in language education (Floridi et al., 2018). As a result, discussions about AI in ELT frequently focus on speed, accuracy, and performance improvement. However, the growing use of AI in education also raises important human and ethical concerns. Language learning is not only about mastering grammar or vocabulary. It is also connected to identity, culture, communication, and self-expression (Isaee & Barjesteh, 2026b). Students use language to express emotions, build relationships, and understand other people and cultures. For this reason, language education cannot be reduced to a purely technical process.

As AI becomes more influential in ELT, there is concern that educational priorities may shift away from human meaning and toward automation and efficiency. Although AI systems can generate fluent responses and imitate human interaction, they generate outputs through computational pattern recognition and, in their current forms, do not exhibit subjective consciousness, lived emotional experience, or autonomous moral accountability (Agrawal, 2025; Isaee, 2026a). They process patterns and data, but they do not truly understand human experience. This distinction is

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important because learners may begin to confuse simulated interaction with genuine understanding. Recent scholarship in psychology and education has shown increasing interest in spiritual intelligence (SI) as an important human capacity related to sense-making, ethical reflection, self-awareness, and reflection, self-awareness, and interconnectedness (Muzakki, 2019). Unlike religious belief, SI is generally understood as a universal human ability that helps individuals reflect on values, purpose, and relationships with others (Rasti et al., 2023). Research has also linked SI to well-being, resilience, and moral development in educational and professional contexts (Risdiyanto et al., 2026).

Despite the rapid growth of research on artificial intelligence in English language teaching, existing studies have primarily focused on instructional effectiveness, learner engagement, automated feedback, adaptive learning systems, and the enhancement of language skills through AI-supported tools (Manoochehrzadeh et al., 2025; Risdiyanto et al., 2025). Parallel research on SI has established its relevance to meaning-making, ethical sensitivity, self-awareness, resilience, and human flourishing across educational and professional contexts (Popoveniuc, 2017). However, these two bodies of scholarship have largely developed independently. Little attention has been given to how SI might inform the ethical and pedagogical use of AI in language education, particularly in relation to learner agency, reflective judgment, and meaning-oriented learning.

This unresolved intersection is significant because language education depends not only on cognitive performance but also on communication, identity formation, intercultural understanding, and ethical engagement. As AI assumes a more prominent role in ELT, questions concerning how educators can preserve these human dimensions become increasingly important.

The novelty of this paper lies in proposing SI as an integrative human-centered framework for interpreting, guiding, and critically mediating the use of AI in English language teaching.

This paper argues that SI offers a valuable human-centered perspective for AI-mediated ELT. Unlike narrower pedagogical constructs, SI provides an integrative lens that connects reflection, ethics, emotional awareness, and educational purpose within a broader framework of human flourishing. The paper does not suggest that AI can become spiritual or morally conscious. Instead, it views SI as a human capacity that guides how teachers and learners interact with AI technologies in educational settings. From this perspective, AI should support learning without replacing human judgment, ethical sensitivity, or learner agency.

The paper has three main aims. First, it reviews major theories of SI and discusses their relevance to education

by synthesizing key conceptual perspectives on meaning-making, ethical reflection, self-awareness, and human flourishing. Second, it examines the limitations of AI from ethical and human perspectives, particularly in relation to consciousness, meaning, responsibility, and the boundaries of machine-mediated decision-making. Third, it proposes a conceptual framework for spiritually intelligent AI-mediated ELT that emphasizes reflective pedagogy, ethical communication, teacher agency, and learner sense-making. These aims are addressed through an interdisciplinary synthesis of scholarship from psychology, spirituality, AI ethics, and language education, culminating in a framework that integrates insights from these fields into a coherent human-centered approach to AI use in ELT.

By bringing together research from AI ethics, psychology, spirituality, and language education, this paper contributes to current discussions about responsible and values-driven uses of AI in ELT. The conceptual synthesis suggests that the future development of language education should consider not only technological advancement but also the preservation of human capacities related to meaning-making, ethical judgment, reflective engagement, and authentic communication.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1 Methodological Orientation: A Conceptual–Integrative Inquiry

This study follows a conceptual–integrative approach and does not involve empirical data collection. Because the study is literature-based and conceptual in nature, it does not involve human participants, research sites, classroom interventions, or the collection of primary data. The analysis was informed by interdisciplinary literature drawn from the fields of SI, artificial intelligence ethics, psychology, educational technology, and English language teaching. Literature was identified primarily through searches of Scopus, Web of Science, ERIC, Google Scholar, and major academic publishers' databases between January and March 2026. The search focused principally on publications produced between 2000 and 2026, although several earlier foundational works were included because of their historical and theoretical significance.

Key search terms included combinations of “spiritual intelligence,” “existential intelligence,” “AI ethics,” “artificial intelligence in education,” “AI-mediated learning,” “English language teaching,” “language education,” “human-centered AI,” “learner agency,” “ethical literacy,” and “technology-mediated learning.” Sources were included when they (a) presented influential theoretical or empirical contributions to SI, (b) addressed ethical, philosophical, or human-centered perspectives on artificial intelligence, or (c) examined technology-mediated language learning and educational practice. Sources were excluded when they lacked clear

scholarly grounding, were not directly relevant to the conceptual focus of the study, or primarily addressed technical aspects of AI without educational or human implications.

The synthesis proceeded through four broad stages: identification and collection of relevant literature, extraction of key concepts, interdisciplinary comparison and thematic integration, and development of a conceptual framework. The analytical procedures used within these stages are described below.

Unlike systematic reviews that aim for exhaustive coverage, conceptual-integrative studies emphasize interpretation, theoretical connection, and critical synthesis. Following the initial literature search, sources were evaluated according to their relevance to the study's central concepts (spiritual intelligence, artificial intelligence, ethics, human agency, and English language teaching), their scholarly quality, and their contribution to theoretical development. Priority was given to peer-reviewed journal articles, influential academic books, highly cited theoretical works, and recent review studies published in reputable scholarly outlets. Duplicate records identified across databases were removed, while marginal sources with limited conceptual relevance or insufficient scholarly grounding were excluded from further analysis. Preference was given to publications that provided substantial theoretical insights, conceptual clarification, empirical evidence relevant to the discussion, or significant contributions to educational, ethical, or psychological debates concerning AI and spirituality.

To facilitate synthesis, key ideas, recurring concepts, and theoretical arguments were extracted from the selected literature and compared across disciplines. Through iterative reading and comparison, related concepts were grouped into broader thematic categories, including meaning-making, ethical sensitivity, learner agency, reflective judgment, human-technology relationships, and educational responsibility. These themes served as the foundation for the subsequent interdisciplinary synthesis and framework development.

The methodological orientation of this study is based on the idea that concepts such as meaning, spirituality, ethics, and human agency cannot be fully understood through quantitative measurement alone (Koenig & Carey, 2024, 2025). Scholars in spirituality and mental health research have warned that excessive dependence on narrow measurements may oversimplify complex human experiences and create what has been described as "scale contamination" (Muzakki, 2019). For this reason, the present study focuses more on conceptual understanding and theoretical reflection than on prediction or statistical generalization.

The analytical procedure followed a series of iterative stages designed to facilitate interdisciplinary conceptual synthesis. Throughout this process, the analysis was guided by an interdisciplinary conceptual lens integrating theories of SI, artificial intelligence ethics, psychology, and English language teaching. This integrative perspective provided the foundation for

examining relationships among key concepts and for developing the proposed conceptual framework. First, key concepts and theoretical propositions were extracted from the selected literature, including constructs related to SI, meaning-making, ethical sensitivity, learner agency, reflective judgment, artificial intelligence, and language education. Second, these concepts were compared across disciplinary perspectives to identify areas of convergence, divergence, and conceptual overlap. Third, related concepts were organized into broader thematic clusters that captured recurring concerns within the literature, such as human responsibility, ethical decision-making, reflective engagement, and human-technology relationships. The fourth stage involved identifying conceptual tensions and unresolved questions emerging across the reviewed scholarship. Particular attention was given to tensions between technological efficiency and human agency, automation and interpretation, algorithmic guidance and ethical responsibility, and machine-generated outputs and human meaning-making. Finally, insights from these thematic and comparative analyses were integrated into a conceptual framework that positions SI as a mediating human capacity for interpreting and guiding AI use in English language teaching. Throughout the process, the objective was not to establish causal relationships but to develop a theoretically coherent framework capable of generating future empirical inquiry.

It is also important to clarify the scope of the paper. The study does not argue that artificial intelligence possesses spirituality, consciousness, morality, or human awareness. Likewise, it does not promote any religious ideology or doctrine. Rather, SI is treated as a human capacity that influences how teachers and learners understand, evaluate, and use AI technologies in educational settings. From this perspective, AI functions as a supportive educational tool, while responsibility for meaning, ethics, and pedagogical purpose remains with human beings.

This conceptual-integrative approach has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, although the literature-selection process followed explicit relevance and quality criteria, some degree of selection bias is unavoidable because conceptual studies require judgment regarding which sources are most theoretically informative. Second, the interpretation and synthesis of concepts inevitably involve researcher subjectivity, and alternative readings of the literature may yield different emphases or conceptual relationships. Third, despite drawing on multiple disciplines, the framework may reflect uneven representation across fields due to differences in the availability and maturity of relevant scholarship. Finally, the proposed framework remains conceptual and has not yet been empirically validated. Consequently, the framework should be regarded as a theoretically grounded proposition that requires empirical testing and refinement across diverse educational contexts.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Result

3.1.1 Spiritual Intelligence: Evolution, Debates, And Conceptual Tensions

3.1.1.1 *The Emergence of Spiritual Intelligence in Psychological Thought*

The idea of SI emerged from broader discussions about the nature of human intelligence (Emmons, 2000). Traditional theories of intelligence mainly focused on reasoning ability, memory, language skills, and problem-solving. These approaches were useful for understanding academic achievement, but they did not fully explain how people deal with meaning, ethics, purpose, or existential questions. Such issues are especially important in education and intercultural communication (Gardner, 2000). Attempts to expand the concept of intelligence became more visible through Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences. Although Gardner's (2000) did not formally identify SI as an independent category, he introduced the idea of "existential intelligence." This concept referred to the human ability to reflect on questions related to life, death, meaning, and existence. Gardner's discussion helped open space for later scholars to explore intelligence beyond cognitive performance alone. Building on these discussions, Emmons (2000) presented one of the earliest systematic explanations of SI. He described SI as an adaptive human capacity that allows individuals to use spiritual awareness in solving problems and achieving goals. His model included abilities such as transcendence, deeper consciousness, and finding sacred meaning in everyday life. However, some scholars criticized this approach because it appeared too closely connected to religious belief rather than psychological functioning. Later researchers attempted to make the concept more inclusive and psychologically grounded. Instead of defining SI through religion, they focused on qualities such as reflective awareness, ethical sensitivity, compassion, and sense-making (Ramachandaran et al., 2017). This shift was important because it presented SI as a human capacity rather than a religious identity. In this view, SI influences how individuals interpret experiences, understand relationships, and respond to complex situations.

3.1.1.2 *Definitional Diversity and the Problem of Conceptual Boundaries*

One of the main challenges in research on SI is the lack of a single accepted definition. Unlike cognitive intelligence, which has relatively stable frameworks, SI remains conceptually diverse. Different scholars emphasize different dimensions. Some focus on meaning and purpose, while others highlight ethics, self-awareness, transcendence, or connectedness. As a result, debates continue regarding whether SI should be

considered a distinct form of intelligence or a combination of other psychological qualities.

Critics argue that unclear boundaries may weaken the concept. Halama and Strizenec (2004), for example, questioned whether SI truly represents a separate ability or simply overlaps with emotional and moral capacities. Other researchers have also raised concerns about measurement validity, especially when SI instruments include religious terminology or culturally specific beliefs (Muzakki, 2019). These concerns reflect deeper questions about whether spirituality can be fully explained through psychological models. In response, many scholars now prefer functional definitions of SI. Rather than focusing on religious beliefs, these definitions emphasize how people approach meaning, values, ethical responsibility, and self-reflection. Amram (2022) describes SI as the ability to apply spiritual awareness in ways that improve well-being, judgment, and daily functioning. This approach avoids linking SI to any single religious tradition and makes the concept more applicable across cultures and educational settings.

Although definitions still vary, recent reviews show increasing agreement around several core dimensions of SI. These commonly include sense-making, ethical sensitivity, self-understanding, and a sense of connection with others (Anwar et al., 2020). This growing consistency suggests that SI reflects a recognizable pattern of human functioning, even if it cannot be reduced to a single definition. SI remains philosophically and psychometrically contested, and the present study does not assume universal agreement regarding its ontological status. Instead, SI is adopted as a heuristic and conceptual lens that foregrounds dimensions of human functioning (purpose, interconnectedness, and value coherence) that are often underrepresented in technology-focused educational discourse. This pragmatic orientation allows the construct to serve an interpretive role even while scholarly debate concerning its precise boundaries continues.

3.1.1.3 *Spiritual Intelligence and Its Relationship to Emotional and Moral Intelligence*

Another important debate concerns the relationship between SI and related concepts such as emotional intelligence and moral intelligence. Emotional intelligence generally refers to the ability to recognize, manage, and express emotions effectively. Research has shown that SI supports communication, empathy, and social interaction. However, it does not fully explain how people understand meaning, purpose, or ethical responsibility (Risdiyanto et al., 2026). Several scholars suggest that SI operates at a broader level by connecting emotions with reflection, values, and ethical understanding (King, 2008). Emotional intelligence focuses mainly on emotional processes, while SI explores why emotions and actions matter within a

larger human context (Rasti et al., 2023). In this sense, SI does not replace emotional intelligence. Instead, it gives emotional experiences deeper meaning and direction. A similar distinction exists between SI and moral intelligence. Moral intelligence emphasizes ethical reasoning and appropriate behavior, whereas SI also involves compassion, interconnectedness, and existential reflection. This difference is especially relevant in education. Learners are not only expected to follow rules but also to develop reflective judgment, empathy, and personal voice. Research has linked SI to resilience, well-being, and adaptive coping in difficult situations (Williamson, 2017). These findings suggest that SI helps individuals manage uncertainty by creating meaning and coherence rather than simply following external rules. In AI-mediated ELT environments, this distinction becomes highly important. Emotional intelligence may support interaction, and moral intelligence may guide ethical decisions, but SI addresses deeper questions about agency, meaning, and human purpose in technology-rich learning environments.

3.1.1.4 Distinguishing Spiritual Intelligence from Adjacent Constructs

Although SI shares conceptual territory with emotional intelligence, moral intelligence, reflective practice, and humanistic pedagogy, it should not be regarded as a simple synonym for any of these constructs. Emotional intelligence primarily concerns the perception, regulation, and use of emotions in interpersonal and intrapersonal functioning. Moral intelligence focuses on ethical reasoning and the capacity to act in accordance with principles such as fairness, responsibility, and integrity. Reflective practice emphasizes critical examination of one's beliefs and actions, while humanistic pedagogy prioritizes learner dignity, autonomy, and self-actualization.

SI differs from these constructs by functioning at a broader integrative level. Rather than addressing emotions, ethics, or reflection in isolation, SI concerns the human capacity to situate these processes within a larger framework of existential purpose, interconnectedness, and value coherence (Anwar et al., 2020). In this sense, SI does not replace adjacent capacities; instead, it organizes and orients them toward questions such as why particular actions matter, how personal values align with broader responsibilities, and what constitutes a meaningful and ethically grounded life. This integrative role is especially important in educational settings. Teachers and learners often experience tensions between efficiency and care, performance and authenticity, or technological innovation and ethical responsibility. Emotional intelligence may help individuals manage affective responses, and moral intelligence may guide judgments about right and wrong. Still, SI provides a higher-order perspective that connects these responses to enduring questions of purpose and human flourishing. Accordingly, the present paper conceptualizes SI as a meta-capacity that coordinates reflective, emotional, and ethical dimensions of human functioning around

existential meaning and relational responsibility. This framing acknowledges the construct's contested nature while clarifying its distinctive contribution to discussions of artificial intelligence and English language teaching.

3.1.1.5 Measurement, Validity, and the Limits of Quantification

Researchers have developed different tools to measure SI, including self-report questionnaires and mixed-method approaches. These instruments have helped increase empirical research on SI, but they have also generated criticism. Some scholars argue that reducing spirituality to numerical scales may oversimplify a complex human phenomenon (Bambling, 2025). This issue is particularly relevant in education. Experiences related to meaning, identity, ethics, and reflection are often personal, dynamic, and context-dependent. They do not always fit easily into standardized measurements. Because of this, many researchers support qualitative and interpretive approaches to studying SI. These approaches focus more on reflection, lived experience, and narrative understanding. For this paper, the debate over measurement highlights an important point. The educational value of SI does not depend entirely on psychometric precision. Its importance lies in its ability to illuminate aspects of learning that are often ignored in technology-centered discussions. By viewing SI as a guiding human capacity rather than a measurable performance variable, educators may engage more critically with both the possibilities and limitations of AI in ELT.

3.1.1.6 Relevance of SI for Contemporary Education

SI has become increasingly relevant in modern educational contexts shaped by uncertainty, diversity, and rapid technological change. Today's learners face complex social realities, ethical dilemmas, and digitally mediated interactions that challenge traditional understandings of knowledge and authority. In such environments, the ability to reflect on values, develop empathy, and create meaningful learning experiences becomes highly important. Research connecting SI with well-being and mental health further supports its educational significance. Studies suggest that SI can strengthen resilience, reduce psychological stress, and support adaptive coping in difficult situations (Ajele et al., 2021). These findings are especially relevant in digitally intensive learning environments where automation and technological pressure may increase feelings of stress, isolation, or alienation. In ELT, SI aligns closely with humanistic educational traditions that emphasize learner voice, intercultural understanding, ethical communication, and reflective learning (Risdiyanto et al., 2026). Language education involves interaction with different cultures, perspectives, and identities. These encounters require openness, humility, empathy, and thoughtful judgment. SI may help both teachers and learners approach these experiences in more meaningful and ethically aware ways.

Within AI-mediated ELT, SI should therefore not be viewed as a peripheral or abstract idea. Instead, it represents an important human capacity for navigating technologically supported learning environments. Understanding the limitations of AI, as well as the human qualities that technology cannot replicate, is essential for developing language education that remains meaningful, ethical, and sustainable.

3.1.2 Artificial Intelligence and the Question of Humanity

3.1.2.1 Intelligence Without Inner Life: The Limits of AI

AI has made significant progress in areas commonly associated with human cognition, including language processing, pattern recognition, and decision-making (Isaee & Barjesteh, 2026b). In educational settings, AI technologies are increasingly used to provide automated feedback, personalize learning, and support classroom interaction. These developments have encouraged many people to describe AI systems as intelligent, responsive, or even empathetic. However, despite these capabilities, current AI systems are generally understood as operating without subjective experience or phenomenological consciousness (Isaee, 2026b).

Human intelligence is closely connected to awareness, emotion, memory, culture, and personal experience. Human understanding is shaped not only by information but also by values, relationships, and moral reflection (Mayer, 2000). AI systems operate differently. They analyze data, recognize patterns, and generate responses through algorithms and statistical prediction. Although they can imitate emotional language, they do not actually feel emotions or understand meaning in a human. This distinction is especially important in education. Learners may interpret AI-generated responses as signs of genuine understanding or care. However, AI systems do not possess intentionality, self-awareness, or ethical consciousness. Recognizing this limitation is necessary to avoid confusion about the role of technology in teaching and learning.

3.1.2.2 Simulated Empathy and Artificial Understanding

One of the most attractive features of modern AI systems is their ability to produce fluent and emotionally engaging language (Isaee, 2026a). In ELT settings, chatbots and writing assistants often respond politely and offer encouragement that appears empathetic. These features may improve learner engagement and confidence, but they also raise important ethical questions. Human empathy involves emotional awareness, moral responsibility, and genuine relational understanding. It requires the ability to recognize another person's feelings while remaining aware of one's own ethical position. AI-generated empathy is fundamentally different. It is based on learned linguistic patterns rather than lived emotional experience (Isaee & Barjesteh, 2026a). From the perspective of SI, this

difference is highly significant. SI involves reflective awareness, ethical sensitivity, and intentional judgment. These qualities emerge from human consciousness and lived experience. When learners interact with AI systems that appear understanding or compassionate, they may confuse linguistic fluency with genuine care. In educational environments, this confusion may weaken critical awareness and reduce opportunities for meaningful human interaction.

3.1.2.3 Moral Responsibility and the Absence of Spiritual Capacity

Recent discussions about AI increasingly focus on ethics and moral responsibility (Risdianto et al., 2025). Some scholars ask whether AI systems can make ethical decisions or act as moral agents. Although AI can follow programmed ethical guidelines, responsibility for its actions still belongs to human beings, including developers, educators, and institutions (Manoochehrzadeh et al., 2025). Most philosophical and educational accounts define moral agency as requiring self-awareness, intentional reflection, and the capacity to assume responsibility for one's actions. Current AI systems are not generally regarded as meeting these criteria; accordingly, accountability for their decisions and consequences remains with human designers, institutions, and users. They cannot reflect on moral consequences, question their decisions, or grow through ethical experience. As a result, assigning moral responsibility to machines may reduce human accountability and create ethical confusion. Research on spirituality and psychology further highlights the human nature of moral and spiritual awareness. SI involves reflection on values, meaning, and ethical purpose. It is connected to consciousness, lived experience, and moral orientation (Zohar & Marshall, 2000). These qualities cannot be reproduced through algorithms or computational systems. For this reason, educational responsibility cannot be transferred to AI technologies. Teachers and educational institutions remain responsible for ensuring that AI is used ethically and meaningfully in learning environments.

3.1.2.4 AI and the Risk of Dehumanization

Several recent studies warn that uncritical dependence on AI may contribute to forms of spiritual or existential confusion. When AI systems are treated as authoritative sources of guidance, learners may begin to rely on machine-generated responses instead of developing their own reflective judgment. Over time, this may blur the distinction between human understanding and algorithmic output. From the perspective of SI, this tendency is problematic. SI encourages reflection, questioning, and ethical sensitivity. It supports the ability to live with uncertainty rather than seeking immediate and automated answers. Educational environments that prioritize efficiency and automation may weaken these reflective processes. AI-mediated interaction may also influence how communication

itself is understood. Language can gradually become more transactional and efficiency-oriented rather than relational and values-driven. In ELT, communication involves empathy, cultural awareness, and mutual understanding. If these dimensions are reduced, language learning may lose part of its deeper educational and human value.

3.1.2.5 Human-centered Perspective on AI in Education

Recognizing the limitations of AI does not mean rejecting technology altogether. AI can support learning in valuable ways when used responsibly. However, its use should remain grounded in human values and educational purpose. Values-driven approaches to AI emphasize transparency, accountability, and respect for human agency (Dignum, 2019). From the viewpoint of SI, these principles should also include ethical reflection, sense-making, and awareness of the broader consequences of technology use. In this perspective, AI is not an independent authority but a tool shaped by human intentions and decisions. In ELT, this means that AI integration should be accompanied by reflective teaching practices that encourage ethical communication, learner agency, and meaningful engagement (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2013). Teachers remain central in guiding learners to use AI critically rather than passively accepting machine-generated outputs. Through this process, SI becomes part of everyday pedagogical practice rather than a purely theoretical idea.

3.1.2.6 The Human Future of AI-Mediated ELT

The central issue is not whether AI can become spiritual or morally conscious. The more important question is whether education can preserve its human character in increasingly technology-driven environments. SI provides a useful framework for addressing this concern because it reminds educators that learning involves more than information processing or technical performance. In AI-mediated ELT, recognizing the non-human nature of AI is essential for protecting the deeper purposes of language education. When teachers understand what AI cannot provide, such as moral judgment, lived experience, and spiritual awareness, they are better able to design learning environments that combine technological support with human insight. This understanding prepares the ground for viewing ELT as a meaning-oriented educational practice that depends fundamentally on human reflection, ethical engagement, and interpersonal connection.

3.1.3 English Language Teaching as a Meaning-Oriented Practice

3.1.3.1 Language Learning Beyond Technical Skill

English language teaching has always involved more than learning grammar and vocabulary. Although earlier teaching methods focused mainly on repetition, memorization, and accuracy, later approaches began to view language learning as a social and personal process. Communicative and humanistic approaches emphasized communication, learner autonomy, and self-expression rather than mechanical language practice alone (Larsen-

Freeman & Anderson, 2013). Language is not simply a system of rules. It is also a way for people to express emotions, build relationships, and understand the world around them. Through language learning, individuals encounter different cultures, values, and perspectives. These experiences require reflection, openness, and ethical sensitivity. For this reason, ELT provides an important context for examining how AI technologies influence human sense-making (Biesta, 2015; Dörnyei, 2019). At the same time, many educational institutions increasingly emphasize efficiency, standardization, and measurable outcomes (Biesta, 2015). AI technologies are often promoted as solutions because they can automate assessment, personalize instruction, and reduce teacher workload (Isaee et al., 2025). However, when efficiency becomes the primary educational goal, deeper dimensions of language learning, such as communication, understanding, and ethical engagement, may receive less attention.

3.1.3.2 Identity, Voice, and Agency in ELT

Language learning is closely connected to identity formation. As learners develop new linguistic abilities, they also negotiate social roles, experiment with self-expression, and reshape their sense of identity. This process can involve uncertainty, vulnerability, and emotional struggle (Dörnyei, 2019). Effective ELT, therefore, depends not only on instructional methods but also on creating learning environments that support dignity, agency, and reflective participation. SI provides a useful perspective for understanding these processes. Important dimensions of SI, including self-awareness, purpose, and ethical reflection, are closely related to the identity work involved in language learning (Emmons, 2000). Learners who are encouraged to reflect on meaning and values may become more capable of expressing themselves confidently in intercultural settings where misunderstandings and unequal power relations sometimes emerge (Zohar & Marshall, 2000). AI-mediated ELT introduces additional challenges into this process. Automated feedback systems and conversational AI tools can shape how learners view their abilities, progress, and communicative voice. When machine-generated feedback is presented without contextual understanding or ethical sensitivity, learners may become overly dependent on algorithmic evaluation. From an SI perspective, these concerns highlight the continuing importance of teacher guidance and reflective pedagogy in technology-supported learning environments (Isaee & Barjesteh, 2023).

3.1.3.3 Intercultural Communication and Ethical Engagement

English functions as a global language and plays a major role in intercultural communication. ELT classrooms often include learners from different linguistic, cultural, and ideological backgrounds. As a result, language education requires teaching approaches that encourage dialogue, mutual understanding, and ethical interaction (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). SI may support intercultural competence by promoting empathy, interconnectedness, and ethical sensitivity. Rather than

encouraging learners to simply adopt dominant cultural norms, SI-oriented pedagogy encourages reflection, openness, and value-based communication. This perspective becomes especially important in AI-mediated ELT because AI systems may unintentionally reproduce cultural assumptions present in their training data (Y. Amram & Dryer, 2008). If AI tools are used without critical awareness, they may reinforce dominant language patterns and marginalize alternative voices or perspectives. In contrast, spiritually intelligent pedagogy encourages learners to question assumptions, examine values critically, and engage thoughtfully with language and culture. In this sense, SI can help balance the standardizing tendencies of automated educational systems.

3.1.3.4 ELT, Technology, and Instrumentalization Risk

The growing use of AI in ELT reflects wider educational trends related to technologization and data-driven learning. Educational systems increasingly rely on analytics, monitoring tools, and predictive technologies to evaluate learner performance (Barjesteh & Isaee, 2024). Although these systems may provide useful information, they can also reduce learners to measurable data rather than recognizing them as developing human beings. This instrumental view of learning creates important pedagogical concerns. When language education becomes overly focused on accuracy, speed, and measurable outcomes, its broader formative goals may weaken (Biesta, 2015). Researchers have warned that technology-centered educational models may prioritize control and surveillance instead of dialogue, trust, and human interaction, especially when educational decisions are shaped by opaque algorithms (Koenig & Carey, 2025). SI offers an alternative perspective. By emphasizing meaning, ethical reflection, and human values, SI-oriented ELT restores the importance of human judgment within educational practice. This approach does not reject technology. Instead, it places AI within a broader educational vision that recognizes both the usefulness and the limitations of automation while protecting learner dignity and agency (Anwar et al., 2020).

3.1.3.5 Teacher Agency and the Mediating Role of Pedagogy

Discussions about AI in education sometimes portray teachers mainly as facilitators of technology rather than as reflective professionals with ethical and pedagogical expertise (Agrawal, 2025). Such perspectives may reduce teacher agency and underestimate the role educators play in shaping meaningful learning experiences. In practice, the educational impact of AI depends less on the technology itself and more on how teachers use it within pedagogical contexts. SI highlights the importance of teacher self-awareness, ethical responsibility, and reflective judgment (Ramachandaran et al., 2017). Teachers with stronger spiritual awareness may be better prepared to manage

tensions between innovation and responsibility or between efficiency and human meaning. They can evaluate AI tools critically, adapt them to learner needs, and guide students toward thoughtful and responsible technology use (Popoveniuc, 2017).

3.1.3.6 ELT as a Site for Rehumanizing AI in Education

These discussions position ELT as an especially important field for rehumanizing AI in education. Language learning is deeply connected to communication, identity, relationships, and ethical interaction. Because of this, ELT clearly reveals both the strengths and the limitations of AI-supported instruction (Barjesteh et al., 2026b). Integrating SI into AI-mediated ELT may help educators create learning environments that balance technological innovation with human understanding (Azamatova et al., 2023). Such environments encourage learners not only to use language effectively but also to communicate ethically, reflectively, and meaningfully in a world increasingly influenced by intelligent technologies.

3.1.4 Toward Spiritually Intelligent Ai-Mediated ELT: A Conceptual Synthesis

3.1.4.1 From Technological Integration to Pedagogical Meaning

Discussions about AI in English language teaching often focus on implementation. Researchers and institutions usually ask which technologies should be adopted, how they can improve instruction, or how they may increase efficiency. Although these questions are important, they often overlook a deeper issue: how teachers and learners interpret the role of AI within educational practice. Technology does not enter classrooms as a neutral tool. Its educational impact depends on the values, assumptions, and pedagogical decisions that shape its use (Emmons, 2000). A SI approach shifts attention away from technology itself and toward pedagogical intention. Instead of asking only what AI can do, educators are encouraged to consider what kind of learning experiences they want to create and whether AI genuinely supports those goals. This perspective places human judgment and educational purpose at the center of AI integration. SI is important in this interpretive process because it encourages awareness of meaning, values, and ethical responsibility. Teachers who approach AI reflectively are less likely to adopt technologies simply because they appear innovative or efficient. Instead, they evaluate whether these tools contribute positively to learner development and meaningful communication.

3.1.4.2 Why Spiritual Intelligence as the Guiding Framework?

Although several educational concepts, including reflective pedagogy, critical consciousness, ethical literacy, and humanistic education, offer valuable perspectives on technology integration, SI is adopted in

this paper because it provides a broader integrative framework. Reflective pedagogy emphasizes thoughtful examination of practice; critical consciousness focuses on power, inequality, and social transformation; ethical literacy develops sensitivity to moral consequences; and humanistic education prioritizes learner dignity and self-actualization. Each of these perspectives addresses an important aspect of educational practice. SI contributes a distinctive perspective by explicitly linking these capacities to questions of existential purpose, value coherence, and interconnectedness. Rather than concentrating on a single dimension of educational experience, SI integrates reflection, ethical judgment, emotional awareness, and relational responsibility within a unified orientation toward meaningful human flourishing (Y. Amram, 2011; King, 2008). This broader perspective is especially useful in AI-mediated ELT, where educators must balance efficiency, autonomy, ethics, identity, and intercultural communication simultaneously.

Operationally, SI is reflected in practices such as questioning the educational purpose of technology, aligning instructional decisions with enduring values, recognizing the relational consequences of language use, and guiding learners to evaluate AI outputs in relation to their own goals and responsibilities. These practices extend beyond technical competence or isolated ethical reasoning by connecting pedagogical decisions to deeper questions about what it means to teach and learn well. The present study, therefore, does not claim that SI is inherently superior to other educational frameworks. Rather, it argues that SI offers a conceptually inclusive lens capable of bringing together insights from reflective, ethical, critical, and humanistic traditions within a single values-driven framework for responsible AI integration.

3.1.4.3 AI as Pedagogical Mediator, Not Educational Authority

An important principle of this framework is that AI should function as a pedagogical support rather than an educational authority. Supportive technologies may assist learners, provide suggestions, or create practice opportunities. Educational authority, however, involves interpretation, ethical judgment, and responsibility. Confusing these roles may weaken both teacher agency and learner autonomy (Popoveniuc, 2017). AI tools such as writing evaluators and conversational systems can offer useful linguistic feedback and exposure to different language forms (Barjesteh & Isaee, 2024). However, their responses are generated through algorithms and statistical patterns rather than genuine understanding. They do not possess awareness of context, human intention, or ethical consequence. Spiritually intelligent pedagogy makes these limitations visible and encourages learners to engage critically with AI-generated feedback. In this framework, teachers remain responsible for interpretation and guidance. Learners are encouraged to compare AI suggestions with human perspectives, reflect on communicative intention, and make independent decisions about language use. This

process supports reflective judgment and reinforces the idea that language learning involves interpretation rather than passive acceptance of machine-generated answers (Y. Amram, 2011).

3.1.4.4 Sense-making in AI-Supported Language Learning

Sense-making is central to both SI and language education. In traditional ELT, meaning develops through dialogue, interaction, reflection, and shared interpretation. AI-mediated environments make this process more complex because learners interact with systems that can produce language fluently without possessing human experience or intention (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). An SI approach encourages learners to reflect critically on AI-generated language rather than accepting it automatically. Learners may ask questions such as: What assumptions shape this response? Does this language reflect my intended meaning? Are there alternative ways to communicate the same idea? Such reflective engagement transforms AI interaction into a learning process instead of a shortcut to immediate answers (Dörnyei, 2019). This perspective also reduces the risk of excessive dependence on AI systems. When learners rely too heavily on automated tools for expression or interpretation, they may gradually lose confidence in their own communicative abilities. By emphasizing sense-making as a human responsibility, SI pedagogy preserves learner agency and reflective participation (Bambling, 2025).

3.1.4.5 Ethical sensitivity and Responsible Communication

Language is closely connected to ethics because communication can influence relationships, identities, and social understanding. In AI-mediated ELT, ethical concerns also involve issues such as cultural bias, representation, and algorithmic influence (Koenig & Carey, 2025). SI contributes to ethical sensitivity by encouraging learners to reflect on values and consequences. AI-generated language is shaped by training data that may reproduce dominant perspectives or hidden biases. An SI approach encourages learners to question these patterns instead of accepting them uncritically (Agrawal, 2025). Teachers play an essential role in guiding this process. Classroom discussions about language choice, representation, and cultural meaning can help learners think more carefully about how AI shapes communication. Such practices connect technology use with broader conversations about ethical and responsible language use (Barjesteh et al., 2026a).

3.1.4.6 Learner Agency and Autonomy

One major concern in AI-mediated education is the possible weakening of learner autonomy. AI systems can provide immediate corrections, recommendations, and answers. Although this may increase efficiency, it can also encourage learners to depend too heavily on algorithms for judgment and decision-making (Dignum, 2019). A SI framework attempts to protect learner agency by treating AI as a resource rather than an authority. Learners are encouraged to evaluate AI

outputs critically and make independent communicative decisions. Educational tasks should involve reflection, explanation, and justification so that learners remain active participants in their own learning process. This focus on autonomy is closely connected to SI because SI emphasizes purpose, self-awareness, and intentional action. Learners are encouraged to identify their own goals and values while using AI tools selectively and responsibly. In this way, AI-mediated ELT supports not only language development but also reflective and independent thinking (Byram, 2013).

3.1.4.7 The Teacher as a Reflective and Spiritually Intelligent Mediator

Within this framework, teachers play a central role in organizing and guiding AI-mediated learning. Their role extends beyond technical competence and includes ethical judgment, reflective awareness, and pedagogical responsibility. Teachers must constantly balance innovation with human meaning and technological efficiency with learner well-being (Williamson, 2017). Spiritually intelligent teachers are attentive to the emotional and ethical dimensions of learning. They recognize when AI supports meaningful engagement and when it may create dependency, confusion, or reduced human interaction. They also encourage critical digital literacy by openly discussing both the possibilities and limitations of AI technologies. Importantly, this role does not require teachers to promote spirituality as a religious belief system. Instead, it involves maintaining awareness of educational

purpose, ethical responsibility, and the human consequences of pedagogical decisions. In AI-mediated ELT, such awareness becomes increasingly important as technology assumes a larger role in classroom interaction and learning design (Zohar, 1997).

Figure 1 presents the proposed conceptual framework for spiritually intelligent AI-mediated English language teaching. The framework positions SI as the central human capacity that mediates the relationship between AI technologies and ELT practice. Rather than allowing AI to function as a direct instructional authority, the framework emphasizes that technological affordances should be interpreted and guided through human reflection, ethical judgment, and pedagogical awareness. The framework reflects two complementary elements. First, the reviewed literature consistently suggests that meaning-making, ethical reflection, human agency, and educational responsibility remain central dimensions of learning that cannot be reduced to technological efficiency alone. Second, building upon these insights, the authors propose that SI may serve as a mediating human capacity through which AI technologies are interpreted, evaluated, and pedagogically integrated within ELT contexts.

This proposition is conceptual rather than empirical and is intended to provide a theoretically informed basis for future research and framework testing.



Figure 1. A Conceptual Framework for Spiritually Intelligent AI-Mediated English Language Teaching

Figure 1 conceptualizes SI as the central human capacity mediating the relationship between artificial intelligence and English language teaching. The framework was developed from the interdisciplinary synthesis presented throughout this paper. The AI component derives from literature highlighting the pedagogical affordances of artificial intelligence, including personalization, feedback generation, adaptive learning, and instructional support. The SI component derives from scholarship emphasizing meaning-making, ethical reflection, self-awareness, interconnectedness, and human flourishing. The ELT component reflects research demonstrating that language learning involves not only skill development but also communication, identity formation, intercultural understanding, and learner agency.

The directional relationships shown in the framework represent conceptual rather than causal claims. The pathway from AI to SI reflects the proposition that AI-generated content and technological affordances require human interpretation, ethical evaluation, and reflective mediation before being integrated into educational practice. The pathway from SI to ELT reflects the argument that spiritually intelligent reflection can shape pedagogical decisions, classroom interactions, and learner engagement in ways that preserve meaning, responsibility, and human agency. The interrupted direct relationship between AI and ELT symbolizes the framework's central assumption that technology alone should not determine educational purposes or practices without human mediation.

Based on the literature synthesis, the framework advances the following conceptual propositions for future empirical investigation: (P1) higher levels of SI among teachers may be associated with more reflective and ethically informed uses of AI in ELT; (P2) spiritually intelligent mediation may strengthen learner agency, meaning-making, and critical engagement in AI-mediated learning environments; and (P3) the educational benefits of AI in ELT may be enhanced when technological affordances are integrated through pedagogical practices informed by ethical reflection and human-centered values. These propositions are offered as theoretically derived hypotheses that require empirical validation.

3.2 Discussion

The conceptual synthesis developed in this paper contributes to emerging discussions concerning the educational implications of AI by extending the focus beyond technological performance toward human-centered dimensions of learning. Much of the current literature on AI in English language teaching has emphasized efficiency, personalization, automated feedback, adaptive learning, and language-skill development (Manoochehrzadeh et al., 2025). These contributions have demonstrated the pedagogical potential of AI-supported learning environments. However, scholars in AI ethics and educational technology have increasingly argued that educational innovation should also address questions of human

agency, ethical responsibility, transparency, and the preservation of meaningful human participation in learning processes (Koenig & Carey, 2025). The present synthesis aligns with these concerns and suggests that discussions of AI-mediated ELT may benefit from greater attention to the human capacities that guide the interpretation and use of technological tools. A central contribution of the proposed framework is its positioning of SI as a mediating human capacity within AI-mediated educational environments. Previous scholarship has associated SI with meaning-making, self-awareness, ethical sensitivity, resilience, and the capacity to reflect upon broader questions of purpose and interconnectedness (Y. Amram & Dryer, 2008; Y. J. Amram, 2022). While these characteristics have been examined in relation to leadership, well-being, and educational development, their relevance to artificial intelligence in language education has received limited scholarly attention. The present analysis therefore extends existing discussions by proposing that SI may provide a useful interpretive framework through which teachers and learners evaluate AI-generated content, exercise ethical judgment, and maintain learner agency in increasingly automated educational contexts.

The framework also contributes to ongoing debates concerning the relationship between human intelligence and machine intelligence. Contemporary AI systems are capable of generating sophisticated linguistic outputs and simulating forms of interaction that may appear reflective, empathetic, or conversationally meaningful (Agrawal, 2025). Nevertheless, the literature reviewed in this paper consistently distinguishes computational pattern generation from subjective consciousness, lived experience, and autonomous moral responsibility (Dignum, 2019). This distinction is particularly important in language education because communication involves not only information exchange but also identity construction, intercultural understanding, emotional expression, and ethical engagement. The synthesis therefore supports the view that technological capability alone cannot replace the human processes through which educational meaning is constructed.

Another theme emerging from the interdisciplinary synthesis concerns the tension between efficiency and reflection. AI technologies may reduce cognitive burden, increase access to learning resources, and support individualized instruction. At the same time, excessive dependence on automated systems may create risks associated with diminished critical engagement, overreliance on machine-generated responses, and reduced opportunities for reflective meaning-making. Similar concerns have been raised within broader discussions of educational technology and digital culture (Williamson, 2017). The proposed framework does not reject technological innovation; rather, it suggests that spiritually intelligent mediation may help balance technological efficiency with ethical reflection, learner autonomy, and educational purpose.

The discussion also highlights several theoretical considerations. SI remains a contested construct, and

scholars continue to debate its conceptual boundaries, measurement, and distinction from related constructs such as emotional intelligence, moral intelligence, and existential intelligence (Gardner, 2000). Consequently, the framework advanced here should not be interpreted as a definitive model of AI-mediated language education. Instead, it represents a theoretically informed proposition derived from interdisciplinary synthesis. Its primary contribution lies in opening a new line of inquiry that connects SI, AI ethics, and English language teaching within a shared human-centered perspective.

Overall, the discussion reinforces the broader argument that responsible AI integration in ELT requires more than technical competence and pedagogical efficiency. It also requires sustained attention to meaning, ethical responsibility, reflective judgment, and human agency. By bringing together insights from SI theory, AI ethics, psychology, and language education, the present study contributes to ongoing efforts to ensure that technological innovation remains aligned with the human purposes of education.

3.2.1 Research Contribution

The present study makes several theoretical and conceptual contributions to the growing body of scholarship on artificial intelligence in language education. First, it introduces spiritual intelligence as a previously underexplored perspective for examining the human dimensions of AI-mediated English language teaching. While existing studies have primarily emphasized technological capabilities, instructional effectiveness, and learning outcomes, this study expands

the discussion by foregrounding meaning-making, ethical reflection, learner agency, and educational purpose. Second, the study integrates literature from multiple disciplines, including AI ethics, educational technology, psychology, spirituality research, and applied linguistics. This interdisciplinary synthesis provides a novel conceptual framework that positions spiritual intelligence as a mediating construct between technological affordances and human educational values. In doing so, the study contributes to a more balanced understanding of AI integration that recognizes both technological innovation and human responsibility. Third, the framework offers a conceptual model for understanding progressive levels of engagement with AI in ELT, moving from instrumental and efficiency-oriented uses toward reflective, ethically informed, and purpose-driven educational practices. Although conceptual in nature, the model provides a foundation for future empirical investigation and theory development in AI-supported language learning environments.

3.2.2 Implications for ELT and AI Integration

Figure 2 presents four conceptual levels of engagement with AI in English language teaching. These levels are intended primarily as analytical categories for understanding different orientations toward AI use rather than as fixed developmental stages through which all teachers or learners necessarily progress. At the same time, the framework has a normative dimension because it proposes that higher levels of engagement involve greater degrees of reflection, ethical awareness, pedagogical intentionality, and human agency.



Figure 2. Levels of Engagement in AI-Mediated English Language Teaching: A Spiritually Intelligent Progression

The implications of this framework extend to classroom practice, teacher education, curriculum design, and educational policy.

AI adoption should be understood not merely as a technological decision but as a pedagogical and ethical one. Teachers are encouraged to employ AI tools in ways that support learner reflection, critical evaluation, and meaningful engagement rather than passive dependence on automated outputs.

The framework further suggests the importance of integrating ethical literacy into language education. Learners should be encouraged to examine issues of authorship, bias, accountability, transparency, and the social consequences of AI-generated communication. Such practices can help foster responsible digital citizenship while strengthening critical language awareness.

Teacher professional agency also emerges as a central consideration. Rather than replacing teachers, AI technologies increase the importance of pedagogical judgment, contextual interpretation, and ethical decision-making. Professional development initiatives should therefore address not only technical competencies but also reflective and ethical dimensions of AI integration.

At the institutional level, the findings highlight the need for governance frameworks that prioritize transparency, learner well-being, teacher participation, and educational values. Educational policies should evaluate AI adoption according to its contribution to meaningful learning rather than efficiency alone.

3.2.3 Limitations of the Study

Several limitations should be acknowledged. First, this study is conceptual and theoretical rather than empirical. The proposed framework is derived from interdisciplinary literature synthesis and has not yet been validated through classroom-based investigation.

Consequently, the relationships proposed among spiritual intelligence, ethical awareness, learner agency, and AI-mediated learning remain theoretical propositions that require empirical examination.

Second, spiritual intelligence remains a contested construct within the literature. Ongoing debates concerning its conceptual boundaries, measurement, and distinction from related forms of intelligence may affect future operationalization and interpretation of the framework. Ongoing debates concerning its conceptual boundaries, measurement, and distinction from related forms of intelligence may affect future operationalization and interpretation of the framework.

Third, the framework was developed primarily within the context of English language teaching. Cultural, institutional, and educational differences may influence the applicability of the proposed model across diverse learning environments. Future studies should therefore examine the framework in different linguistic, cultural, and disciplinary contexts.

Finally, because artificial intelligence technologies continue to evolve rapidly, educational practices and ethical concerns associated with AI may also change. As a result, the conceptual relationships proposed in this paper should be viewed as dynamic and subject to further refinement as technological developments continue.

3.2.4 Suggestions for Future Research

The framework proposed in this study should be regarded as an initial step toward understanding the role of spiritual intelligence in AI-mediated English language teaching. Future research is needed to examine the validity, applicability, and educational implications of the proposed relationships among spiritual intelligence, ethical awareness, learner agency, and artificial intelligence.

Particular attention should be given to empirical investigations examining whether SI functions as the mediating construct proposed in this paper. Quantitative studies may explore relationships among SI, ethical awareness, learner autonomy, attitudes toward AI, and learning outcomes. Qualitative approaches, including interviews, classroom observations, ethnographies, and reflective journals, may provide deeper insights into how learners and teachers experience AI-supported learning environments.

Future research should also investigate teacher cognition, professional identity, and pedagogical decision-making in technologically mediated contexts.

Longitudinal studies may help clarify how spiritually intelligent approaches influence teachers' capacity to maintain professional agency and ethical clarity over time. From the learner perspective, studies should examine the effects of AI-mediated learning on autonomy, responsibility, critical thinking, and ethical development.

Research involving diverse cultural and educational contexts would be particularly valuable for understanding how different value systems influence learner engagement with AI technologies.

Additional investigations are needed to evaluate classroom task designs that operationalize spiritually intelligent pedagogy. Comparative and design-based studies may examine how different forms of AI-supported interaction influence reflection, meaning-making, engagement, and ethical sensitivity.

Finally, cross-disciplinary collaboration among researchers in applied linguistics, psychology, educational technology, philosophy, and AI ethics may contribute to the further refinement of theoretical frameworks that distinguish human spiritual capacities from machine intelligence.

Such work will be essential for ensuring that future educational innovation remains aligned with humanistic values and the broader purposes of education.

4. CONCLUSION

The rapid expansion of artificial intelligence in education has intensified important questions concerning learning, human agency, ethical responsibility, and educational purpose. This paper sought to address these issues through three interconnected aims. First, it reviewed major theories of SI and examined their relevance to education. The conceptual synthesis suggests that SI offers a useful lens for understanding human capacities related to meaning-making, ethical reflection, self-awareness, interconnectedness, and purposeful action. These dimensions highlight aspects of educational experience that extend beyond technical performance and cognitive efficiency.

Second, the paper examined the limitations of artificial intelligence from ethical and human-centered perspectives. The reviewed literature indicates that while AI systems can support learning through personalization, feedback generation, and adaptive assistance, they operate through computational processes rather than subjective consciousness, lived experience, or autonomous moral responsibility. Consequently, questions of meaning, ethical judgment, and educational purpose remain fundamentally human responsibilities. The synthesis therefore suggests that effective AI integration in ELT requires ongoing human interpretation and ethical oversight rather than reliance on technological capability alone.

Third, the paper proposed a conceptual framework for spiritually intelligent AI-mediated English language teaching. The framework proposes that SI can function as a mediating human capacity through which AI technologies are interpreted, evaluated, and integrated into pedagogical practice. From this perspective, AI serves as a supportive educational resource rather than an instructional authority, while teachers maintain responsibility for fostering reflective engagement, learner agency, ethical communication, and meaning-oriented learning. The framework further suggests that human-centered approaches to AI integration may help preserve the relational, cultural, and ethical dimensions of language education.

However, it is important to acknowledge that the proposed framework remains conceptual and has not yet been empirically validated. The relationships and propositions advanced in this paper should therefore be regarded as theoretically derived rather than empirically established. Future research is needed to test, refine, and extend the framework across diverse educational contexts. As AI technologies continue to evolve, the challenge for ELT is not simply how to use increasingly sophisticated tools, but how to ensure that technological innovation remains aligned with the human capacities that give language learning its educational and ethical significance.

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