GENERATIVE AI IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF TEACHER PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY: A SCOPING REVIEW

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ABSTRACT
In the context of profound transformation in educational systems, the teaching profession is called upon to redefine itself in response to the emergence of tools and action logics increasingly influenced by artificial intelligence (Ceallaigh & Murphy, 2026; Haghi et al., 2026). This paper examines the role of generative AI in the processes of constructing teacher professional identity with reference to inclusive contexts. Drawing on a scoping literature review, the study explores how AI impacts the development of a supportive teacher professional identity (Hong et al., 2024), highlighting new forms of agency (Biesta et al., 2015). These transformations raise significant ethical questions and require a critical and informed repositioning. From this perspective, we explore whether and to what extent AI operates as an instrumental support or as a transformative device, capable of redefining the domains of teaching professionalism (Hanna et al., 2019; Wong & Liu, 2022; Sharma & Jacobs, 2016; Sahli Lozano et al., 2023).

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Introduction

The advent of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) is bringing about profound transformations in contemporary educational systems, affecting not only teaching and learning processes but also the ways in which teachers construct and reinterpret their professional identity (Zhou, 2025). The increasing diffusion of tools capable of generating content, providing personalised feedback, and supporting complex decision-making processes is redefining the traditional boundaries of educational practice, prompting critical reflection on the professional competencies, ethical responsibilities, and pedagogical practices that characterise the teaching profession (Ó Ceallaigh & Murphy, 2026).

From this perspective, the integration of GenAI cannot be regarded merely as a technological innovation; rather, it should be understood as a social phenomenon (Storey et al., 2025) capable of profoundly influencing how teachers conceive their professional role, their relationship with knowledge, and educational interactions within school contexts (Zhai, 2024). The literature highlights a gradual shift from the teacher as the primary holder and transmitter of knowledge toward the role of learning facilitator, critical mediator of information, and promoter of personalised and inclusive learning pathways (Lan, 2024). This transition requires teachers to rethink their practices and their perceptions regarding their roles and responsibilities.

In this scenario, teacher agency is highly relevant. This concept is understood as the capacity to act intentionally, exercise professional judgment, and actively contribute to processes of educational innovation and change (Biesta et al., 2015). As Biesta, Priestley, and Robinson (2015) argue, agency is not an individual attribute or a competence but rather a dynamic process that emerges through situated, contextually mediated action. In light of these reflections, the introduction of GenAI may generate tensions related to professional autonomy, decision-making responsibility, and the redefinition of the boundaries of teacher professionalism (Kennedy & Castek, 2025). On the other hand, it may expand opportunities for the provision of creative and innovative ideas for instructional design, assessment, and the development of teaching materials and resources.

These issues are particularly significant in inclusive educational contexts, where the recognition of individual differences and potential, the centrality of educational relationships, and the differentiation of learning pathways represent fundamental principles of pedagogical action. In such environments, the integration of GenAI not

only requires a careful evaluation of the opportunities offered by technology but also reflection on the professional competencies necessary for its effective and responsible use.

In this regard, teacher preparedness becomes a crucial factor for the meaningful adoption of GenAI. Within the field of emerging technologies, preparedness can be understood as the possession of the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and confidence levels that enable teachers to integrate such tools into educational practice and to critically address their challenges and implications (Luckin et al., 2022). Indeed, teachers need to acquire the competencies necessary to use technology effectively while preserving and promoting the principles of inclusive education. Thus, GenAI may be considered both a source of further complexity to foster equity, participation, and the quality of educational relationships and, at the same time, the key resource to overcome it. Based on these reflections, the need to examine the role that GenAI plays in the construction and evolution of teacher professional identity (TPI) becomes central in teacher education processes to shape future teacher agency. This process of professional redefinition can be interpreted through Mezirow's (1994) transformative learning theory, according to which encounters with new experiences and perspectives may foster a critical reassessment of existing assumptions and established practices, generating significant changes in ways of thinking and acting.

During prior research on teacher identity development, the authors of this article identified few publications examining the relationship between this process and the use or impact of GenAI, despite the growing interest in both areas of educational inquiry. This observation led to the following research question for this scoping review:

How does the use of GenAI influence teacher professional identity development? Specifically, does it primarily support existing identity processes, or does it also contribute to reshaping the dimensions of teacher professional identity? If so, through what mechanisms and to what extent?

Considering this gap, the article presents an exploratory mapping of the literature aimed at analysing the main theoretical evidence currently available to investigate the interconnections among GenAI, teacher agency, and professional identity in inclusive educational contexts. Through this review, the study seeks to highlight opportunities, critical issues, and possible future directions for both research and educational practice.

1. GenAI: definitions, development and educational implications

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has been recognised as a field of scientific research for more than half a century. Recently, its effectiveness has changed dramatically, moving from a secretive academic endeavour, often mocked as a utopian aspiration, to a domain in which its power is now both overestimated and underestimated (Luckin et al., 2022). AI has many definitions, none of which is unanimously accepted within the AI research community. However, the *Oxford English Dictionary* simply defines AI as: "the capacity of computers or other machines to exhibit or simulate intelligent behaviour; the field of study concerned with this subject" (OED, 2023). Today, the spread of GenAI within education is often framed in terms of innovation and efficiency. GenAI offers a new and powerful way of accessing information. It is a specific application of artificial intelligence based on machine learning and natural language processing (Zewe, 2023).

This technology is built upon training data provided by individuals. Models "learn" to generate content by extracting statistical patterns. GenAI challenges existing forms of work by automating aspects of the creative process and sampling, thereby complicating established concepts. It is therefore important to examine the implications of generative AI for the validity and future of creative work, as well as its effects on contemporary ecosystems, particularly educational ones (Epstein et al., 2023).

In this regard, the adoption of tools such as ChatGPT, NotebookLM, or Gemini continues to redefine the possibilities and challenges of teaching and learning. Given these rapid developments and their far-reaching implications, researchers should critically assess the impact of AI on educational practices and its broader societal implications (Abrams, 2023). GenAI offers personalised and adaptive experiences that can be tailored to educational needs. Consequently, it is important to approach the use of GenAI in learning and teaching with a critical and reflective perspective, carefully considering the potential trade-offs between efficiency and effectiveness, personalisation and privacy, and innovation and tradition (Bozkurt & Sharma, 2023). There are differing perspectives on generative AI, ranging from those who argue that it may homogenise discourse or highlight broader epistemic shifts in AI-mediated knowledge to those who emphasise the constructive role of human motivation, whereby originality and intention are transferred from model parameters to the human capacity to ask better questions (Bauer, 2025; Bozkurt & Sharma, 2023; Bentley, 2025). Current discussions suggest that AI may redefine the

traditional understanding of teaching by redistributing cognitive, creative, and evaluative tasks that were previously regarded as exclusively human and professional responsibilities within the teaching profession (Van Zoost, 2025). Today, the evolving demands placed on teachers are reshaping their professional identities, creating new roles, competencies, and ethical responsibilities in teaching with artificial intelligence (Van Zoost, 2025). The role of the teacher, therefore, is not simply to use GenAI but to create epistemic conditions in which students are accountable for what they know and for what they become through their interactions with the machine, and vice versa (Piazza et al., 2025).

2. The impact of GenAI on the professional identity of teachers

The concept of TPI, generally understood as a dynamic, social, and context-dependent process through which teachers construct meanings about themselves and their profession (Li et al., 2022), has recently gained prominence. Various studies (Beijaard, 2019; Beauchamp & Thomas, 2006) emphasise that teacher identity encompasses professional competencies that encapsulate values, beliefs, and perceptions, which are closely related to professional orientation, commitment, task perception, teacher effectiveness, and professional value (Hanna et al., 2019; Wong & Liu, 2022; Sharma & Jacobs, 2016; Sahli Lozano et al., 2023). The reconceptualisation of teacher identity proposed by Hong et al. (2024) describes it as a continuously evolving process, shaped by the perceptions and understandings that teachers develop about themselves throughout their professional practice. Within this perspective, teachers' beliefs about their ability to address the profession's multiple challenges also emerge. Learning to become a teacher (Friesen & Besley, 2013; Chong et al., 2011) is therefore the result of a process of constructing meanings and beliefs about one's professional role.

As a complex system of beliefs, self-representations, modes of practice, and interpretative frameworks, professional identity constitutes the foundation through which teachers construct and maintain coherence in their professional actions (Beijaard et al., 2004). Today, GenAI is profoundly reshaping teacher identity, and it has influenced how teachers perceive their role within educational contexts. Although teachers have not been regarded as mere transmitters of knowledge since the 70s, the immediate availability of information and AI-generated content has given rise to an urgent rethinking of the teacher's role to the extent that even the presence of teachers in the classroom is in doubt (Selwyn,

2019; Guan et al., 2025). Indeed, students can now rapidly access explanations, summaries, translations, and examples through advanced digital tools without relying exclusively on teachers as their reference point. Consequently, the role of the teacher is increasingly shifting towards guiding students in the critical interpretation of information, the reliability of sources, and the responsible use of technology. Teachers' professional authority is no longer based solely on the possession of knowledge. Rather, their ability to mediate, contextualise, and provide guidance throughout the learning process becomes central (Zhai, 2025).

This unprecedented evolution further prioritises the need to revise teacher education course programmes aimed at preparing teachers to face these new challenges (OECD, 2025). In fact, alongside traditional disciplinary and pedagogical expertise, increasing importance is being placed on digital competencies, knowledge of artificial intelligence systems, the ability to design innovative learning activities, and the promotion of the ethical, critical, and responsible use of technology (Pratschke, 2024). From this perspective, strengthening teachers' AI-related competencies is of strategic importance, as the effective integration of these technologies into educational contexts largely depends on teachers' ability to use and evaluate them critically, consciously and ethically (Cukurova, 2025). This is essential to prepare future generations of teachers for a critical, informed, and responsible use of AI even in assessment practices (Starkey, 2020).

While these developments have reinforced the importance of equipping teachers with technological and AI-related competencies, teacher education programs do not appear to pay sufficient attention to the domains that underpin teacher identity development. Teachers need to develop a more flexible and up-to-date professional profile, capable of integrating technological tools without abandoning the educational and relational dimensions of teaching. Beyond its operational and methodological implications, the introduction of AI raises deeper questions concerning teacher professionalism. In particular, attention has been directed towards the impact these technologies may have on the construction and evolution of teachers' professional identity, influencing how they interpret their role, define their responsibilities, and exercise professional judgement in teaching and assessment processes (Ollington, 2025). This transformation may also generate feelings of uncertainty and disorientation. Some teachers fear a loss of professional relevance, while others experience difficulties in adapting to rapid technological change.

New challenges also arise in relation to the assessment of learning, the risk of overreliance on AI tools, and the need to ensure authenticity and critical thinking among students. This concern about the pedagogical risks of an uncritical use of AI was also highlighted by Sibilio (Besio, Pinnelli, Sibilio, 2025). In his view, the main issue is not only the technical reliability of AI systems, but the possibility that both teachers and learners may passively accept algorithmic outputs without engaging in critical validation, reflective interpretation and autonomous judgement. From this perspective, GenAI may affect teacher professional identity as it challenges teachers to maintain their role as pedagogical mediators capable of guiding students in "learning to learn", evaluating the reliability of information, and resisting forms of cognitive dependence on automated systems. Thus, the professional responsibility of teachers is not limited to integrating AI into educational practice, but also involves creating the conditions for students to understand, question and critically use AI-generated knowledge.

Moreover, in this regard, Selwyn (2024) argues that, because AI is based on statistical correlations and quantitative data, its outputs are inevitably constrained by the quality of the data and the indicators used to represent complex educational phenomena. In educational contexts, this may result in an oversimplification of reality, reducing multidimensional processes such as learning and student engagement to measurable and calculable variables (Mitchell, 2019). Indeed, the current literature still presents significant gaps in understanding how to effectively support teachers in integrating GenAI and how teacher education programmes should be redesigned to adequately prepare future generations of educators to work in learning environments characterised by the presence of GenAI (Zhai, 2025). To date, much of the existing research has focused on issues related to technology adoption and acceptance, while paying less attention to the deeper transformations that AI produces in teachers' professional roles and agency (Biesta et al., 2015). For this reason, Zhai (2025) highlights the need for further studies specifically investigating how generative AI is redefining teachers' responsibilities, decision-making autonomy, and professional identity, while exploring the complex interactions that develop between teachers and AI systems. It can therefore be argued that GenAI is also reshaping the educational relationship between teachers and students. By automating routine tasks, such as the preparation of teaching materials or the preliminary marking of assignments, AI can enable teachers to devote greater attention to the more distinctly human dimensions of teaching, including dialogue, listening, emotional support, and the personalisation of learning

pathways. From this perspective, AI should not be viewed as a substitute for teachers, but rather as a tool capable of enhancing their pedagogical and relational roles.

As artificial intelligence and educational technologies introduce new philosophies and methodologies, they also challenge teachers to re-evaluate their professional identities and adapt their practices (Lan, 2024). This integration is characterised by adaptive algorithms that personalise educational content according to teachers' individual strengths and learning trajectories, potentially enhancing both their self-efficacy and teaching practices (OECD, 2022). Such interactions with AI technologies are believed to have a profound impact on teachers' professional identity, challenging and transforming their beliefs and practices (Lan, 2024).

3. Methodology

3.1 Aim

This study aims to investigate whether, and to what extent, GenAI functions as a supportive tool in teacher professional identity development or as a transformative agent capable of reshaping the domains of teacher professional identity. In particular, it seeks to examine the mechanisms through which GenAI influences teachers' identity development and the extent to which this influence is reflected in their professional roles, educational practices, and pedagogical decision-making (Hanna et al., 2019; Wong & Liu, 2022; Sharma & Jacobs, 2016; Sahli Lozano et al., 2023).

3.2 Research Design

This scoping review (Tricco et al., 2018; Ghirotto, 2020) aimed to systematically map available knowledge by identifying, analysing, and classifying existing scientific evidence. A scoping review design, rather than a systematic review, was chosen because the study's purpose is exploratory and descriptive. The objective, in fact, is not to answer a narrowly defined research question or produce a conclusive summary on the effectiveness of specific interventions, but rather to outline the breadth of the field of investigation, describe how the topic has been conceptualized and studied in the scientific literature, and identify any knowledge gaps.

This approach is particularly suited to heterogeneous or emerging research areas, in which concepts, methods, target populations, and results can vary considerably across studies. The review was therefore conducted and reported in accordance with the PRISMA Extension for Scoping Reviews (PRISMA-ScR, Tricco et al., 2018), developed specifically to support transparent, rigorous and replicable reporting of scoping reviews. The review process comprised literature searching, study screening and selection, data extraction and charting, and thematic synthesis.

3.3 Inclusion and exclusion criteria

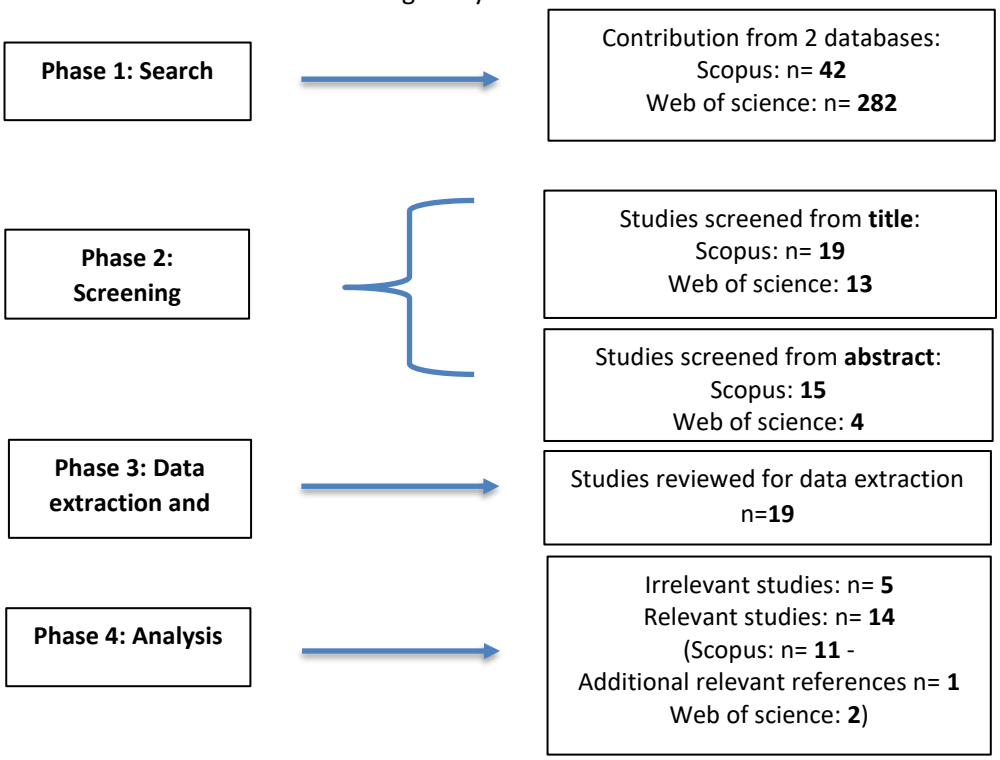
The literature search was conducted in June 2026 using the international databases Scopus and Web of Science, selected for their extensive coverage of scholarly publications in the fields of social sciences and education (Pranckutė, 2021). The search was limited to studies published in English between 2020 and June 2026. The search terms were iteratively defined through successive stages of keyword refinement. The final search string used was: ("teacher professional identity" OR "teacher professional identity development" OR "teacher identity") AND ("artificial intelligence" OR "GenAI" OR "generative AI"). Specific inclusion criteria were applied during the study selection process. Priority was given to contributions within the fields of Social Sciences and Psychology, as well as articles available in Open Access format. Conversely, contributions belonging to the so-called grey literature were excluded from the search, including conference proceedings, undergraduate dissertations, doctoral theses, technical reports and documents not subjected to scientific peer review. In addition, books, book chapters and other publications not indexed in the selected databases were not considered.

3.4 Study selection

The initial search identified 282 articles in Web of Science and 42 articles in Scopus. After exporting and downloading the corresponding Excel files, a preliminary screening of article titles was conducted to identify studies relevant to the relationship between TPI and AI. All articles related to different disciplinary fields or focused exclusively on the technical aspects of artificial intelligence, without a significant connection to teacher professional identity, were excluded. Following this title-screening phase, 13 articles were retained and 269 excluded from Web of Science and 19 articles were retained and 23 excluded from Scopus. For both databases, exclusions were made due to a lack of content relevance or because the articles belonged to a different discipline. Subsequently, the abstracts of the

selected articles were subjected to an in-depth review, involving shared reading and discussion with two other researchers. This process led to the identification of a final corpus of 19 contributions considered relevant to the aims of the study: 15 from Scopus and 4 from Web of Science.

Table 1: PRISMA Flow Chart Outlining Study Selection Process



Subsequently, the data extraction phase for the included studies (n = 19) was initiated. To this end, the researchers conducted a preliminary discussion aimed at defining and sharing the analysis criteria and the information to be collected. The articles were then reviewed independently by the three researchers, who reached agreement on the inclusion of the selected studies. Based on the agreed criteria, a data extraction table (Table 2) was developed, aimed at systematically collecting information on the relevant studies (n = 14), including bibliographic data, objectives, sample characteristics, methodology and main results.

This procedure allowed for the information to be catalogued and organized in a structured manner, facilitating subsequent data synthesis and interpretation.

From this selection process, which began with a total of 19 contributions, 14 relevant studies emerged (11 from Scopus, one additional study from the same database, and 2 from Web of Science). Although non-open-access studies were excluded, an exception was made for the latter work from Scopus: a copy was requested directly from the author, as the abstract highlighted its relevance to the advancement of the research. Consequently, the work was included in the final selection, for which it is particularly well-suited due to its thematic relevance.

TITLE	AUTHORS & YEAR	AIM	KEY FINDINGS
A Narrative Inquiry into Language Teacher Identity Construction in the Global GenAI Context	Teng, Mark Feng; Yip, Jesse W. C. 2025	Explore the opportunities and challenges posed by the global GenAI platform on understanding the structure of the language teacher	The findings reveal that teachers navigate two major roles, worrier and warrior, in response to GenAI's challenges and opportunities. The study underscores how institutional capital and ideological stances constitute these roles in teacher identity formation, with emotional labour emerging as a compensatory strategy to assert irreplaceable human value in an AI-driven classroom.
Prompting Teacher Identities: A Model for Teacher Subjectivities Constituted Through Artificial Intelligence	Zoost, Steven Van 2025	Offer a conceptual model for how teachers' identities are constituted through AI prompt engineering.	The conceptual model of TSCAI invites reconsideration of the relationship between teachers and AI. The TSCAI model conceptualises teacher identity not as an autonomous individual with agency, but as a subject constituted within the discourses of AI prompt engineering and governed through specific technologies of the self.
A collaborative reflection on the synergy of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and language teacher identity reconstruction	Ghiasvand, Farhad; Seyri, Haniye 2025	Unravel teacher identity construction and reconstruction during AI-induced education; this study explores Iranian EFL teachers' AI-adopted identities and how their identities are (re)constructed during the transition from conventional modes of teaching to AI-mediated teaching.	The results of thematic analysis revealed that AI contributed to language teacher identity (LTI) (re)construction in six areas. It "caused teacher role transformation", "triggered pedagogical alignment and development", "made L2 education data-driven, personalized, and collaborative", "enhanced teachers' professional expertise and knowledge base", "spurred teachers to be self-reflective practitioners", and "made teachers tech-savvy in the shifting world" hence (re)shaping LTI.
AI Integration into Language Education and Teacher Identity: An Ecological Perspective	Satvati, Nadia; Kamali, Jaber; Boldaji, Fatemeh Safian; Khodadadi, Muhammad; Akhondi, Saeid 2025	Explores how the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools into language education can influence language teachers' identity from an ecological perspective.	The findings of this study revealed that AI integration in instructional practices had a significant empowering impact on participating teachers' identity construction at different ecological layers of micro-pedagogical, meso-institutional, and macro-societal. The findings illustrated that AI integration encouraged teachers to develop their knowledge, and therefore, it could increase their self-confidence which contributed to shaping their professional identity.

Becoming an inclusive teacher across 'virtual and real' contexts: negotiating teacher identity through engagement with GenAI	Seongryeong Yu & Demetrice Smith-Mutegi 2026	Explore how pre-service teachers construct and negotiate their professional identities as inclusive educators through interactions with generative AI across virtual and real-world teaching contexts.	Findings indicate that the aspirations of the GenAI-generated classroom came into conflict with the institutional, curricular, and material constraints of actual classrooms. This gap has been identified as a critical space for identity work, where ideals are tested, renegotiated, and made visible through creativity and constraint. From this perspective, GenAI served as a reflective partner. For teacher education, these findings suggest that GenAI-mediated identity work may support the development of human capacities when integrated with reflective and dialogic practice.
Becoming with the algorithm: A post humanist narrative of EFL teacher identity in the age of AI	Fathi, Jalil 2026	Explore the evolving professional identities of eight experienced English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers in Iran over one academic year as they integrated generative artificial intelligence (AI) into their pedagogy.	This study revealed that sustained engagement with generative AI reconfigures teacher identity in ways far more profound than simple tool adoption. The participants' stories traced an ontological journey from an initial epistemic anxiety and defence of human authority, through the cultivation of a new craft as expert "prompt-pedagogues," to the ongoing negotiation of a hybrid, symbiotic identity. Teacher identity in the age of artificial intelligence becomes a process of co-creation, a professional reality in which teacher cognition and training are inextricably tied to a non-human agent.
Why think historically when AI can do it? Understanding the relationship between generative artificial intelligence and history teacher identity	Moylan, Rachel 2026	Seeks to understand history teachers' perspectives concerning their purpose and their profession in relation to generative artificial intelligence.	This research has demonstrated the importance of considering GenAI in history education beyond the user–tool relationship. The introduction of GenAI created conditions of uncertainty in which the history teachers in this study renegotiated their understandings of themselves and their profession, demonstrating that they are highly capable thinkers and possess the capacity for complex analysis of broader ethical and social issues. Rather than signalling an end to the need for historical thinking, the teachers in this study emphasise the increased value of their work and their profession in the context of GenAI technologies.
AI-mediated instruction and novice language teachers' identity:	Haghi, Sara; Alpat, Muhammet Furkan; Kamali, Jaber 2026	Examine how artificial intelligence (AI)-mediated instruction shapes novice language teachers' identity by highlighting both reinforcing and disrupting forces.	The integration of AI significantly improves novice language teachers' sense of dynamism and productivity. It solidifies the perception of themselves as effective teachers. One important finding of this study was the emergence of a "tech-savvy identity" among novice language teachers. The development of this nascent identity dimension bridges the gap between AI literacy and LTI.

reinforcing and disrupting factors			The identified themes reveal that effective AI integration, especially when it corresponds to educational objectives and yields favourable student outcomes, bolsters novice language teachers' emerging identities.
Teacher identity negotiation in AI-enhanced higher education and its implications for professional development	Li, Jie; Zhang, Qianyu 2026	Investigate how university English teachers in China negotiate their language teacher identity (LTI) in the age of AI.	The integration of AI has worked as a powerful facilitator in pushing language teachers to engage in a profound process of professional identity negotiation. The findings reveal that teachers' identity reconstruction is linked to their interactions within three key communities: peer networks, institutional structures, and student relationships. Emerging from the initial crisis, most participants showed significant agency in actively reconstructing their professional value, instead of remaining in a state of confusion. The most crucial shift was from being an "information transmitter" to a "critical guide".
Pre-service teachers preparedness for AI-integrated education: An investigation from perceptions, capabilities, and teachers' identity changes	Guan, Lihang; Zhang, Yue; Gu, Mingyue Michelle 2025	Investigate pre-service teachers' perceptions and capabilities within the framework of social cognitive theory, focusing on their attitudes, intentions, self-efficacy, and AI literacy for effective AI integration.	The study suggests that AI integration can foster a transformation of the teacher's professional identity: from a simple transmitter of knowledge to a facilitator of learning; greater attention to designing, guiding, and supporting student learning paths; collaborating with AI to personalize teaching; reducing administrative and repetitive tasks, leaving more time for the creative and relational aspects of the profession. The teacher of the future is described as a learner, leader, collaborator, designer, facilitator, and analyst, according to ISTE standards. However, participants still view AI primarily as a simple tool, not as an educational collaborator.
Through tensions to identity-based motivations: Exploring teacher professional identity in Artificial Intelligence-enhanced teacher training	Lan, Yanzhen 2024	Explore teacher professional identity (TPI) tensions and motivations for Artificial Intelligence (AI) integration in teaching within a Chinese university-level AI-enhanced teacher training pro- gramme.	The study reveals tensions between group belonging and individuality, between humanity and technology, and between continuity and openness in the field of TPI. It highlights the crucial role of personalized, AI-enhanced teacher training in aligning the different identities and motivations of educators with technological advances, pointing to a strategic approach for effectively integrating AI into teacher training worldwide.

Digital Echoes: Crafting Chinese EFL Teacher Identity in the Era of AI-Enhanced Instruction-A Qualitative Exploration	Zhou, Qing; Hashim, Harwati; Sulaiman, Nur Aini 2024	Understand how AI integration is influencing the professional identities of Chinese university English language teachers (EFL).	The findings indicate that AI integration enhances personalized learning and reduces the burden of administrative tasks. However, it also challenges teachers to reshape their roles and manage both technological and ethical complexities effectively. The study highlights the necessity for ongoing professional development and robust institutional support to effectively integrate AI in educational settings, ensuring it enhances rather than undermines the teaching and learning process.
Educating for Complexity: A Learning Architecture for Systems Thinking in Professional Education and Generative AI Governance	Pedraja-Rejas, Liliana; Acosta-Garcia, Katherine; Rodriguez-Ponce, Emilio; Munoz-Fritis, Camila 2026	Explore the impact of AI on the professional identity construction of Chinese university EFL teachers by analysing their perceptions, adaptations, influencing factors, opportunities, and challenges of AI-supported teaching.	The article suggests that systems thinking fosters the development of professional identity because it helps professionals: tackle complex problems by considering multiple actors and perspectives; make motivated and responsible decisions; reflect critically on their decision-making processes; develop skills of analysis, collaboration, and ethical responsibility. specifically, the proposed model develops four professional practices: Defining the problem and defining the system's boundaries (sensemaking and boundary setting); Causal representation and modelling; Reasoning about interventions and solutions; Meta-learning and professional reflection.
Understanding EFL teachers' affective and cognitive responses to ChatGPT in higher education	Wang, Chenghao; Zou, Bin; Zhang, Weilei; Du, Yiran; Hu, Wei 2026	Investigate university teachers of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) affective (emotional) and cognitive responses to ChatGPT, and to understand which factors influence their willingness to integrate ChatGPT into daily teaching practices, using an extended Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)	The findings indicate that perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use significantly shape teachers' attitudes, which in turn predict their behavioural intentions to adopt ChatGPT. Evidence highlights that frontline EFL teachers value ChatGPT's potential. yet remain concerned about tool reliability, digital equity, and pedagogical alignment.

Table 2: Description of the Included Articles

4. Results and discussion

As shown in Table 3, below, the thematic synthesis of the selected studies led to the identification of four main macro-areas: GenAI as operational support, GenAI as a driver of professional development, GenAI as a source of identity tensions, and GenAI as a transformative agent of teacher identity. These themes show that the relationship between GenAI and teacher professional identity development cannot be reduced to the mere adoption of a technological tool. Rather, the reviewed literature suggests that GenAI intervenes at multiple levels of teachers' work, affecting daily practices, professional learning, emotional experiences, and broader processes of identity reconstruction.

Table 3: Thematic Synthesis of the Evidence on GenAI and Teacher Professional Identity Development

MACRO-AREAS	SELECTED ARTICLES
GenAI as operational support	**Wang et al. (2026)** (perceived usefulness, ease of use, ChatGPT adoption); **Zhou et al. (2024)** (reduction of administrative workload, personalisation); **Guan et al. (2025)** (AI supporting instructional design, personalisation, and repetitive tasks); **Yu & Smith-Mutegi (2026)** (GenAI as a reflective partner in initial teacher education).
GenAI as a driver of professional development	**Ghiasvand & Seyri (2025)** (self-reflection, professional development, expertise); **Satvati et al. (2025)** (identity empowerment and increased self-efficacy); **Haghi et al. (2026)** (tech-savvy identity and professional growth); **Pedraja-Rejas et al. (2026)** (systems thinking and professional reflection); **Lan (2024)** (AI-enhanced teacher education); **Yu & Smith-Mutegi (2026)** (development of reflective capacities); **Guan et al. (2025)** (preparedness and new professional competencies).
GenAI as a source of identity tensions	**Lan (2024)** (tensions between humanity and technology, individuality and belonging); **Teng & Yip (2025)** (worrier vs warrior, emotional labour); **Moylan (2026)** (uncertainty and the redefinition of the profession); **Li & Zhang (2026)** (identity negotiation and initial crisis); **Fathi (2026)** (epistemic anxiety and identity negotiation); **Zhou et al. (2024)** (ethical challenges and role redefinition); **Yu & Smith-Mutegi (2026)** (conflict between the ideal and the reality of inclusive education).
GenAI as a transformative agent of teacher identity	**Van Zoost (2025)** (teacher identity constituted through AI); **Fathi (2026)** (human–AI co-construction of identity); **Ghiasvand & Seyri (2025)** (identity reconstruction); **Satvati et al. (2025)** (AI shaping identity across ecological levels); **Li & Zhang (2026)** (professional identity reconstruction); **Guan et al. (2025)** (transformation from knowledge transmitter to learning facilitator); **Haghi et al. (2026)** (emergence of a tech-savvy identity).

Starting from this thematic synthesis, the following analysis examines how these interconnected macro-areas contribute to the reconfiguration of teachers' professional identity, demonstrating that the integration of AI, particularly GenAI,

is not only a technical innovation but also a powerful catalyst for the reconfiguration of teachers' professional identity. AI technologies are not merely tools but active agents that shape teachers' teaching practices, pedagogies, and perceived identities in the classroom (Ghiasvand and Seyri, 2025). The findings also highlight a shift from traditional roles towards hybrid and dynamic configurations: sustained engagement with GenAI is believed to reconfigure teachers' identities in ways far more profound than the simple adoption of a tool (Fathi, 2026). Ghiasvand and Seyri (2025) argue that new technologies culminate in the reformulation of identities through the new practices teachers adopt. Digital technologies inspire teachers to reinterpret their sense of self and lead to a reconfiguration of identity. An important aspect that emerged concerns how teachers' identities are shaped within the contexts in which they work.

In Fathi (2026), identity is viewed not as a fixed human trait, but as a dynamic, co-constructed assemblage arising from human-AI interaction. The literature also highlights the emergence of new representations of teaching. Some authors propose the metaphor of the 'teacher-centaur' (Fassbender, 2024), describing the teacher as a hybrid figure combining human skills with algorithmic support. From this standpoint, AI does not replace the teacher but contributes to the redefinition of professional practices and educational responsibilities, leading to forms of human-machine collaboration that require new ethical and decision-making skills. Another important finding concerns the initial and ongoing training of teachers. Numerous studies emphasise that preparing to use AI cannot be limited to developing technical or digital skills; it is also necessary to promote reflective, critical, and ethical skills that enable teachers to understand the significance of AI for their profession and to integrate such technologies in a conscious and pedagogically sound manner (Yu & Smith-Mutegi, 2026; Guan et al, 2025; Haghi et al, 2026; Lan, 2024).

Haghi et al (2026) show that AI-mediated education has encouraged self-reflection among language teachers, prompting them to reconsider their beliefs about teaching methods and to consider pedagogical adjustments for continuous professional growth. Another key theme emerging in the literature refers to the identity tensions related to the adoption of AI. Lan (2024) underlines the necessity for teachers to adapt themselves to new tools and methodologies, while at the same time preserving established beliefs about teaching and learning and traditional pedagogical practices, which may produce tension. Teng and Yip (2025)

also reveal that teachers face ideological tensions and respond to the community changes driven by GenAI, evolving their role into either “worriers” or “warriors”.

As teachers' roles undergo transformations and they try to adapt themselves to new ones and new expectations, they experience tensions and identity conflicts. Several studies show that teachers must constantly negotiate the balance between the human and technological aspects of teaching, between continuity and innovation, and between professional autonomy and collaboration with algorithmic systems. These tensions are not viewed solely as obstacles, but as opportunities through which teachers construct and redefine their professional identity (Haghi et al., 2026; Lan, 2024). An additional burden for novice teachers, who face various challenges related to constructing their professional identities, is the emotional labour associated with managing technological changes without adequate preparation (Guan et al., 2025).

The most recent studies indicate growing attention in this area; it is particularly interesting to note that, although the inclusion criteria covered the period from 2020 to June 2026, the relevant scientific literature is mostly concentrated in the last two years, with two specific contributions from 2024. The authors interpreted this as a sign of growing scientific interest in the topic, consistent with the findings of the research. It is also notable that most studies focus on foreign language teachers. Finally, an unexpected finding concerns the geographical origin of the studies, which mainly come from China and Iran.

According to these approaches, teacher identity is no longer regarded purely as an individual trait, but as the result of dynamic interactions among people, technologies, educational practices, and institutional contexts (Yu & Smith-Mutegi, 2026; Haghi et al., 2026). AI is therefore regarded as an agent that actively shapes professional identities and transforms educational ecosystems.

5. Future perspectives: inclusive teacher agency in AI-mediated educational ecosystems

These findings suggest that the relationship between GenAI, teacher professional identity and inclusive teacher agency requires further investigation. The reviewed literature shows that GenAI may simultaneously operate as practical support, a driver of professional development, a source of identity tensions and a transformative factor in teacher identity development. Actually, these dimensions should not be understood as separate effects of technological innovation, but as interrelated processes through which teachers negotiate their professional role, autonomy, responsibility and pedagogical judgement within increasingly hybrid educational environments. Stemming from these premises, future research should

therefore move beyond a purely instrumental view of GenAI and examine how AI-mediated practices may contribute to the ongoing redefinition of teachers' roles, responsibilities and professional self-understandings.

From this perspective, the ecological approach to teacher agency is particularly relevant. Agency is not an innate ability or a stable competence, but an achievement emerging from the interaction between teachers' personal-professional resources, cultural and material conditions, institutional constraints, and future-oriented aspirations (Aiello, & Sibilio, 2018; Biesta et al., 2015; Priestley et al., 2015). This view is consistent with broader conceptualisations of professional agency as a socio-culturally situated process connected to identity, learning, and participation in changing work contexts (Eteläpelto et al., 2013), as well as with Emirbayer and Mische's (1998) temporal conception of agency. Accordingly, GenAI-mediated identity development should be understood as a dynamic negotiation between continuity and change, professional memory and innovation, human judgement and algorithmic mediation.

This issue is especially relevant in inclusive educational contexts, where teacher agency is closely linked to recognising learner diversity, removing barriers to participation and designing meaningful learning opportunities for all students (Aiello & Sharma, 2018; Florian & Spratt, 2013; Rouse, 2008; Sharma et al., 2018). Although inclusion is often acknowledged as a guiding educational principle, few studies explicitly examine how GenAI may influence teachers' professional identity in inclusive settings, especially in relation to diversity, equity, accessibility and personalised learning. This gap is significant because inclusive education places relational, ethical and contextual dimensions of teaching at its core. Thus, future research should therefore identify the competencies teachers need to integrate GenAI in ways that support equitable and meaningful educational practices. In this regard, the UNESCO AI Competency Framework for Teachers emphasises the importance of a human-centred mindset, ethical awareness, pedagogical competence and professional learning beyond technical AI knowledge (Miao & Cukurova, 2024). Within this framework, GenAI may be conceived not merely as a teaching support tool, but as a bounded co-agent in pedagogical design and professional reflection. This notion does not attribute autonomy, intentionality or educational responsibility to AI, rather, it highlights how AI systems may influence teachers' possibilities for action, decision-making processes and representations of professional practice. Research on hybrid human–AI learning technologies frames AI as part of an augmentation process supporting learning, regulation, and educational decision-making (Molenaar, 2022). Similarly, studies on teacher–AI co-design suggest that AI may act as an assistant, co-designer, dialogic partner or reflective interlocutor (Rizzo, Legrenzi, 2025; Zappalà et al., 2025) when teachers engage with its outputs critically and iteratively (Wang et al., 2026). However, AI co-agency should remain pedagogically bounded. While GenAI may propose,

recombine and generate options, teachers retain responsibility for interpreting, evaluating and contextualising these suggestions. This distinction is particularly important in inclusive education where pedagogical decisions require contextual sensitivity, professional judgement and attention to the complexity of students' learning trajectories. If used uncritically, GenAI may constrain teacher agency by simplifying learner profiles, reinforcing deficit-oriented categories, or reducing professional judgement to the validation of algorithmic recommendations. Future research should therefore investigate GenAI neither as a substitute for teacher agency nor as a neutral instrument, but as a socio-technical mediator whose educational value depends on teachers' capacity to critically appropriate, adapt, question and recontextualise its outputs within inclusive pedagogical frameworks. Longitudinal, empirical, and context-sensitive studies are needed to clarify the mechanisms underlying these processes and to explore how teachers negotiate the opportunities and challenges associated with AI throughout their professional trajectories. Such evidence would provide a stronger foundation for the design of teacher education programmes capable of preparing teachers not only to use AI effectively, but also to critically reflect on its implications for their professional identity and educational practice.

Conclusions

In synthesis, the review highlights the need for future research to go beyond questions of technology adoption and instead focus on a deeper understanding of the processes through which GenAI shapes teacher identity and agency. The reviewed literature indicates that GenAI not only modifies teaching practices but also contributes to the redefinition of teachers' professional identities, opening new lines of inquiry into the relationship between technology, agency, teacher education, and professional development. Teacher professional identity emerges as a dynamic construct shaped by the interaction among personal beliefs, professional practices, institutional contexts, and digital technologies. In this context, GenAI fosters reflection on teachers' roles and responsibilities while also generating tensions related to professional autonomy, ethical judgement, and the human dimension of teaching.

From this perspective, the relational dimension of teaching assumes particular importance. Education is grounded in interpersonal encounters, dialogical interaction, and the shared construction of knowledge; dimensions that cannot be fully replicated by intelligent technologies, even when these are able to simulate complex cognitive or disciplinary processes. As Moylan (2026) argues, although GenAI does not "think" in the human sense, its capacity to convincingly simulate historical thinking raises important questions about the aims of history education and the value of teaching historical thinking. More broadly, it invites reflection on

how disciplinary knowledge and educational practices may be reshaped by the integration of such technologies.

This highlights the need for longitudinal, empirical, and context-sensitive studies capable of clarifying the mechanisms through which teachers negotiate the opportunities and challenges associated with AI across their professional trajectories. Such evidence would provide a stronger foundation for the design of teacher education programmes that prepare educators not only to use AI effectively, but also to critically engage with its implications for professional identity and educational practice.

Author contributions

This article is a collaborative effort among the authors and all participated in the design, data collection and analysis phases. However, authorship can be attributed as follows: Rossella D'Agostino is the author of the “Introduction” and “Methodology”; Ida Esposito is the author of the “ Results and Discussion”; Emanuela Zappalà is the author of “Future Perspectives: Teachers' Inclusive Agency in AI-Mediated Educational Ecosystems”; Zahra Sadat Mohajeri is the author of “GenAI: Definitions, Development, and Educational Implications”; and Erika Marie Pace is the author of "The Impact of GenAI on Teachers' Professional Identity", “Conclusions” and is scientific supervisor of the manuscript.

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