

The influence of Artificial Intelligence on English Language Teachers' Professional Identity Development at Tertiary Education Level



Nazia Koonj

Lecturer, Centre of English Language and Linguistics, Mehran
UET Nazia.koonj@faculty.muuet.edu.pk

Shamshad Junejo

(Ph.D Scholar) Lecturer Mehran University of Engineering and
Technology, Jamshoro

Abstract: Artificial Intelligence is rapidly taking new heights in the field of technology. The impact of technology integration on the language pedagogy is also meaningful. From the lens of teaching and learning the provision of Artificial Intelligence has paved the way forward for more technology integrated learning. This study explores the influence that AI holds on the English language teachers' identity development and their institutional and sociocultural context. The study focuses on the ELT engagement with the help of Artificial Intelligence. This study is qualitative in nature. Convenient sampling was used to collect the data from (n=08) participants which were interviewed and analyzed through thematic analysis. Major Findings suggest that teachers role have greatly shifted from monetized classroom teacher to facilitator and their professional identity have been greatly influenced by the use of AI which have impacted positively in their confidence as well. Some teachers go extra mile to be AI competent by opting self-paced trainings for AI tools. The institutes, colleagues, fellow teachers also contribute in the trainings for the use of AI. One minor finding suggest that the teachers are naive believers towards AI which makes them overly relying on it for tasks such as assignment feedback. The teachers today see their imagined self as future trainers for AI tools to other fellow teachers.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, ELT Professionals, AI and Identity, Identity Negotiation

1. Introduction

Artificial Intelligence has taken over the world to new heights. So is the improvement in teaching and learning scenario. Rise of technology has enabled teachers to aid resources, advanced teaching and learning tools and multiple opportunities for learners for better and active engagement in the classrooms. Sometimes, teachers view artificial intelligence as a threat to teachers' role as facilitators in the classrooms. Since AI judges' human intelligence and unlike humans has an innumerable possibility to one thing at a time. Teachers are becoming more tech-savvy for the use of AI in classroom contributing positively and saving time as well.

Research Objectives

- I. To identify the integration of AI in language teaching in shaping Pakistani teachers' professional identities and positioning within the institutional and sociocultural context?
- II. To learn the influence of the Pakistani English language teachers and their sense of engagement with AI in English language teaching in terms of investment imagined professional identity and sense of agency?

Research Questions

- I. How does the integration of AI in

language teaching shape Pakistani teachers' professional identities and positioning within the institutional and sociocultural context?

- II. How do Pakistani English language teachers make sense of their engagement with AI in English language teaching in terms of investment, imagined professional identity and sense of agency?

Literature Review

The rapid evolution of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in education has profoundly altered the landscape of English Language Teaching (ELT), motivating teachers to review their ideas, self-sense, and purpose in the class. Their professional identity has been shaped by their beliefs, practices, societal communication and expectation in the world view of AI integration which is how they are considering their role and overall contribution in the view point of their tasks and responsibilities in the class (Zhang Y. Y., 2025).

In ELT context, the teachers' professional identity is often circulated by human elements like cognitive and outgoing competence and expressive relations. Since 2022 till 2026 researches have explored the impact of AI positively with the help of generative AI tools on the teachers' personality, competence and identity development. (Zhang X. R., (2026))

This study based on review paper of recent studies in teacher identity development and AI integration from 2023 to present date 2026 from diverse context including China, Korea, Turkey, Iran and Jordan explores the teacher identity shaping and the dual role AI plays in classrooms. Teachers view themselves as tech-savvy facilitators but the tensions rise around the teacher autonomy and authenticity which can be facilitated by supportive and innovative ideas for AI integration. This review concludes that the teachers' growth can be largely improvised with the teacher friendly frameworks providing human-centric approach to learning. (Ren, 2025)

2.1 AI as Identity threat

AI is a potential threat to the dynamic role of

teacher in classroom. This is one of the common fears of teachers while using AI in classrooms. They consider the role of AI a dominant one and posing threat to their role as a teacher. This has been a persistent debate and tension among teachers as they feel they will have role erosion in future and they will not be much needed since the AI performs some voluntary services of teachers like lesson planning and feedback. This study includes responses from 30 teachers over their fear of undesirability and credibility as a linguistic expert and guide in the class. To which they responded that the fear is real in teachers and they have a threat from AI as self-erosion in future. (Chen, 2025)

AI tools as (Tajeddin, 2025) mentions acts as a double-edged sword for all those beginner ELT professionals which can sometimes benefit and contradict at the same time. Seven ELT teachers in Iran were explored under a qualitative study focusing on the use of AI based instructions in the class. Students showed mistrust attitude towards the AI based instructions in the class because of the unfit lesson controls by AI tools. Students highlighted this unfit lesson plan as a question of novice teachers and their reliance of AI expertise. The professional and credibility is a serious matter and should not be overly handled depending on AI prompts completely. (Tajeddin, 2025)

A review study from 2015-2015 suggested that the use of AI in Pre-service teachers require a balance between the AI generated text and human generated teaching materials. Some of pre-service teachers pointed that the AI sometimes generated culturally biased and stereotyped texts that pose serious concerns over their accountability as facilitators. The south contexts because of inequalities in sufficient resources pose questions to teachers' credibility (Ebrahimi, 2025)

2.2 Constructive Revolutions of AI

AI can multiply creative skills of teachers when handled with humanized personal assistant. It can be a revolutionized point of view in shaping the cultural and professional identity. Amongst multiple points of view, AI evolves as a tool of improving and exploring multiple domains at a

single time bringing creativity at place. Another pre-service teachers group believes AI tools greatly influence professional accountability by reducing anxiety among teachers and being a cooperative tool. (Yáng, 2026)

Digital Literacy strengthens professional identity and boosts confidence among teachers. A study conducted on Korean teachers' reports higher self-worth with tech-savvy professional attitude. This helped them construct positive identities as teachers and highlight skills with precision. They contributed the need to personalize the experience and expertise with AI which is a much needed integration of AI and humanized skills. (Huang, 2025)

AI integration facilitates teachers in the world of technology and innovation to charge themselves as agents of change that allow them to be adaptive in nature in flexible settings. AI is often viewed as a catalyst of change in the teaching and learning scenarios by self-training and elevating teacher identities from traditional ownership to facilitation in classrooms. (Bozkurt, 2024)

2.3 Current Unresolved Issues

AI poses potential threat to teacher independence and shaping teachers' identities. Supported by recent studies, AI imbalances teacher identity and independence in context-driven areas that require special attention as AI proposes same responses irrespective of the context. AI doesn't consider real situations and tensions in the classrooms while it keeps giving ideal and out of context information posing serious threat to teachers for EFL/ESL classrooms. (Aayushi, 2025)

The AI risk ethical and practical values among teachers and students by intruding genuineness in text generation for the class as it play as double-edged sword endangering the overreliance from both sides. (Aayushi, 2025)

AI fragments ideologies and roles by under appreciation as it worsens critical thinking among teachers and learners. GenAI settings struggle use of AI as it hinders human minds to participate critically. Term called 'superficial adoption' refers to users limiting use of AI that

doesn't obstruct human intelligence and critical skills. Institutional efforts are considerable factors normalizing the patterns of overreliance on AI creating ideological divide and tension. (Yusuf, 2024)

2.4 Future Prospects in AI

The recent literature review from 2023-2026 bring forth the role of Artificial Intelligence as a facilitator in both identity formation and future opportunities. However, maintaining the matchless role of teacher in context specific, critical supervision and emotional direction for students. Teacher trainings and mentorship are a future need for better integration of AI and formation of teacher identities.

A collection of cross-sectional and longitudinal studies can pave way for future directions in the identity formation and integration of Artificial intelligence to understand paths for future research by having worldviews from all stake holders and institutions. The role of policy making is crucial in placing teacher identity centric and other viewpoints at the same time.

Artificial intelligence can serve as a collaborative agent of change by integrating educators and different viewpoints to collectively flourish in the digital world. (Saeedian, 2023)

2. Research Methodology

This is a qualitative study involving in depth semi structured interviews with the participants for the data collection. The collected data will then be subjected to thematic analysis to generates initial codes and then group it into various themes.

Some researchers claim that "qualitative research" has become a broad umbrella tem for any method that doesn't imply a standard survey. This broad categorization sub categorizes any approach from sitting in on social groups and conducting open-ended interviews to analyzing documents for content analysis (C. L, 2007). This type of approach in research is all about the perceptions of different individuals and getting people's heads to comprehend the personal meanings they attach to their actions and the world around them (Chauhan, 2012). Because

this study aligns with those core principles and seeks that same depth of understanding, it is firmly rooted in the qualitative tradition.

3.1 Data Collection Tools

The present study used semi structured online interviews to collect the data from eight English Language university teachers. Their identities were kept confidential for maintaining the ethical anonymity. The teachers had varying levels of experience at university level ranging from 4-15 years. The medium for data collection was interview as according to Creswell (2008) provide detailed information to the researchers; the participants give their direct insights about certain phenomenon. The present study used semi structured online interviews as the source to collect data from the teachers who had individually been contacted and they were informed regarding the interview protocol themes. Mathers (1998) et al mentions that semi-structured interviews use a series of open-ended

questions based on the topic that the research wants to cover. This kind of interview requires a preplanning of questions.

3.2 Sampling

This study followed purposive sampling techniques as this research aimed to collect data from university English language teachers who had 5 plus years teaching experience. The data was collected from equal number of male and female participants to balance the gender and get comprehensive views.

3.3 Data Analysis & interpretation

The study used qualitative interviews which were conducted via online/ internet. The interviews were recorded. Researcher heard them several times and transcribed them. The study used thematic analysis to interpret the data as it helps the researchers to divide the descriptive data into themes and categories (Creswell, 2008).

4.1 Results and Discussion:

Themes	Narratives
Professional shift from being knowledge provider to mentor and facilitator.	Being an English language teacher especially in Pakistan my professional identity is transferred from teacher to mentor, facilitator and critical thinker to guide the student in the age of Artificial intelligence (Respondent,1) I see myself as a reflective English teacher, who blends both the traditional pedagogy with AI as a supportive teaching tool in the classroom. (Respondent,2) Mostly I see myself someone who usually guides students in a way that they don't misuse it and they use it in a proper way for their help. (Respondent, 3) I believe since the AI tools are introduced, being a professional ELT teacher, I would say that even though I was not a user of AI but now a days tasks are facilitated by AI (Respondent, 5)
Professional Identity Development a. innovation	Students often see me as both innovative and supportive when I use AI to enhance learning, or as principled and skill-focused when I limit its use to protect independent thinking. (Respondent, 1) I have found that my students have always viewed me as an innovative and engaging teacher. (Respondent, 2) If I talk about students in my class, they are always looking for something new that I could bring to my language classroom

	(Respondent, 3) Sometimes, my students and colleagues are surprised by the content I take to class. (Respondent, 6)
b. Focus on Learning	Colleagues may position me as adaptable and forward-looking if I adopt AI. (Respondent, 1) This is because not everyone knows how to prompt AI correctly. AI has lots of information. Correct prompts generate better results, which is appreciated by all in my case. (Respondent, 6)
Acceptance by Institution, colleagues and students	Institutions generally view AI-using teachers as aligned with modernization and digital policy, (Respondent, 1) They always like my classroom but I think my colleagues and institution may see me progressing with the usage of AI (Respondent, 2) I guess that there is a lot of AI acceptance in institutions inside Pakistan and outside Pakistan (Respondent, 4) Definitely, for a colleague or student or institutions considers me as one who someone who somehow not fit in the perspective of teaching if I'm not using AI. (Respondent, 5) They always like my classroom but I think my colleagues and institution may see me progressing with the usage of AI (Respondent, 2) Sometimes, my colleagues also seek help from me in this regard. (Respondent, 6) For a colleague or student or institutions considers me as one who someone who somehow not fit in the perspective of teaching if I'm not using AI. (Respondent, 5) My students enjoy solving the worksheets (Respondent, 3)
AI Strengthened professional confidence	AI strengthened my sense of competence when it helped me design differentiated lessons, provide quick feedback, and support struggling learners more effectively. (Respondent,1) for using lesson planning AI has always strengthened my confidence my classroom are always productive (Respondent, 2) if we talk about benefits of AI helps me when I have to design different classroom activities like kahoot, quizlet that helps me to quickly plan the activities. (Respondent, 3) I take assistance from AI when I'm struggling with ideas of brainstorming and coming up with more ideas and newer ideas in a shorter period of time or when I have to facilitate some workshop. (Respondent, 4) Yes, multiple times AI strengthened my sense of being a compliant teacher. Once I was in class and a students asked me something regarding a technical issue with computer related to assignment formatting. I never knew this as it was a technical issue related to the computer but I asked chatGPT and it gave me tremendously easy

	solution for the issue. (Respondent, 6)
AI weakened Professional Confidence	However, it also challenged my professional confidence when students relied too heavily on AI for writing tasks, raising concerns about originality, assessment fairness, and the true development of language skills, which required me to redefine my role and teaching strategies. (Respondent ,1) I like when my students are participating but concerns are about challenges. So initially they challenged me until I until I made myself finesse with the usage of AI. (Respondent,2) it also challenges me when students use AI to submit the answers this usually makes me think that there should be less use of AI tools. (Respondent,3) So yah that's when I use some AI but one of its negative impact you might say is like over reliance on it. (Respondent,4)
Temporal investment in terms of training	I normally try to attend various trainings be it virtual or physical in order to understand this chatbot better. I attend training sessions by access program. (Respondent, 2) I also try to attend trainings organized by HEC and other such organizations to use AI more effectively and efficiently. . (Respondent, 4) I have completed some kind of international courses regarding the one in TESOL which was a three months course. So I guess this is one of the best time investment if someone is spending time in learning AI. . (Respondent, 5) I normally watch you tube videos, investing my time into fruitful learning of AI prompting. (. (Respondent, 1) Understanding proper use of AI requires time and practice. I learned prompt engineering through YouTube videos or just casually scrolling through Instagram reels. So, it took me very minimal, but conscious efforts. . (Respondent, 6) I think initially I took help from youtube videos and training workshops. Now I feel the more I used it the better I get with more experience in using it. (Respondent, 4) I sometimes invest a lot of time and efforts to learn how to write specified and focused prompts. In terms of learning I have learnt that we have a specific prompt for each kind of task we need to accomplish. (Respondent, 1)

AI improved Efficiency	In terms of efficiency I would say that it has reduced the amount of time that I used to invest planning lectures. It has improved my office work related to letter writing and formatting different documents. Sometimes, AI does marvelous tasks and its me who takes the entire credit.. In terms of career advancement I feel that now writing research and understanding the relations among various research paers is just a click away with AI tools like litmaps, elicit, etc. Also student outcomes have increase in a credible way as it helps them correct their errors without the fear of being judged and it never gets tired explaining the something again and again. (Respondent, 1) Well, it reduces our labour to complete complex tasks like writing letters, applications and preparing course files (Respondent, 2) it helps us complete professional tasks timely and then share quality time with our family and friends socializing (Respondent, 3) Yes, it helps us save time, efficiency (Respondent, 4) AI is an amazing tool for teaching, it can explain complex concepts in simple words. One can cross query AI models for deeper understanding. One can also generate images to make these concepts more comprehensible. (Respondent, 6)
Negotiation Traditional VS AI	Well, AI has helped me to do the assessments timely and efficiently. It has helped me become a teacher who is more aware, more speedy in providing the feedback to the students. (Respondent, 1) Certainly, the advent of AI has helped me polish and flourish my teaching skills. (Respondent, 2) Undoubtedly, I would say that AI has helped me improve my image as a teacher. With every use of a new tool. I feel more equipped and more aware of various concepts and their relation with one another. (Respondent, 3)
Imagined self in the era of AI integration	I also aim to take on roles such as curriculum innovator, teacher mentor, and policy contributor, helping integrate AI responsibly while preserving strong language teaching practices and academic integrity. (Respondent 1) I aspire to be a part of the more professional learning community that focuses on ethical and effective use of AI in English Language teaching (Respondent, 2) I want to grow not only as a teacher but also as a researcher as I'm also interested in how AI effects English language learning and assessment. In future I would like to work in different programs i.e. training programs of teachers or curriculum designers where I can help others

	deal with issues encountered because if AI. (Respondent, 3) In future I see myself as a mentor or guide as AI could not guide the students. Teachers are the one who built the character of the students. They are the ones who could emotionally and ethically motivate them and provide them with an appropriate guideline (Respondent, 6)
Resistance	Yes, there were moments when I wanted to engage more with AI but I had to face constraints due to university policies regarding the percentage of use of AI. Yes, I have selectively used and at times resisted AI to align with my teaching values. (Respondent, 1) Yeah, there were instances when I wanted to use AI but due to lack of expertise to articulate my ideas to the software I wasn't able to use AI. Also due to unclear institutional policies sometimes I wonder what is permissible and what is not permissible. (respondent, 2) Yes, at times I refrain from using AI due to the fact that my seniors may question my own capabilities and knowledge. (Respondent, 3) yeah, sometimes it happens that we were reluctant to use it in class or during research because when you use it presence of students, they think that we are over reliant on it. If a teacher uses a lot of AI in class students feel that he lacks professional knowledge and capabilities. (Respondent, 5)

5. Conclusion

The present study has two major and one minor finding. Teachers believed Artificial Intelligence have negotiated their professional identity and have a great influence on their performance too. They see their confidence boosted when they integrate lessons with AI. This can be seen by teachers' responses as they go for self-paced trainings to explore more in the field of Artificial intelligence. The second major finding reflects the role of institutions in shaping and framing the use of AI in ESL/EFL classrooms. Trainings are now provided for teachers to be more aware of current AI tools and the way they can be used for different student levels in classrooms.

However, one minor finding reflects the understanding and potential risks of overreliance and dependency on AI which poses direct threat to teachers' credibility, ownership and authenticity as a professional. This is context-sensitive and needs optimized integration of AI

tools for better learning results.

References

- Aayushi, D. K. (2025). Relief or displacement? How teachers are negotiating generative AI's role in their professional practice. .
- Bozkurt, A. X. (2024). The Manifesto for Teaching and Learning in a Time of Generative AI: A Critical Collective Stance to Better Navigate the Future. *Open Praxis*, 16(4), 487–513.
- C. L, B. (2007). Strategies for making social studies texts more comprehensible for English-language learners. *The Social Studies*, 98(6), 185–188.
- Chen, R. L. (2025). A cross-sectional look at teacher reactions, worries, and professional development needs related to generative AI in an urban school district. *Springer Nature Link*, 16045–16082.
- Ebrahimi, Z. K. (2025). Mapping the emerging

- research landscape on applications of ChatGPT in Language teacher education: A systematic narrative literature review. *Discover Artificial Intelligence*.
- Huang, Q. (2025). Integrating IT to foster engagement and reduce anxiety in foreign language learning. *Sage Journals*.
- koonj, n. (2023). E learning. 5-9.
- Ren, X. &. (2025). Examining Teaching Competencies and Challenges While Integrating Artificial Intelligence in Higher Education. *Association for educational communications and Technology*.
- Saeedian, A. &. (2023). Scenario-based classroom context mode: reshaping non-native teachers' decision-making and pedagogical reasoning. *Asian-Pacific Journal of Second and Foreign Language Education*.
- Tajeddin, Z. &. (2025). Emotional tensions in identity transition from teachers to teacher educators: voices from early-career teacher educators. *Asian-Pacific Journal of Second and Foreign Language Education*.
- Yáng, J. &. (2026). ueling AI literacy through school support: unveiling the mediating role of basic psychological need satisfaction in Chinese university English teachers. *Springer Nature Link*, 14(167).
- Yusuf, A. P.-G. (2024). Generative AI and the future of higher education: a threat to academic integrity or reformation? Evidence from multicultural perspectives. *International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education*.
- Zhang, X. R. ((2026)). College students' literacy, ChatGPT activities, educational outcomes, and trust from a digital divide perspective. *Sage Journals*, Vol. 28((2)), 673–695.
- Zhang, Y. Y. (2025). Developing AI Literacies and negotiating professional identities: A study of pre-service English teachers in a ChatGPT- facilitated pedagogy. *jccall*.