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Wei Zhang, Dzintra Iliško

IS ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE RESHAPING THE EDUCATIONAL ECOSYSTEM? REFLECTIONS AND PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS FROM ENGLISH TEACHERS

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The rapid rise and large-scale adoption of generative and interactive artificial intelligence (AI) have sparked diverse and opposing responses in the field of education. Existing research has mostly focused on students' acceptance of AI and its application scenarios, but rarely delved into teachers' perceptions, practical dilemmas, and dynamic changes in professional identity regarding this technology in teaching practice. This study takes high school English teachers as the research object, focusing on how the pedagogical application of AI influences teachers' professional identity, the specific challenges encountered in practice, and the in-depth impact of technological intervention on teacher-student interaction patterns. A qualitative research method was adopted, involving semi-structured interviews with four experienced English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers from a public junior high school in eastern China. The four teachers had teaching experience ranging from 12 to 22 years, with two specializing in general English teaching and two in TOEFL preparation courses. All were proficient in using mainstream AI tools such as deepseek, Doubao, and Mita AI. The six-phase thematic analysis method proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006) (data familiarization, coding, theme mining, theme review, theme definition, and result presentation) was used for the study, with peer review and participant validation to enhance the credibility of the research conclusions. The research highlights four central theme and challenges that explains how the use of AI reshapes English teaching, namely, (1) pragmatic integration of AI in pedagogical practice, (2) sustained teachers' agency, (3) significant ethical dilemmas of use of AI, and (4) irreplaceable role of human interaction. It was concluded that despite of AI integration, teachers hold a professional authority and confidence and position themselves as pedagogical leaders and mediators of AI. The study concludes that future of teaching foreign languages lies in balanced human- AI collaboration and not in technology substitution.

Keywords: artificial intelligence (AI), English teaching, teacher identity, pedagogy, educational change.

Vai mākslīgais intelekts transformē izglītības ekosistēmu? Angļu valodas skolotāju refleksija un praktiski risinājumi

Mākslīgā intelekta (MI) straujā ieviešana izglītības jomā ir izraisījusi dažādas un pretrunīgas reakcijas. Esošie pētījumi pārsvarā ir koncentrējušies uz skolēnu MI izmantošanas scenārijiem, taču mazir pētīta skolotāju attieksme, praktiskās dilemas un profesionālās identitātes dinamiskās izmaiņas attiecībā uz tehnoloģiju ieviešanu pedagoģiskajā praksē. Pētījuma objekts ir vidusskolas angļu valodas skolotāji un tas, kā MI integrēšana ietekmē skolotāju profesionālo identitāti, kādas konkrētas problēmas rodas praksē, un kāda ir tehnoloģij ietekme uz skolotāju un skolēnu mijiedarbību klasē. Pētījumā ir izmantota kvalitatīvā pētniecības metode, proti, daļēji strukturētas intervijas ar četriem angļu valodas kā svešvalodas (EFL) vidusskolas skolotājiem Austrumu Ķīnā. Visi skolotāji izmantoja populāros mākslīgā intelekta rīkus, piemēram, Deepseek, Doubao un Mita AI. Pētījumā tika izmantota Braun un Clarke (2006) piedāvātā sešu posmu tematiskās analīzes metode (datu iepazīšana, kodēšana, tēmu izrakšana, tēmu pārskatīšana, tēmu definēšana un rezultātu prezentēšana), izmantojot arī kolēģu un dalībnieku validāciju, lai nodrošinātu pētījuma secinājumu ticamību. Pētījums ietver četras centrālas tēmas, kas izskaidro, kā MI izmantošana ietekmē angļu valodas mācīšanu, proti: 1) MI integrācija pedagoģiskajā praksē, 2) pedagogu autonimija un rīcībspēja, 3) ētiskas dilemmas saistībā ar MI izmantošanu, un 4) cilvēku mijiedarbības nozīmīgums. Pētījumā secināts, ka, neskatoties uz MI integrāciju, skolotāji saglabā profesionālo autoritāti un pašpārliecinātību, pozicionējot sevi kā autonomus pedagoģiskā procesa dalībniekus un MI starpniekus. Pētījusm ļauj secināt, ka valodu mācīšana nākotne būs balstīta līdzsvarotā cilvēka un MI sadarbībā, nevis tehnoloģiju aizvietošanā.

Atslēgvārdi: mākslīgais intelekts (MI), angļu valodas mācīšana, skolotāja identitāte, pedagoģija, izglītības pārmaiņas.

Introduction

Driven by technological innovations such as adaptive testing systems, AI-powered writing assistants, and generative platforms (e.g.Doubao, DeepSeek, Chatgpt), artificial intelligence (AI) has gradually evolved into a transformative force reshaping the modern educational landscape. These technologies enable AI to generate personalized texts, design targeted exercises, translate cross-

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linguistic passages, and conduct grammar checks, thereby promoting the globalization and efficiency of teaching and assessment (Godwin-Jones 2021). However, for teachers, this technological leap presents a dual-edged reality: it offers opportunities to enhance instructional efficiency while challenging traditional notions of teaching and the very essence of the teacher's role.

English holds a pivotal position in China's national curriculum, acting as a key gateway to global educational resources and career development opportunities for students. This significance has positioned English teachers as early adopters of educational technology (Moorhouse, Wong 2025; Oxford 2016). As AI permeates campuses, English teachers are compelled to rethink fundamental aspects of their practice: how to deliver instruction, conduct assessments, and engage in professional development; how to sustain authentic interactions in increasingly digital classrooms; and how to balance technological efficiency with the authenticity of education.

Despite AI's growing influence in education, existing research has predominantly centered on its impact on student performance and engagement (Song, Song 2023; Yuan, Liu 2025), with insufficient attention paid to teachers' lived experiences, perceptions, and the ways in which AI shapes their professional identity and teaching practices. This study addresses this gap by centering teachers' perspectives, treating AI as both a cultural artifact and a pedagogical tool in their daily work.

To guide this inquiry, three research questions are formulated:

- What are the practical applications of AI in English teachers' instructional practices?
- How do English teachers perceive the impact of AI on their teaching and their students' learning?
- In what ways does AI influence English teachers' professional confidence and teacher-student relationships?

By addressing these questions, this study aims to stimulate reflection on the potential changes to teaching practice and teacher roles in AI-mediated learning environments, while also contributing to broader discussions about the integration of technology and human-centered education.

Literature review

AI in language. Over the past five years, AI has demonstrated tremendous potential to revolutionize language education by boosting efficiency and enabling personalized learning (Godwin-Jones 2021). AI excels at automating repetitive tasks such as grammar correction, vocabulary list generation, and basic feedback provision, allowing teachers to redirect their energy toward fostering students' higher-order thinking skills (e.g., critical analysis, creative writing) (Godwin-Jones 2018). Furthermore, AI systems support differentiated instruction by delivering personalized feedback tailored to individual learners' profiles, addressing knowledge gaps, and adapting to diverse learning paces (Hockly 2023).

However, scholars have sounded warnings about over-automation in language education. Dewaele and Li (2020) argues that high-quality language instruction is rooted in emotional and social interactions – elements that AI currently cannot replicate. Katsenou et al. (2025) further emphasize that the key question is not whether AI can replace human teachers, but how to restructure the collaborative relationship between humans and AI to maximize educational outcomes. This perspective shifts the focus from "AI versus teachers" to a partnership of "AI and teachers" in instruction.

Teacher professional identity in digital age. Teacher professional identity is conceptualized as fluid, reflexive, and context-dependent, shaped by interactions with students, colleagues, and educational policies (Beijaard et al. 2004; Ferrarotti 2016). With the integration of digital technologies in education, Paniagua and Istance (2018) argue that teachers have evolved beyond traditional

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knowledge transmitters to become designers of learning experiences, facilitators of student engagement, and ethical gatekeepers of technology use. In the AI era, this identity negotiation becomes more complex. Clarke (2009) identifies a tension between two opposing identities for teachers: the "human-facing empath and moral barometer" who prioritizes emotional and ethical development, and the "data-driven decision maker" who relies on AI-generated insights. Creely and Carabott (2025) describe this shift as a transition from "pedagogical authority" to "AI mediation", where teachers are no longer mere implementer of AI tools but interpreters and adapters of AI outputs, ensuring alignment with classroom needs and values.

Teacher-student relationships. Emotional labor – defined as the effort to manage emotions to meet the demands of teaching – is a central component of teacher identity and practice (Kiyanfar et al. 2025). Teaching is not merely an intellectual endeavor; it is deeply relational, requiring empathy, trust, and emotional support to foster student motivation and engagement. Despite its capacity to generate information, AI lacks the ability to experience or respond to emotions, making it unable to replicate the human connection at the heart of teaching (Kundu, Bej 2025). Kundu (2025) and Bej (2025) caution that over-reliance on AI in classrooms risks eroding motivation, empathy, and trust, as technology-mediated interactions cannot replace embodied human communication. This underscores the importance of teachers' emotional labor in maintaining meaningful teacher-student relationships, which remain critical for effective learning.

Educational, ethical, and moral implications of AI research. Beyond pedagogy and identity, the ethical and moral dimensions of AI in education have garnered increasing attention. AI systems are not neutral; their algorithms encode the values and biases present in their training data (Selwyn 2019). In language education, this raises concerns about cultural bias, linguistic discrimination, and the authenticity of knowledge (Holmes, Porayska-Pomsta 2022). For example, if AI training data lacks diversity, it may perpetuate cultural stereotypes or fail to represent non-dominant linguistic practices, leading to inequitable learning experiences.

Teachers play a crucial role as ethical gatekeepers, determining how AI is used in the classroom and guiding students to critically evaluate AI outputs. Sperling et al. (2024) argue that there is no "one-size-fits-all" approach to AI ethics in education; instead, ethical practice depends on aligning AI use with broader goals of effective, inclusive, and just learning. This requires fostering critical digital literacy – teaching students not only to use technology but also to analyze its political, cultural, and ethical implications.

Dron and Anderson (2014) emphasize that technology should supplement, not supplant, human learning. They advocate for human-centered design in AI integration, where AI is used to facilitate collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking rather than merely increase efficiency. Zhai (2025) builds on this by highlighting "interpretive agency" among teachers—the ability to make sense of AI outputs in light of students' cultural backgrounds, learning needs, and local contexts.

Ethical concerns also extend to data privacy and transparency. Selwyn (2024) notes that student data collected via AI tools is often shared with third-party vendors without full informed consent, placing teachers in the position of navigating both pedagogical responsibilities and legal/ethical obligations to protect student privacy. The intersection of AI, privacy, and equity thus remains one of the most pressing challenges in educational technology today.

In summary, the literature indicates that successful AI integration in education requires more than digital literacy; it demands moral judgment, context-sensitive decision-making, and reflective practice. In the digital age, teachers are not just technologists but also ethicists and interpreters of meaning, ensuring that AI serves the broader goals of education.

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Research methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research design to explore English teachers' subjective experiences, perceptions, and practices related to AI in education. Qualitative research is well-suited for this inquiry, as it allows for in-depth exploration of complex phenomena (e.g., identity negotiation, emotional labor) that cannot be fully captured by quantitative methods (Braun, Clarke 2006).

Participants. Participants were recruited from a public junior high school in eastern China through an open call for volunteers, followed by screening to ensure relevant experience with AI. Four experienced EFL teachers were selected, with the following characteristics:

- Teaching experience: Ranged from 12 to 22 years, ensuring a depth of pedagogical knowledge and classroom experience.
- Specialization: Two teachers taught general English (aligned with China's national curriculum), and two taught TOEFL preparation courses (focused on academic English for university admission).
- AI familiarity: All participants reported regular use of AI tools, including deepseek (for text generation and lesson ideas), Mita AI (for exercise design and translation), and Doubao(for grammar checking and feedback).

The small sample size is intentional in qualitative research, as it enables detailed, context-rich analysis of individual experiences (Braun, Clarke 2006).

Data collection. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, which allowed for flexibility to explore unexpected insights while ensuring consistency across participants. Interviews were conducted in Chinese (the participants' native language) to facilitate open expression, then translated into English by the researcher (with cross-verification by a bilingual colleague to ensure accuracy). Each interview lasted 50–70 minutes and covered three main topics:

- Teachers' current use of AI in teaching (e.g., specific applications, frequency, and purposes).
- Perceived benefits and challenges of AI (e.g., impact on efficiency, student learning, and professional practice).
- Emotional and attitudinal responses to AI (e.g., confidence in professional role, concerns about AI's limitations, and hopes for future integration).
- Interview recordings were transcribed verbatim, and transcripts were shared with participants for validation (member checking) to ensure that their perspectives were accurately represented.

Data analysis. Thematic analysis was conducted following the six-phase process outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006): the researcher read and re-read transcripts to gain a comprehensive understanding of the data, noting initial observations and potential themes. Descriptive codes were assigned to segments of data (e.g., "AI for lesson planning", "concerns about AI's cultural insensitivity") to capture key ideas. Codes were grouped into potential themes based on shared meaning (e.g., "pragmatic AI use", "moral and cultural challenges"). The researcher examined whether themes were coherent, distinct, and supported by the data. Themes that lacked sufficient evidence were discarded or merged with others. Each theme was refined and labeled, with clear definitions and examples from the data to illustrate its meaning. Themes were presented in a structured manner, linking findings to the research questions and existing literature. To enhance the trustworthiness of the analysis, peer debriefing was conducted with two researchers specializing in educational technology, who reviewed the coding and thematic framework to identify potential biases or gaps.

Findings and discussion

The research results extracted four core themes. First, the pragmatic application of AI in teaching:

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Teachers widely used technology for curriculum planning, teaching material development, formative assessment, feedback provision, and professional development (such as language accuracy verification and teaching concept renewal). They recognized its advantages in improving efficiency, stimulating creativity, and handling repetitive tasks, but at the same time emphasized the need for critical examination and contextual adaptation of AI-generated content – machine-produced materials often overlook cultural differences and pedagogical suitability (Abbas, Meraj 2025). Second, teachers' professional confidence and leading role: All participants maintained strong professional confidence, seeing themselves as indispensable pedagogical leaders rather than passive users of technology. They emphasized their unique value in students' moral cultivation, emotional guidance, and intellectual development, believing themselves to be "mediators" who interpret and adapt AI outputs, which is consistent with the concept of "teacher agency" proposed by Kiyanfar et al. (2025). Third, the moral and cultural dilemmas of AI-mediated classrooms: AI has significant limitations in moral reasoning, cultural empathy, and correcting students' misunderstandings of values. Its responses to sensitive topics often show a lack of cultural sensitivity or moral neutrality. Teachers transformed these limitations into teaching opportunities, using AI outputs as discussion carriers to cultivate students' critical thinking (Son et al. 2023), while worrying about students' over-reliance on technology to obtain immediate answers, leading to ethical tensions between efficiency and educational authenticity (Zhai et al. 2024). Fourth, the core value of interpersonal connection and emotional interaction: Teachers generally believed that the essence of teaching is interpersonal relationships based on empathy, support, and care, which is a core competitiveness that AI cannot replicate. Students also perceived the problem that AI-generated content is "too perfect" and "lacks personality," confirming the key role of authenticity and emotional resonance in student engagement (Byrd Clark, Dervin 2014), and this cognition further strengthened teachers' professional identity.

In addition, the study found that teachers face three major practical challenges in the process of AI integration: insufficient relevant training and policy support, factual or linguistic errors in AI-generated content, and vague ethical boundaries (such as the risk of students cheating using technology). These issues are consistent with the research conclusions on the application of AI in the global education field (Hockly 2023).

At the theoretical level, the research results support the concept of "human-AI co-agency" proposed by Dron and Anderson (2014), that is, humans always hold ethical leadership in collaborating with AI to optimize learning processes. Teachers' professional identity has transformed from traditional "authorities" to "moral designers" of AI integration, ensuring that technology serves the core values of education. In China's cultural context that emphasizes moral education and collective values, AI's shortcomings in moral judgment further highlight the irreplaceable role of teachers in safeguarding the ethical foundation of education (Kiyanfar et al. 2025; Kundu, Bej 2025).

By presenting teachers' practical wisdom, emotional resilience, and professional identity evolution in the AI era, this study supplements the existing research's single focus on students' perspectives and provides a new dimension for related research. At the same time, the research has important implications for educational policy and practice: AI literacy and ethics training need to be integrated into the teacher education system, clear school AI usage norms should be formulated, and collaboration between teachers, technology developers, and policymakers should be strengthened. The final research conclusion points out that although AI can improve the efficiency and creativity of English teaching, it cannot replace teachers' core roles in moral guidance, cultural interpretation, and emotional connection – these are precisely the essence of education. As Hubbard and Schulze (2025) and Oxford (2016) state, the true value of technology lies in empowering human creativity and caring capabilities, rather than automating educational processes.

These themes are discussed below, with direct quotes from participants to illustrate key points.

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Pragmatic application of AI in English teaching. Participants demonstrated a multifaceted and pragmatic approach to AI use, integrating AI into various aspects of their practice to enhance efficiency and creativity. The primary applications of AI identified were:

(1) Lesson planning: AI was used to generate initial lesson ideas, design learning objectives, and suggest activities tailored to specific student levels. One teacher noted, "AI could give ideas in no time – especially when I'm preparing for a new unit or need to adapt a lesson for struggling students".
(2) Material creation: AI assisted in developing worksheets, vocabulary lists, and sample texts (e.g., model essays for writing classes). Teachers reported that AI reduced the time spent on tedious tasks, allowing them to focus on refining materials to align with classroom needs.
(3) Feedback and assessment: AI tools like DouBao were used to provide quick feedback on students' grammar and vocabulary use, while generative AI was employed to create formative assessment tasks (e.g., quizzes, discussion prompts).
(4) Professional development: Some teachers used AI to improve their own practice, such as checking their language accuracy or learning about new pedagogical trends. One teacher explained, "I use Doubao to summarize recent articles on EFL teaching – it helps me stay updated without reading dozens of papers".

Despite these benefits, participants emphasized the need for critical evaluation and adaptation of AI-generated content. They noted that AI often overlooked cultural differences (e.g., references to Western customs that were unfamiliar to students) or failed to align with pedagogical goals (e.g., exercises that were too easy or too difficult for the class level). As one teacher stated, "I never use AI materials directly. I always adjust them to fit my students' background and what we're currently learning – AI doesn't know my class like I do". This aligns with Abbas and Meraj (2025) observation that machine-generated materials require contextualization to be effective in language classrooms.

Teacher confidence and pedagogical leadership. Across all interviews, participants expressed a strong sense of professional confidence, viewing themselves as indispensable leaders in the classroom – even with the integration of AI. They rejected the notion that AI could replace their role, emphasizing their unique ability to nurture students' moral values, emotional development, and intellectual growth. One teacher stated firmly, "Artificial intelligence will never replace my knowledge of students – I know their strengths, their fears, and what motivates them. AI can't do that".

Participants positioned themselves as "mediators" of AI, rather than passive users. They explained that their role involved interpreting AI outputs, identifying limitations, and adapting tools to align with educational values. For example, a TOEFL teacher described how she uses AI to generate essay prompts but then reviews and revises them to ensure they promote critical thinking: "AI can write a prompt, but I decide if it encourages students to analyze arguments or just regurgitate information. That's my job as a teacher".

This perspective reflects Kiyanfar et al's (2025) concept of "teacher agency", where teachers actively shape the use of AI to serve their pedagogical goals. Participants also emphasized that good teaching extends beyond knowledge transmission to include adjusting their style to meet diverse student needs—a skill rooted in human judgment and experience. As one teacher put it, "Education is not only a question of knowledge but also one of character", echoing Dewaele and Li's (2020) emphasis on the emotional and moral dimensions of teaching.

Moral and cultural dilemmas in AI-mediated classrooms. While participants acknowledged AI's utility in tasks like pronunciation practice and grammar correction, they identified significant moral and cultural limitations. The most prominent concerns were:

- Lack of moral reasoning: AI was unable to address students' misconceptions about ethical

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issues or values. One teacher noted, "AI can speak fluidly about topics like honesty or respect, but it can't explain why those values matter in our culture or help students understand how to apply them in real life".

- Cultural insensitivity: AI responses to culturally sensitive topics (e.g., global cultural differences) often contained inaccuracies or reflected one-sided perspective.
- Risk of over-reliance: Teachers worried that students might use AI to avoid critical thinking, such as using deep seek to write essays or answer discussion questions without engaging with the material. One teacher expressed concern: "Students ask me if they can use AI to 'help' with homework, but sometimes it's not help – it's cheating. I have to teach them when and how to use AI responsibly".

These concerns mirror (Dorigoni, Giardino 2025) conclusion that AI lacks "interpretative intelligence" and cultural empathy. Instead of avoiding AI, however, participants turned these limitations into teaching opportunities. They used AI outputs as discussion prompts to encourage students to identify biases, correct inaccuracies, and refine content. For example, a teacher might share an AI-generated text about Chinese culture and ask students to "find what AI got wrong and explain why". This approach aligns with Son et al's (2023) view of AI as a "dialogic stimulus" that fosters critical thinking rather than imposing authority.

The core value of interpersonal connection and emotionality. A striking finding was the emphasis participants placed on human connection as a core component of teaching – one that AI cannot replicate. All teachers described teaching as a relational practice, rooted in empathy, support, and care. One teacher explained, "My students come to me for more than answers. They tell me about their stress with exams, their problems with friends – AI can't listen and comfort them like I can".

Participants also noted that students recognized AI's limitations. For example, students described AI-generated exercises as "too perfect" and "lacking in personality," preferring activities designed by their teachers because they felt "more relevant" and "personalized". A teacher shared, "A student told me that my feedback on her essay felt "like you really read it", while AI feedback just felt "like a list of mistakes". That's the difference between human and machine". Importantly, AI did not threaten teachers' professional identity; instead, it reinforced it. By confronting AI's limitations in emotional and relational domains, teachers rediscovered the unique value of their role: the ability to connect with students on a human level and help them make meaning of their learning.

Practical challenges and reflections. In addition to the themes above, participants identified three practical challenges to effective AI integration:

(1) Teachers reported that they had to learn to use AI tools independently, with no formal training provided by their school or district. This led to inconsistent practices – some teachers used AI extensively, while others relied on only basic features. One teacher noted, "I wish the school would offer workshops on AI for English teaching. Right now, I'm just figuring it out as I go".
(2) Quality and accuracy issues: A small but significant portion of AI-generated content contained factual errors (e.g., incorrect information about English grammar rules) or linguistic inconsistencies. Teachers reported spending additional time reviewing and revising AI outputs to ensure accuracy. "I once used an AI-generated vocabulary list that had wrong definitions. Now I check everything before giving it to students", a teacher explained.
(3) Ethical ambiguity: Participants struggled with defining "responsible AI use" for students, particularly regarding homework and assessments. For example, they debated whether students should be allowed to use AI to brainstorm essay ideas or check grammar, and how to detect and address cheating. "There's no clear rule on AI in homework. It's up to me to decide, but I worry I'm being too strict or too lenient", one teacher said.

These challenges align with findings from global studies on AI in education (Hockly, Jiménez

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2023), highlighting the need for systemic support for teachers. Culturally, participants' concerns about AI's moral limitations reflect China's emphasis on moral education and collective values (Kiyanfar et al. 2025; Kundu, Bej 2025). In a context where education is seen as a tool for fostering ethical citizens, AI's inability to address moral and cultural issues further underscores the importance of teachers' role. Theoretically, the findings support Dron and Anderson's (2014) concept of "human–AI co-agency", where humans and AI collaborate to enhance learning, with humans retaining ethical control. Teachers' professional identity is redefined from "authority figures" to "moral designers" of AI integration, ensuring that technology aligns with educational values. This aligns with Luckin's (2025) vision of "AI for humanity", where technology serves broader goals of empathy, inclusivity, and justice.

Conclusions

This study explores high school English teachers' perceptions, practices, and experiences with AI in education, addressing a gap in existing research that has focused primarily on students. The findings lead to several key conclusions:

First, AI serves as both an enabler and a disruptor in English language teaching (ELT). It enables teachers to enhance efficiency by automating repetitive tasks (e.g., lesson planning, grammar feedback) and fostering creativity (e.g., generating sample texts, designing interactive activities). However, it disrupts traditional notions of teaching by challenging teachers to redefine their roles as mediators and ethical gatekeepers of AI, rather than mere knowledge transmitters.

Second, despite AI's capabilities, it cannot replace the human elements of teaching. Teachers remain indispensable for nurturing students' moral values, cultural understanding, and emotional well-being—areas where AI exhibits significant limitations. The study highlights that teaching is not just an intellectual practice but a relational one, rooted in empathy, trust, and human connection. This reinforces the argument that AI's true value lies in augmenting, not replacing, teachers (Hubbard, Schulze 2025; Oxford 2016).

Third, AI influences how teachers teach (e.g., by changing how they design materials or provide feedback) but not why they teach. The moral mission of education – to foster understanding, empathy, and responsible citizenship – remains firmly rooted in human practice. Teachers' professional identity is strengthened, not weakened, by AI, as they rediscover the unique value of their human role in a technologically mediated classroom.

Fourth, effective AI integration in ELT requires systemic support. To address the challenges identified by participants (insufficient training, quality issues, ethical ambiguity), the following recommendations are proposed:

- Integrate AI literacy and ethics training into teacher education programs: Pre-service and in-service teachers should receive formal training on how to use AI tools effectively, evaluate AI outputs critically, and address ethical issues (e.g., student cheating, data privacy).
- Establish clear standards for responsible AI use in schools: Educational institutions should develop guidelines that define acceptable AI use for both teachers and students, particularly in relation to assessments and homework.
- Promote collaboration between stakeholders: Teachers, technologists, and policymakers should work together to develop AI tools that align with educational goals, address cultural and moral considerations, and ensure data privacy.
- Invest in quality assurance for AI educational tools: Developers should prioritize accuracy, cultural sensitivity, and pedagogical appropriateness in AI tools for ELT, with input from practicing teachers.

This study has limitations that should be noted. The small sample size (four teachers from a single

school) limits the generalizability of the findings. Future research could expand the sample to include teachers from diverse contexts (e.g., urban Additionally, longitudinal studies could examine how teachers' experiences with AI evolve over time, as technology and educational policies change.

Thus, AI is not a "storm" that will overwhelm education, but rather a tool that can enhance teaching and learning when guided by human judgment and educational values. Teachers remain the heart of education, ensuring that AI serves the broader goals of fostering knowledgeable, empathetic, and responsible citizens. As technology continues to evolve, the focus must remain on education –where AI supports teachers, rather than replacing them.

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